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**PRONUNCIATION OF THE LETTER 'S' AND THE GEMINATE
'SS' IN ENGLISH**
**A CASE STUDY OF 3RD YEAR LMD STUDENTS AT THE
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH, MENTOURI UNIVERSITY**

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the
Requirements for Master Degree
in Applied Language Studies

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Dedications

In the Name of God the Most Merciful and the Most Compassionate

This work is dedicated to:

-The spirits of my late grandfather and uncle.

-My Parents: my dear father and my beloved mother without whom I would not have been what I am. Thank you, mother and father, for all your sacrifices.

-My brothers and sisters, especially Widad, Chourouk and Nour-Elislam.

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Abstract

Learning the pronunciation of English words by students who have a French linguistic background is not without difficulties since the two languages use the Latin alphabet and share so many cognates. This research work investigates the nature of some common errors made by 3rd year students at the Department of English when pronouncing words that include the letter 's' and the geminate 'ss'. Based on the assumption that the students master some rules that govern the pronunciation of the letter 's' and the combination 'ss' in French, we hypothesize that if the students encounter words they are not familiar with in English, they will made errors as a result of the interference of French graphemic rules. In order to check this hypothesis two tests, one in French and another in English, have been administered to a sample of 20 students. The results show that the students have failed to recognise the correct pronunciation of many words in English as opposed to those in the French test; we believe that they are the words with which the students are not familiar. In order to confirm the hypothesized reasons behind such a failure, a questionnaire has been administered to the same sample of students. The findings of the analysis of the questionnaire have indicated that the primary cause of the mispronunciation of the words is the interference of French due to the application of its graphemic rules in English, and this confirms the hypothesis of this research. Finally, some pedagogical implications are suggested, which we think, may help the students in learning the correct pronunciation of the words containing the letter 's' and the geminate 'ss'.

List of Tables

Table 1: French in the Fundamental School	7
Table 2: French in the Fundamental School under the New System	8
Table 3: French at the Secondary School (1 ^e AS)	8
Table 4: French at the Secondary School (2 ^e AS/3 ^e AS)	9
Table 5: EFL1 in the Fundamental School	11
Table 6: EFL2 in the Intermediate School	12
Table 7: English in the Intermediate School under the New System	12
Table 8: English at the Secondary School in 1 ^e AS	12
Table 9: English at the Secondary School (2 ^e AS/3 ^e AS)	13
Table 10: Phonetic Features of French Vowels	40
Table 11: Graphemes of French Vowels	41
Table 12: Graphemes of French Diphthongs	42
Table 13: Graphemes of French Triphthongs	42
Table 14: Phonetic Features of French Consonants (Place of Articulation)	43
Table 15: Phonetic Features of French Consonants (Manner of Articulation)	44
Table 16: Graphemes of French Consonants	45
Table 17: Phonetic Features of English simple Vowels	47
Table 18: Graphemes of English Vowels	48
Table 19: Graphemes of English Diphthongs	49
Table 20: Graphemes of English Triphthongs	50
Table 21: Phonetic Features of English Consonants (Place of Articulation)	51
Table 22: Phonetic Features of English Consonants (Manner of Articulation)	52
Table 23: Graphemes of English Consonants	53
Table 24: Scores in French and English Tests from High to Low	60
Table 25: Correlation between French and English Tests	63
Table 26: Classification of Students' Levels in French	65
Table 27: Top Level Students' Scores	66
Table 28: Scores of Top Level Students in the English Test	67
Table 29: Scores of Intermediate Level Students	68
Table 30: Scores of English Test at the Intermediate level	69
Table 31: Correct and Wrong Answers of Each word in the French Test	71
Table 32: Correct and Wrong Answers for the Word 'Observation'	73

Table 33: Correct and Wrong Answers for the Word ‘Soubresaut’	7
Table 34: Correct and Wrong Answers in the English Test	75
Table 35: Answers about ‘Precise’ and ‘Precisely’	77
Table 36: Answers about the Word ‘Concise’	78
Table 37: Answers about the Adjective ‘Close’	79
Table 38: Answers About of the Word ‘Houses’	80
Table 39: Answers about the Word ‘Casino’	80
Table 40: Answers about the Adjective ‘Loose’	81
Table 41: Answers about the Verb ‘Increase’	81
Table 42: Answers about the Words ‘Dessert’ and ‘Dissolve’	82
Table 43: Answers about the Words ‘Excuses’, ‘Comparison’, and ‘Oasis’	83
Table 44: Answers about the Word ‘Useless’	84
Table 45: Students’ Answers to Question 1	88
Table 46: Students’ Answers to Question 2	90
Table 47: Students’ Answers to Question 3	91
Table 48: Students’ Answers to Question 4	93
Table 49: Students’ Answers to Question 5	94
Table 50: Students’ Answers to Question 6	96
Table 51: Students’ Answers to Question 7	98
Table 52: Students’ Answers to Question 8	100
Table 53: Students’ Answers to Question 9	101
Table 54: Students’ Answers to Question 10	103

List of Figures

Figure 1: Correlation between French and English Scores	61
Figure 2: Students' Average in the French Test	62
Figure 3: Students' Average in the English Test	62
Figure 4: Results of each Student in the Test	64
Figure 5: Answers in the French Test	72
Figure 6: Answers in the English Test	76

List of Abbreviations

AF: Année Fondamentale

AM: Année Moyenne

AP: Année Primaire

AS: Année Secondaire

CA: Contrastive Analysis

CAH: Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis

EA: Error Analysis

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

EFL1: English as a First Foreign Language

EFL2: English as a Second Foreign Language

ESL: English as a Second Language

FL: Foreign Language

IPA: International Phonetic Association

L1: First Language

L2: Second Language

LMD: Licence Master Doctorat

NL: Native Language

RP: Received Pronunciation

TL: Target Language

Phonetic Symbols Used

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

1. Standard French

a. Simple Vowels

Vowel	Description	Example	Transcription	Meaning
ɑ	open, front, unrounded	gâteau	gato	cake
a	open, front, unrounded	acteur	aktor	actor
e	half close, front, unrounded	effacer	efase	delete
ɛ	half open, front, unrounded	mer	mɛr	sea
ə	half close, central, unrounded	penser	pase	think
i	close, front, unrounded	idée	ide	idea
o	half close, back, rounded	jaune	ʒon	yellow
ɔ	half open, back, rounded	objet	ɔbzɛ	object
ø	half close, front rounded	feu	fø	fire
œ	half open, front, rounded	fleuve	flœv	river
u	close, back, rounded	rouge	ruʒ	red
y	close, front, rounded	rue	ry	street
ã	open, front, unrounded nasal	ancien	ãsjẽ	old
ẽ	half open, front, unrounded,	matin	matẽ	morning
õ	half open, back, rounded, nasal	Oncle	õkl	uncle
œ̃	half open, front, rounded, nasal	parfum	parfẽ	perfume

b. Consonants

Consonant	Description	Example	Transcription	Meaning
b	voiced, bilabial, stop	table	tabl	table
d	voiced, dental, stop	disque	disk	disk
f	voiceless, labiodental, fricative	femme	fam	Woman
g	voiced, velar, stop	légume	legym	vegetable
k	voiceless, velar, stop	cousin	kuzẽ	cousin
l	voiced, dental, lateral	libre	libr	free
m	voiced, bilabial, nasal, stop	ami	ami	friend
n	voiced, dental, nasal, stop	année	ane	year
p	voiceless, bilabial, stop	page	paʒ	page
r	Voiced, velar, fricative	riche	riʃ	rich
s	voiceless, dental, fricative	soleil	sɔlej	sun
t	voiceless, dental, stop	thèse	tɛz	thesis
v	voiced, labiodental, fricative	vite	vit	fast
z	voiced, dental, fricative	maison	mɛzɔ̃	home
ʃ	voiceless, palato-alveolar,	chaud	ʃo	hot
ʒ	voiced, palato-alveolar fricative	pigeon	piʒɔ̃	pigeon
ɲ	voiced, palatal, nasal, stop	agneau	aɲo	Lamb
ŋ	voiced, velar, nasal, stop	parking	parkiŋ	parking car
ɥ	voiced, bilabial, glide	minuit	minɥi	midnight
j	voiced, palatal, glide	cahier	kaje	notebook
w	voiced, bilabial, velar, glide	oui	wi	yes

2. Standard English

a. Simple Vowels

Vowel	Description	Example	Transcription
ɪ	close, front, unrounded	busy	bɪzɪ
e	half close, front, unrounded	leopard	'lepəd
æ	half open, front, unrounded	have	hæv
ʌ	open, central, unrounded, short	above	ə'bʌv
ɒ	open, back, rounded	because	bɪ'kɒz
ʊ	close, back, rounded	book	bʊk
ə	half close, central, unrounded	thorough	'θʌrə
i:	close, front, unrounded, long	machine	mə'ʃi:n
ɜ:	half close, central, unrounded, long	bird	bɜ:d
ɑ:	open, back, unrounded, long	fast	fɑ:st
ɔ:	open, back, rounded, long	cause	kɔz
u:	close, back, rounded, long	beauty	'bju:ti

b. Diphthongs

Diphthong	Example	Transcription
ɪə	theory	'θiəri
eə	prayer	preə
ʊə	cure	kjʊə
eɪ	day	deɪ
aɪ	either	'eɪðə
ɔɪ	noise	nɔɪz
əʊ	boat	bəʊt
aʊ	now	naʊ

c. Triphthongs

Diphthong	Example	Transcription
eɪə	layer	'leɪə
aɪə	fire	'faɪə
ɔɪə	employer	ɪm'plɔɪə
əʊə	follower	'fɒləʊə
aʊə	power	'paʊə

d. Consonants

Consonant	Description	Example	Transcription
b	voiced, bilabial, stop	bell	bel
d	voiced, alveolar, stop	lady	'leɪdɪ
f	voiceless, labiodentals, fricative	phase	feɪz
g	voiced, velar, stop	great	greɪt
k	voiceless, velar, stop	kind	kaɪnd
l	voiced, alveolar, lateral	alone	ə'ləʊn
m	voiced, bilabial, nasal	name	neɪm
n	voiced, alveolar, nasal	sun	sʌn
ŋ	voiced, velar, nasal	sing	sɪŋ
p	voiceless, bilabial, stop	apple	'æpl
s	voiceless, alveolar, fricative	assume	ə'sju:m
t	voiceless, alveolar, stop	attract	ə'trʌkt
v	voiced, labiodental, fricative	veil	veɪl
z	voiced, alveolar, fricative	zoom	zu:m
ʃ	voiceless, palato-alveolar,	shine	ʃaɪn
ʒ	voiced, palato-alveolar, fricative	measure	'meʒə
θ	Voiceless, interdental, fricative	think	θɪnk
ð	voiced, interdental, fricative	father	'fɑ:ðə
h	voiceless, glottal, fricative	behind	bɪ'hɑɪnd
tʃ	voiceless, palato-alveolar,	church	tʃɜ:tʃ
dʒ	voiced, palato-alveolar, affricate	suggest	sə'dʒest
r	voiced, alveolar, retroflex, glide	race	reɪs
j	voiced, velar, glide	young	jʌŋ
w	voiced, bilabial, glide	queen	kwi:n

Table of Content

INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER I: Pronunciation and Language Transfer	5
Introduction	5
1.1. French and English in Algeria	6
1.1. 1.French	6
1.1. 2.English	10
Conclusion	14
1.2. Contrastive Analysis, Error Analysis and Transfer Theory	15
1.2.1. Contrastive Analysis	15
1.2.1.1. Objectives of Contrastive Analysis	16
1.2.1.2. Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis	18
1.2.1.3. Criticism to CA	21
1.2.2. Error Analysis	23
1.2.2.1. Fossilization Vs Stabilization	24
1.2.2.2. Mistakes Vs Errors	25
1.2.2.3. Stages of EA	26
1.2.2.4. Source of Errors	27
1.2.2.5. Weaknesses of Error Analysis	30
1.2.3. Cross-Linguistic Influence	30
1.2.3.1. Definition of Transfer	31
1.2.3.2. Positive Transfer Vs Negative transfer	32
1.2.3.3. Avoidance	33
1.2.3.4. Overuse	34
1.2.3.5. Markedness Theory	34
1.2.3.6. Factors Affecting Language Transfer	35
Conclusion	36
1.3. The Sound System and Stress of French and English	36
1.3.1. Principles for Classifying Sounds	36
1.3.1.1 Vowels	37
1.3.1.2. Consonants	38
1.3.2. French	39
1.3.2.1. Simple Vowels	39
1.3.2.2. Diphthongs	41

1.3.2.3. Triphthongs	42
1.3.2.4. Consonants	42
1.3.2.5. Stress	45
1.3.2.6 The Graphemic Rules of the Sound /s/	46
1.3.3. English	46
1.3.3.1. Vowels	47
1.3.3.2. Consonants	50
1.3.3.3. Stress	53
1.3.3.4. The Graphemic Rules of the Sound /s/	54
Conclusion	56
CHAPTER II: Error Analysis	57
Introduction	57
2.1. Subjects	57
2.2. Research Tools	58
2.3. Analysis and Interpretation of Results	59
2.3.1. Performance in French and English	60
2.3.1.1. Individual Performance in the Two Tests	63
2.3.2. Degree of Achievement in French	65
2.3.2.1. Top Level	65
2.3.2.2. Intermediate Level	68
2.3.2.3. Low Level	70
2.3.3. Analysing Students' Errors	70
2.3.3.1. Analysis of Students' Errors in the French Test	71
2.3.3.2. Analysis of Students' Errors in the English Test	74
2.3.4. Discussion of the Findings of the Tests	85
2.4. Questionnaire	86
Introduction	86
2.4.1. Subjects	86
2.4.2. Description of the Questionnaire	87
2.4.3. Analysis of the Questionnaire	87
2.4.3.1. Question 1	88
2.4.3.2. Question 2	89
2.4.3.3. Question 3	91
2.4.3.4. Question 4	93
2.4.3.5. Question 5	94

2.4.3.6. Question 6	94
2.4.3.7. Question 7	95
2.4.3.8. Question 8	97
2.4.3.9. Question 9	99
2.4.3.10. Question 10	101
2.4.4. Discussion of the Findings	103
Conclusion	104
Pedagogical Implications	105
Limitations	106
CONCLUSION	107
BIBLIOGRAPHY	109
APPENDICES	

INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

In the process of learning a language, which is neither the native language (NL) nor it is the second language (L2), but rather a language which shares some features of either or both languages; learners are exposed to errors since errors are part of learning. These errors whether of competence or performance result not only from the differences, but also from the similarities. While some researches claim the importance of facilitation resulting from equivalent rules when two languages share the same rules, other researchers claim that the closer two languages are to each other, the more errors are likely to appear. Hence, errors in using language cannot be avoided.

Some assume that, in the Algerian context, good learners of English are also good learners of French. This may be due to the closeness of both languages, which facilitates the learning of the new language (English), mainly acquiring its vocabulary since many words have a Latin origin. Yet, there are areas where similarity may be problematic. One of the most problems that similarities may cause has to do with the cognate nature of some words which mislead the students in correct use of the new language. One aspect that most of the students neglect in learning the new language is the aspect of pronunciation; how the words correctly pronounced and what errors they make whenever they pronounce some words. From classroom observations, it is noticed that most students mispronounce words that include the letter 's' and the combination 'ss' mainly the words with which they are unfamiliar. For instance, the learners pronounce the following words with the sound /z/ instead of /s/: precise, concise, increase, casino... and the following words with /s/ instead of /z/: dessert, dissolve...

Aim of the Study

This dissertation aims at investigating the nature of the common errors that appear in most students' pronunciation. The study will shed light on the phenomenon of language transfer and more precisely the influence of French graphemic rules on the pronunciation of third year English students. The focus will be on one rule which governs the pronunciation of /z/ and /s/ sounds and which results in recurrent errors of pronunciation.

Research Questions

Our research aims at addressing the following questions:

1-Does the mastery of French graphemic rules facilitate learners' pronunciation of words containing the letter 's' and the combination 'ss' in English?

2-What type of words is difficult and what are the words containing the letter 's' and the geminate 'ss' are most difficult to learners in pronunciation?

3-What are the strategies used by students in pronouncing words that include the letter 's' and the combination 'ss' in English they are not familiar with?

4 -To what extent does French interfere in the students' pronunciation of the words that include the letters 's' and 'ss' in English?

5 - Is the teachers' strategy in teaching phonetics adequate for their learners?

Hypothesis

Based on the assumption that when students learn a new language, they tend to transfer what they have learned in their first or previous language, we hypothesize that if

Algerian learners of English encounter words containing the letter 's' or the combination 'ss' with which they are not familiar, they will made errors in pronouncing these words as a result of the interference of the French graphemic rules.

Means of Research

In order to confirm or to infirm the hypothesis of this research, that is, Algerian students of English mispronounce some words that include the letters 's' and 'ss', especially those which they are not familiar with because of their tendency to transfer from French by applying its graphemic rules. In other words, the extent to which French influences the pronunciation of Algerian students of English. It will be more appropriate to use a test. The test will be administered to a sample of 3rd Year LMD students at the Department of English. It consists of two tests: One in French and the other in English. Each test consists of two sections. In section one the students will be asked to transcribe the underline words in the sentences, in section two, they will be asked to classify some words in one of the columns to group the errors that most students make in pronouncing the words that include the letter 's' as well as the combination 'ss'. To verify the nature of these common errors and whether these errors are due only to language interference a formal questionnaire will be administered to the same sample of students to clarify the real reasons behind such deviation.

Structure of the Study

The research dissertation is divided into two chapters. The first chapter is devoted to the review of literature, whereas the second chapter is devoted to the practical part of this research. In chapter one, we will deal with three parts. The first part reviews the status of French and English in Algeria and their role in the Algeria Educational system. The second part deals with the contribution of the notions: Contrastive analysis in both its strong and weak

version, Error Analysis, Fossilization, Transfer Theory and Markedness Theory is undertaken. Whereas, the third part is reserved to the study of the sound systems of both French and English, a brief description with the corresponding spelling that represents each of the two languages, with more focus on the graphemic rules of the French letter 's' and comparing them with those of English if found to stand for the reality of the phenomenon of interference.

The second chapter is concerned with the analysis and interpretation of the data generated by the tests given to the students and the analysis and interpretation of the questionnaire devoted to the explanations of the nature of errors made by the students in the tests. Finally, some pedagogical implications are suggested, which we think will help the students as well as the teachers.

CHAPTER I

Pronunciation and Language Transfer

Introduction

The main purpose in this research is to investigate the nature of some errors that appear in the pronunciation of a sample of Algerian learners of English and whether they are due to transfer from French or due to another factor. It is important then to know first, the status of both languages in Algeria as well as the role French and English play in the Algerian educational system, starting by French since it is the language which is supposed to have an influence on the learners' pronunciation. After stating the two languages, we will review some approaches that serve the purpose of this research; Contrastive analysis with its strong and weak versions as well error analysis will be then undertaken. The focus will be on the concept 'transfer' and its role from the two perspectives, distinguishing it from the term 'interference'. Other notions such as fossilization, markedness and avoidance are also of quite importance in this research in determining the nature of some errors. Since the research investigates the errors that appear at most students' speech (that is at the phonological level) mainly because of the influence of French, it will be important to describe the sound inventory of both languages, to draw out the relation between the graphemes and phonemes. This comparison will clarify the relation between the spelling(s) of a given sound and the way it is pronounced. More focus will be lay on the graphemic rules that govern the pronunciation of words containing the letters 's' and 'ss'. The American variety of English is another linguistic system that affects the phonological interlanguage of the learners, yet this effect can be considered minor compared to the two linguistic systems. For this reason, we will not deal with its sound system.

1.1. French and English in Algeria

1.1.1. French

Because of its strategic geographical situation, Algeria was colonized by France in the period between 1830 and 1962, during these years of colonization, Arabic was banned from school. The French colonization tried to impose their French language to people by introducing it as an official language and giving it a prominent educational system. For this reason, French was the first language and the medium of instruction. It was also the language of business, administration and government, as Djete (1992:17) notes that “The French imposed a system of direct administration seized control of the educational system and undertook to displace Arabic”. After the independence in 1962, Arabic became the official and national language, while French was considered as the first Foreign language. It is through the process of Arabization that political leaders made their efforts to bring Arabic back to its original status. In fact, they succeeded to some extent in their purpose, as Arabic dominated the educational system, but not to the extent that may lead French to be a neglected language. In 1990, the main subjects in the baccalaureate exam were in Arabic. At the university level, very few subjects were still taught in French such as biology due to the lack of teachers trained in Arabic. Yet, this cannot prevent us from saying that French remains dominant as a First Foreign Language and even such a powerful second language that it is still used by the administration and many educated people.

Nowadays, French retrieves some of its power as it is taught in the educational system at the different levels. Children are usually taught French in formal setting starting from their 4th year of the primary school; however, this is not their first contact with the language. For historical reasons based only on colonization and its effects, children are already familiar with

French; family interaction especially the speech of aged members who were in the period of colonization affects their children's speech and use of words. TV programs; children's ones, make them familiar with the French language, hence, being bilinguals. One of the many reasons of people becoming bilingual is because colonization has imposed another language upon them (Djete, 1992).

French is introduced in the Algerian school system in the 4th year of fundamental schooling. In the first 3 years, pupils have 5 hours per week. The learners can have an extra hour per week devoted to remedial work in the 6^eAF¹. Then, in the following 3 years in the middle school; they have 6 hours per week as illustrated in table 1.

	Primary School			Middle School		
Year of Study	4 ^e AP	5 ^e AP	6 ^e AP	7 ^e AM	8 ^e AM	9 ^e AM
Hours (per Week)	05	05	05	06	06	06
Hours (per Year)	180	180	180	216	216	216

Table 1: French in the Fundamental School

The educational system that Algeria applied starting from 2005 and which is the current one is somehow different. It differs in the year pupils are likely to start being introduced to the French language in the fundamental school and the number of years for its study as well as the time allocated per week for that purpose. Pupils are supposed to be introduced to French from their 3rd year in the primary school and study it for 4 hours per week. In the four years of the middle school, they are supposed to have 5 hours per week as

¹ AF (Année Fondamentale) refers to the first year in fundamental schooling which consists of two levels; primary level, referred to AP (Année Primaire) and intermediate level referred to AM (Année Moyenne).

illustrated in table2.Extra hours devoted to make up sessions are added mainly for pupils in the last year

	Primary School			Middle School			
Year of Study	3 ^e AP	4 ^e AP	5 ^e AP	1 ^e AM	2 ^e AM	3 ^e AM	4 ^e AM
Hours (per Week)	04	04	04	05	05	05	05
Hours (per Year)	124	124	124	180	180	180	180

Table 2: French in the Fundamental School under the New System

At the Secondary level, the time table varies depending on the different branches (streams). In the 1st year, pupils are divided into 3 streams: scientific, literary and technological. The number of hours allowed varies in the 3 streams as table 3 shows:

Streams	Hours (per week)	Hours (per Year)
Literary	05	180
Scientific	03	108
Technological	03	108

Table 3: French at the Secondary School (1^e AS)

For the following two years, that is (2^e AS) and (3^e AS), the number of hours varies. At this level there are many specialties and each one differs in the amount of time allocated to French (table 4):

Streams	Hours (per week)	Hours (per year)
Arabic Language and Literature	04	144
Foreign Languages and Arabic	04	144
Islamic Sciences	04	144
Natural Sciences	03	108
Exact Sciences	03	108
Technology	03	108
Economy and Management	03	108
Chemistry	03	108
Electrical Engineering	03	108
Civil Engineering	03	108
Mechanical Engineering	03	108

Table 4: French at the Secondary School (2^e AS/3^e AS)

At the university level, students who like to specialize in French will have 2 systems to choose from in order to continue their studies. Those who choose the classical system which is still being introduced in few universities will have four years of instruction to get their '*Licence en Français*'. Whereas, students who choose to study under the LMD system (*Licence Master Doctorat*) have three years of instruction to get their '*Licence en Français nouveau regime*'. Those who have the opportunity to pass to the Master will have two years of both instruction and research dissertation before getting their '*Master Diplomat in French*'. The best ones are the students likely to carry on their study as doctorate students having three years to finish their research work to obtain their '*Doctorat en Français*'. In some faculties as Medicine, Biology and Computer Sciences, French is used as the medium of instruction, in others such as Sociology and Economy, French is taught as a foreign language.

1.1.2. English

Unlike French, English had nothing to do with the history of neither Algeria, nor has it any impact on the Algerian society. Therefore, it is neither used in Algeria as a medium of communication, nor as a medium of instruction outside the classroom. It can be considered as a 'true' Foreign Language (FL). Wilkins (1972:122) states "A foreign language situation is one in which the target language is not the mother tongue of any group within the country where it is being learned and has no internal communication either". Harmer (2007:19) states that a distinction can be made between English as a Second Language (ESL) and English as a Foreign Language (EFL). EFL refers to the situations where students learn English for the sake of communication with other English speakers in the world, mainly as tourists or business people. Students often learn EFL in their own country, sometimes on short courses in Britain, USA, etc. ESL students, on the other hand, are described as usually living in a foreign country (Britain, USA) and who are in need to learn the target language (English) to survive and prosper in that community. Ellis (2008) notes that in the case of second language acquisition, "the language plays an institutional and social role in the community (1.e. function as a recognized means of communication among members who speak some other language as their mother tongue)" (2008:6). In contrast, foreign language learning "takes place in settings where language plays no major role in the community and is primarily learnt in the classroom" (Ellis, 2008:6). This means that learners have little, if not, no opportunity to express themselves using the language outside the classroom.

Because of its status as an international, dominant language in the world, English is introduced in the Algerian educational system in order to facilitate communication with the world outside to follow all the developments in modern science and technology reported in English Language. It was then necessary to teach English in the Algerian school system to be

a significant tool in modern life. Recently, Algeria has become aware of the importance English has in the world. That's why it has opened training schools specialized in preparing teachers of TEFL. The problem is the lack of authentic material that helps them transmit English culture to those who are supposed to teach English.

Teaching English in Algeria improved somewhat by the end of the 1990's. It necessitated a lot of pedagogical means such as textbooks and helping teachers in different aspects when teaching English was marked by two different teaching/learning situations: English as a first foreign language (EFL1) and English as a second foreign language (EFL2). In the situation of (EFL1) English is introduced in the fourth year of the primary school; pupils have five sessions per week from the fourth year of the primary school to the first year in the middle school. In the 8^eAF pupils have four hours, whereas the 9^eAF, they have six hours per week (table 5).

	Primary School			Intermediate School		
Year of Study	4	5	6	7	8	9
Hours (per week)	05	05	05	05	04	06
Hours (per year)	180	180	180	180	144	216

Table 5: EFL1 in the Fundamental School

EFL2 teaching/learning has been the situation since 1985. English has been regarded a second foreign language after French. It is introduced in the (8^eAF) when learners are at the age of fourteen. Pupils have 4 sessions per week in this year. In (9^e AF), pupils have 5 hours as table 6 shows. An additional hour per week is sometimes taken to prepare the pupil for the exams.

Middle School			
Year of Study	7	8	9
Hours (per week)		04	05
Hours (per year)		144	180

Table 6: EFL2 in the Intermediate School

Starting from 2005, the school system underwent some changes; pupils have much more hours of English. They start learning English from their (1^eAM) for four years at the middle school and they have three hours per week for the four years as table 7 below shows.

Middle School				
Year of Study	1^e AM	2^e AM	3^e AM	4^e AM
Hours (per Week)	04	04	04	04
Hours (per Year)	144	144	144	144

Table 7: English in the Middle School under the New System

At the secondary level, the time table for teaching English varies according to the stream and the year of study. In (1^eAS), the number of hours varies from two to three: two hours for scientific and technological streams and three hours for literary streams (table 8).

Streams	Hours (per Week)	Hours (per Year)
Literary	03	108
Scientific	02	72
Technological	02	72

Table 8: English at the Secondary School in 1^e AS

In the following years, that is (2^eAS) and (3^eAS), the number of hours varies according to the different branches as it is shown in table 9.

Streams	Hours (per Week)	Hours (per Year)
Arabic Language and literature	04	144
Foreign Languages and Arabic	03	108
Islamic Sciences	03	108
Natural Sciences	03	108
Exact Sciences	03	108
Technology	03	108
Economy and Management	03	108
Chemistry	02	72
Electrical Engineering	02	72
Civil Engineering	02	72
Mechanical Engineering	02	72

Table 9: English at the Secondary School (2^e AS/3^e AS)

English is taught in the different streams because it is a necessary, useful and practical element that will enable learners to meet the future jobs or study requirements. In economy for example, it is worth mentioning that SONATRACH² firm has been an important and constant client of Language Solutions since 1997.

² Sonatrach: Société Nationale pour la Recherche, la Production, le Transport, la Transformation, et la Commercialisation des Hydrocarbures s.p.a.) is the largest Algerian government-owned company formed to exploit the hydrocarbon resources of the country company and the 11th largest oil consortium in the world.

At the university, students who wish to specialize in English have to choose between 2 systems. One is the classical system, which is still adopted in few universities, where students get their 'Licence d'anglais' which is equivalent to the bachelor's degree in English after four years of study. The other is a new system called 'LMD system' (*Licence Master Doctorat*) in which students have two years of instruction and then they choose in the third academic year between three options: Applied Language Studies, Language Sciences and Literature and Civilizations to get their '*licence d'anglais nouveau regime*'. Those who have the opportunity to pass to the Master will have two years of study and a dissertation to write before getting their '*Master Diplomat in English*'. The few students who pass to the Doctorate will have three years to finish their thesis and then are awarded '*Doctorat d'anglais*'. For the others who study in other branches, English is taught as a subject for specific purposes; learning English is related to a field of study and consist of studying the terminology of that field such as biology or economy.

Conclusion

Both French and English play a significant role in the Algerian school system in the sense that the two languages are necessary and useful for achieving various purposes, meeting future needs and job requirements. French is the language which is likely to be dominant and may influences the performance of learners in English because it is the 1st foreign language to be taught as it is introduced to pupils five years before English. We will deal with the sound system of both languages as a necessary step in order to understand the influence of French on the English of the students of our sample at the level of graphemics, in one part after stating the concept transfer as one mean from different approaches such as contrastive analysis and error analysis in the next part.

1.2. Contrastive Analysis, Error Analysis and Transfer Theory

1.2.1. Contrastive Analysis

Contrastive Analysis is generally defined as “a systematic comparison of specific linguistic characteristics of two or more languages” (James 1980:5). It is a branch of linguistics which seeks to compare the sounds, grammars and the vocabulary of two languages with the aim of describing the similar and different points between them. CA which aims at predicting difficulties in the target language emerged in Europe in the fifties and flourished in America by the sixties. Until the late sixties, the prominent theory that was used in the study of L2 learning was the behaviouristic theory. This theory suggests that learning is a question of habit formation and, hence, the errors are the result of the influence of the mother tongue habits. The notions of transfer and interference were then borrowed from psychological learning and applied to second language learning. For this reason, more attention was given to the comparison between the learners’ NL and the TL in order to predict and explain the errors made by the learners. CA started in the centre of Europe with the works of Fries (1945), Weinreich (1953) then it moved to the USA represented by the work of Lado (1957). CA was founded on the assumption that a learner of second language has the tendency to transfer the lexical, syntactic and phonological features of his first language (L1) to the new language. The key notion was ‘transfer’. Lado (1957:2) writes “Individuals tend to transfer the forms and meanings and the distributions of forms and meanings of their native language and culture to the foreign language and culture, both productively when attempting to speak the language and to act in the culture and receptively when attempting to grasp and understand the language and the culture as practiced by natives”. The Chomskyan revolution in linguistics gave a fresh movement to CA, not only by allowing the comparisons between languages to be more

precise, but also it gave what seemed to be a more solid ground and theoretical foundation on the claim that there exist some language universals.

1.2.1.1. Objectives of Contrastive Analysis

A number of fundamental and applied objectives have been traditionally attributed to CA to help teachers in their tasks of teaching a FL. These objectives which we will discuss in turn are: a) providing insights into similarities and differences by establishing some universals between the languages. b) Predicting and explaining the problem in L2 learning. c) Developing course materials for language teaching.

Firstly, CA aimed at the very beginning to study language families, trying to classify them within one language, therefore (French and Spanish were considered Latin languages, while English, German and Dutch were considered as Germanic ones). The rise of the Prague School gave more importance to the systematic analysis of language on a synchronic basis. Many languages were compared to establish universals and language specific characteristics. These comparisons aimed at describing the similarities and differences between the structures of languages. That is to say, more differences lead to difficulties and problems, while more similarities lead to easiness and facilitation. Lado (1957, 2) states that: “we assume that the student who comes into contact with a foreign language will find some features of it quite easy and others extremely difficult. Those elements which are similar to his native language will be simple for him, and those elements that are different will be difficult. The teacher who makes a comparison of the foreign language with the native language for the students will know better what the real learning problems are and can better provide for teaching them”. This view was strongly supported by Banthy, Trager and Waddle (1966:37) who state “the change that has to take place in the language behaviour of a FL student can be equated with the

differences between the structures of the student's NL and that of the TL...the difference between two languages can be established by contrasting two linguistic analyses...what the student has to learn equals the sum of the differences established by Contrastive Analysis". There was a belief that a more effective pedagogy would result if similarities and differences between the NL and TL were carefully identified. The comparison of the sounds was valid and significant because the sound system of languages at that time was limited.

Secondly, CA is aimed at predicting and diagnosing the problems in L2 learning. CA is perceived as an approach that can predict the difficulties that the learner will face in L2. Concerning this point, Oller (1971:79) states that CA is "... a device to predicting points of difficulty and some of the errors that learners will make". Weinreich (1953, cited in Cook, 1993:8) states how the two language systems can be acquired in the mind of the same individual. He uses the concept 'interference' and defines it as "those instances of deviation from the norms of either language which occur in the speech of bilinguals as a result of their familiarity with more than one language" (Weinreich, 1953:1); he further claims "the greater the difference between two systems, the greater is the learning problems and potential area of interferences". According to him, differences lead to difficulties (errors) as a result of the interference of the native language. Lado (1957) agrees with the view of Weinreich, but he makes the following reservation "the list of problems resulting from the comparison between the foreign language and the native language must be considered a list of hypothetical problems until final validations achieved by checking it against the actual speech of students". In fact, it was not until 1968 when Alatas, who states "we should validate but besides we should check out hypothesis difficulties", took the actual production of students and compared them with the hypothetical list of the predicted problems. CA also aims at explaining the errors; this objective is attributed only to the weak version of CA, but not to its strong version.

CA aims at helping the teacher to use this knowledge for explaining the errors made by L2 learners. James (1980:148) claims that "An important [element] of the teacher's role as monitor and assessor of the learner's performance is to know why certain errors are committed. It is on the basis of such diagnostic knowledge that the teacher organizes feedback to the learner and remedial work".

Thirdly, CA aims at developing course material for language teaching, (Fries (1945: 9) states that "the most efficient materials in teaching are those based upon the scientific description of the language to be learned carefully compared with a parallel description of the native language of the learner. Lado supports this idea emphasizing on the predicted problems in the instructional materials". James (1980:145) writes that CA has applications in predicting and diagnosing a proportion of L2 errors committed by learners with a common L1, and in the design of testing instruments of such learners.

The most universal definition that gathers all the objectives of CA is given by Lehiste (1988). He claims that CA is "a comparison of structures of language A and language B, for the purpose of predicting errors made by learners of language B and designing teaching materials that will take account of all the anticipated errors".

1.2.1.2. Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis

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

1. Learning is just as question of habit formation.
2. The comparison between the NL and TL will provide the similarities and differences between the two languages.

3. The habits of the NL may hinder the learners in the target language.
4. The differences between languages create problems while similarities will lead to easiness.
5. On the basis of differences, CA may predict the errors that students will make.

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

a. The Strong Version

The Strong Version or priori version claims that the difficulties, hence the errors that students will make can be predicted by contrasting the two languages. Richards (1974:60) argues that "the strong version states that the learner's behaviour is predictable on the basis of a comparison of SL and TL". The strong version of CA has been made with two assumptions; the first is that the differences between languages lead to errors caused by interference. Lightbown & Spada (2006: 78-79) notes that "errors were often assumed to be the result of [negative] transfer from the learner's native language". The second assumption is that where

there are similarities between the native language and the target language, the learner is likely to find easiness and facilitation in learning. Lado (1957: 1) argues that "... in the comparison between native and foreign languages lies the key to ease of difficulty in foreign language learning". In the preface of his famous book, Lado states "the plan of this book rests on the assumption that we can predict and describe the patterns that will cause difficulty in learning, and those that will not cause difficulty, by comparing systematically the language and the culture to be learned with the native language and culture of the student." (1957: vii).

The strong version of the CAH is clearly stated by Lee (1968, cited in Johnson, 2008: 180) who claims that the sole cause of difficulty and error in FL learning is the interference that comes from the NL. In addition, he argues that the difficulties are mainly due to the differences between the two languages, and the greater these differences are, the more the learners will face difficulties. The strong version which was supported by many proponents, was, however criticised by others for its prediction power. Wardhaugh (1970, cited in Brown, 2007: 250-251) claims that the strong version is unrealistic and impracticable because it oversimplifies the process of predicting difficulty. Wardhaugh states that "at the very least, this [strong] version demands of linguistics that they have available a set of linguistic universals within a comprehensive linguistic theory which deals adequately with syntax." (1970: 125). This is what made him suggest another version, termed as weak version of CAH.

b. The Weak Version

Unlike the strong version, the weak version or the posteriori version does not require a prediction of the difficulties, but it suggests a use of linguistic knowledge to explain actually committed errors. The researchers start with the learner's errors, explaining a subset of them by pointing to the similarities and differences between languages. The weak version was

supported by many linguists such as Richards (1974:61) who claims that “the weak claim of CA is that of accounting for learner behaviour”. Wardhaugh claims that the weak version does not require the prediction of the difficulty, but it demands the explanation of similarities and differences between the two language systems after observing the interference phenomenon. Therefore, the weak version has an explanatory power. Wardhaugh (1970) considers the weak version of CA as one part of error analysis and argues that a great number of contrastive analysts agree with the weak version, but not with the strong one. He states that the weak version has been proved to be helpful in the field of L2/FL which makes it far from critics or attacks.

1.2.1.3. Criticism to CA

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

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

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

Thirdly, CA is criticised for predicting problems which do not occur (Whitman & Jackson 1972) and, besides, it also fails to spot sources of errors outside learners' L1 (Dulay & Burt 1974). This idea is supported by Baird (1967) who criticises the predictive power of CA arguing that CA' fails to predict problems in the pronunciation of some sounds in English by the Indian people. Predictions based on this approach are not reliable since they are based on theoretical assumptions not practical ones (Makey, 1966). According to James (1980) the weak version of CA is 'impractical'.

Fourthly, CA does not fully count for the description of errors that learners make. There are many errors that learners commit but which are not predictable by CA. Such errors are not a result of any interference from the learners' native language, nor are they caused by the differences between the native and the target language systems. For this reason, the assumption that all errors are due to interference has been strongly criticized. Makey (1966: 201) claims that "the principle that all the mistakes of the language learner are due to the makeup of his native language is false". He argues that teachers' predictions of their learners' errors which are based on their own experience are more reliable than predictions based on CA. Some studies have been carried out to test the reliability of the predictions of a CA between two languages. The results have demonstrated that the way an error was classified, e.g. due to interference or not, differed from one study to another (Larsen-Freeman, & Long,

1991: 56). In addition, a CA theory cannot specify the level at which a given error is committed; whether it is at the receptive level or at the productive one. That is, by relying on CA, the teacher cannot know whether the learners have committed a given error because they do not know the rule or the learners know the rule but they could not apply it. Moreover, difficulty might result from the psychological state of the learner while he is performing a given TL task. If the learner believes that a given element is difficult, s/he will find it so, and vice versa.

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

1.2.2. Error Analysis

The failure of CA to account for many learners' errors led to the adoption of the EA approach as a tool for investigating how the learners acquire an L2. EA has a much shorter history, dating from the 1960s and early 1970s. Unlike CA, EA sees learner's errors positively i.e. it gives much attention to the comprehension of L2 acquisition (James 1998, cited in Brown, 2005: 257). Corder (1967: 167) reports "A learner's errors... are in [that] they provide to the researcher evidence of how language is learned or acquired, what strategies and procedures the learner is employing in the discovery of language." That is to say, the mistakes which learners commit should not be overlooked, but they should be investigated and analyzed in order to find clues of the mechanisms that contribute in the emergence of errors. In these lines, we use the terms errors and mistakes interchangeably, but, in EA, they conventionally

differ. Corder (1974, cited in Di, 2005: 13) reports that EA has two objectives: a theoretical objective and an applied one. The theoretical objective is to “elucidate what and how a learner learns when he studies a second language”, while the applied one is to enable the learner “to learn more efficiently by exploiting our knowledge of his dialect for pedagogical purposes”.

The EA approach aims at identifying and describing the actual errors made by the learners in their interlanguage system, and then comparing them with the TL system. The term interlanguage, which is the intermediate system that is neither the NL, nor the TL, but rather a system which includes some features of both, was introduced by Selinker (1972) to refer to the learner’s developing knowledge. Corder (1971, 151) coined the terms “idiosyncrasy dialect”, and Nesmer (1971, cited in Brown, 2007:256) used the term “approximate system”. Selinker (1972) used the term ‘fossilization’ to refer to the fact that some features in learners may stop developing; he gives the following definition to fossilizable linguistic phenomena: they “are linguistic items, rules and sub systems which speakers of a particular NL will tend to keep in their interlanguage to a particular TL, no matter what the age of the learner or the amount of explanation and instruction he receives in the NL” (1972, cited in Larsen-Freeman & Long, 1991: 215). For him these fossilizable structures are the well known errors.

1.2.2.1. Fossilization Vs Stabilization

A language learner might continue to face a problem despite the fact that he has learned it well. This is called fossilization: “the relative permanent incorporation of incorrect linguistic forms into a person’s second language competence has been referred to as fossilization” (Brown: 2007: 270). Fossilization is a natural stage in language learning and need not be considered illness-like, unlike stabilization, which does not leave the possibility

for progress open. Long (2003: 251) states “the more relevant object study for researchers becomes stabilization, not fossilization.” (ibid: 270).

Consistency is one characteristic of fossilization. That is fossilization is integrated in the learning process and its principles: need, motivation, reinforcement, self-determination and others (ibid: 270-271). Vigil and Oller (1976) claim that, with regard to information transmission between learners and their audience in terms of *negative* and *positive affective* (encoded in gestures, facial expressions, tone...) and *cognitive feedback* (linguistic tools: sound, phrase, discourse...)(ibid: 271).

1.2.2.2. Mistakes Vs Errors

Although these terms can be linguistically considered synonyms, from an EA approach they differ.

a. Mistakes

They are considered as a failure to use appropriately what is already known. They might have the form of hesitations, slips of the tongue, random ungrammaticalities, and other performance lapses (Brown: 2007, 257). Such lapses are shared by all people whether native speakers of L2 learners. Mistakes are not considered as signs of deficiency in competence, because they are self-corrected.

b. Errors

They differ from mistakes in that they are “a noticeable deviation from the adult grammar of the native speaker.” In this respect, they are considered as signs of competence deficiency i.e. they show the state of learners in the L2. Corder (1967) claims that in contrast

to mistakes which are believed to be of no significance in the learning process, errors are significant to the teacher since they show him how learners progress.

It is worth mentioning here that the distinction between mistakes and errors is not always clear cut; these notions might overlap in certain cases that make the distinction between them not an easy task. Ellis (1997:17) proposed two ways through which we can distinguish between the two notions: The first is to ask the student to correct himself, if he succeeds, then it is a mistake, but if he fails, then it will be considered as an error. The second is to check if the student repeats producing the same mistake, then it will be considered an error, and if s/he sometimes uses correct forms and sometimes the wrong ones it is then a mistake.

1.2.2.3. Stages of EA

a. Identification

Corder (1971, cited in Brown, 2007: 260) provides a model for identifying erroneous utterances. In this model, Corder makes a distinction between *overt* and *covert* errors. The former are grammatically deviated at the sentence level, whereas the latter are, however, grammatical, but they make no sense with regard to the context. For instance saying *I am fine, thank you* as a reply to the answer *who are you?*

Corder suggests that the deviated sentence, if plausible should be reformulated in the target language and compared to the deviated sentence/utterance with the well-formed one in order to spot and describe the differences. In case the native language of the learner is known, then one may have recourse to translation to indicate the source language interference. (ibid: 260-262)

b. Description

Once errors are identified they have to be described. There are various categories that can be used to describe them (Lennon 1991, cited in ibid, 263):

1. Errors can be classified as ones of *addition, omission, substitution* and *ordering* of certain items.

2. Errors can be classified at different *levels*: phonology, grammar, and discourse.

3. Errors are seen as *local* or *global*. The former are just minor violation of the target rules and, hence, do not cause utterance misunderstanding. On the contrary, the latter effect the process of communication; they prevent the comprehension of the receiver.

4. Errors may also be seen from two different dimensions: *domain*, which means the linguistic *level* (from phoneme to discourse) or *extent*, which means the linguistic units that could have been used instead of the erroneous ones. For example, *a scissor*: the domain is the phrase, while the extent is the indefinite article.

c. Analysis

At this stage, the source of errors is determined by whether they are interlingual, intralingual, the context of learning or the communication strategies followed.

1.2.2.4. Source of Errors

Previously with the CA field, it was assumed that the only source of errors is the interference of the NL habits on the learning of the TL. However, EA which comes to replace CA has found that interference is not the only source of errors; there are other sources of errors that reflect the learning process of the TL. Richards (1971, cited in Di, 2005:14)

proposes a three-way classification of error, namely, *interference errors*, *intralingual errors* and *developmental errors*.

a. Interlingual Errors

Before learners become familiar with the target language, they tend to transfer rules of their native language and to accommodate them with those of the target ones. Such errors are, in other words, the result of negative transfer from the NL to the TL in, presumably, those areas where the languages clearly differ (Robinett & Schachter 1983). In such cases, if a teacher is familiar with the learner's native language, it can be very helpful to detect these sorts of mistakes (Brown: 263-264). Yet, one must not confuse this interference with the behaviouristic approach to language transfer. Interlingual errors can be found at the level of phonology, morphology and lexis. Interlingual phonological errors for instance occur due to phonic interference; a learner who has French as his L2 and English as his FL may pronounce words such as *casino* with /z/ sound in his FL instead of /s/, because of the interference of the L2 in which these words are pronounced with /z/.

b. Intralingual Errors

The intralingual errors are those originating from within the structure of a language itself. It is a transfer within the TL itself. Later on when the learner become familiar with the language system of the TL, the interlingual errors will be reduced at the expense of the intralingual ones. Complex rule-learning behaviour is typically characterized by overgeneralization, incomplete application of rules, and failure to learn conditions for rule application. Overgeneralization of one rule is a main source of this category of errors, for instance, the learner may produce an utterance like *he goed*, which indicates that the learner overuses the rule *verb+ed* for the past tense. Taylor (1975: 95) cited many examples like the

past tense of verb following *a modal* , *v -ing* on a verb following modal and so on. Like the interlingual errors, intralingual errors appear at different levels: phonology, morphology and lexis etc. Intralingual phonological errors are those caused by the false pronunciation of the TL words, for example pronouncing the word club with the vowel /œ/ instead of /ʌ/ sound.

c. Developmental Errors

This type of errors reflects the strategies the learner uses to acquire the language. These errors show that the learner, sometimes completely independent of the NL, makes false hypotheses about the target language based on limited exposure to it. Corder (1981, cited in Di, 2005:15) points out that the major justification for labelling an error as developmental comes from noting similarities to errors produced by the children who are acquiring TL as L1.

Another source of errors is the one termed by Stenson (1974, cited in *ibid*, 15) as *induced errors*. These errors may result from the classroom situation. That is, the learner might make errors because of a misleading explanation from the teacher or faulty presentation of a structure or word in the textbook.

Other researchers have identified different kinds of sources of errors. Selinker (1972, from Richards 1974: 37), for example, distinguishes five sources of errors. They are language transfer, transfer of training, strategies of second language learning, strategies of second language communication, and overgeneralization of TL linguistic material. On the other hand, Corder (1974, cited in Di, 2005:15) suggested three sources of errors (language transfer, overgeneralization or analogy, and methods or materials used in teaching).

1.2.2.5. Weaknesses of Error Analysis

Despite its significance in second and foreign language learning, EA has some weaknesses. We can sum up these limitations in the following points:

1. The distinction between errors and mistakes, as well as the one between interlingual and intralingual errors is of limited use. For instance errors may be recognized but cannot be corrected; they remain unclear.

2. Some learning phenomena cannot be explained by EA. For instance: *the avoidance phenomenon*, which is a sign of deficiency in some part of L2. Yet it does not lead to errors.

3. EA is not insightful in the learning process and L2 course. That is to say, it is restricted to things L2 learners cannot do and, hence, 'gives a static picture of L2 learning behaviour'.

4. EA concentrates on the aspects that the students fail in, while it neglects the ones they have study successfully.

1.2.3. Cross-Linguistic Influence

Cross Linguistics Influence is the term which came to be used as an equivalent to the term 'language transfer'. Kellerman and Sharwood Smith (1986: 6) states:

The fact that the early behaviouristic approach to crosslinguistic influence is now generally viewed as invalid has not prevented the whole transfer questions from re-emerging albeit in new and more complex forms.

According to them, the term 'crosslinguistic influence' is more inclusive in the sense that it allows:

... to subsume under one heading such phenomena as 'transfer', 'interference', 'borrowing', and L2-related aspects of language loss and thus permitting discussion of the similarities and differences between these phenomena.

The term cross-linguistic influence does not refer only to the influence of the NL on the L2, but also the influence of the L2 on the FL and vice-versa. Hence, it can be distinguished from the term transfer, which was introduced in the fifties and the sixties by the behaviourists' notion which sees transfer as a consequence of habit formation which differs from the native language influence. Kellerman & Sharwood Smith (1986) call to restrict the term *transfer* to “processes that lead to incorporation of elements from one language to another” (1986: 1), and consider the super ordinate term *cross-linguistic influence* more theory-neutral and, thus, more appropriate to refer to language contact phenomena such as ‘transfer, interference, avoidance, borrowing and L2-related aspects of language loss’ (ibid.). Selinker (1992: 208) states:

Language transfer is best thought of as a *cover term* for a whole class of behaviors, processes and constraints, each of which has to do with cross-linguistic influence, i.e. the influence and use of prior linguistic knowledge, usually but not exclusively native language (NL) knowledge.

1.2.3.1. Definition of Transfer

Odlin (1989: 27) provides the following definition to the term transfer “the influence resulting from similarities and differences between the target language and any other language that has been previously (and perhaps imperfectly) acquired”. We can remark that within this definition, Odlin includes both positive transfer and negative transfer as opposed to Gass

(1996, 321) who defines transfer as "...the use of the native language (or other language) information in the acquisition of an L2 (or additional language)". From the definition, Gass restricts the term transfer only to positive transfer. Ellis provides this definition for transfer: "the hypothesis that the learning of task A [L1] will affect the subsequent learning of task B [L2]". Weinreich (1953: 1 with regard to his study of bilingualism, provides another definition, which is the same as Ellis's in principle, "...those instances of deviation from the norms of either language occur in the speech of bilingualism as a result of their familiarity with more than language". The contribution of the interference as the only source of difficulty was criticized by many researchers. Dulay and Burt (1972) represents the L1=L2 hypothesis. This hypothesis rejects the theory of transfer and insists that language learning has to do with the strategies used by the learner. Moreover, it states that interference is not the only source of errors; errors are due to other sources (intralingual and developmental errors).

1.2.3.2. Positive Transfer Vs Negative transfer

a. Positive Transfer

Positive transfer or Pro-active transfer refers to the situations where language learners use any kind of prior knowledge about the L1 system and activate it in order to learn a specific element in the TL. This kind of transfer occurs when there are similarities between the L1 and the TL on the, in such a case the learners' L1 can facilitate the L2 learning (Ellis, 2008: 355). That is, the prior knowledge that the learners have about the L1 system will facilitate the leaning of the TL relying on the fact that they are similar. Ringbom (2007, cited in Ellis, 2008: 355) emphasized that "Learners, consciously or not, do not look for differences, they look for similarities wherever they can find them". For instance, any similarity at the level of vocabulary between the L1 and the TL will facilitate the learning task and reduce the time needed for learning. Dulay et al (1982: 97) state that "...*positive transfer* is the automatic use of L1 structure in L2 performance when the structures in both languages are the same,

resulting in correct utterance”. But, similarities are sometimes misleading as the case with false cognate or what is called ‘les Faux Amis’. In this point, Ellis (2008) states that similarities are evident not so much in the total absence of errors, but rather in a reduced number of errors, as well in the learning task (p.355).

b. Negative Transfer

It is defined by Osgood (1949, cited in Ellis, 1997:15) as “the affect of a specifiable interpolated activity upon the retention of previously learned activity”. It is also called interference or retro-active transfer. This kind of transfer causes problems to learners leading them to make errors. Cristopherson (1973:49) states that: “negative transfer, or interference, is transfer of skill X which impedes learning or has a negative influence on the command of a skill Y because of differences between both skills”.

Accordingly, it is clear that the first type of transfer helps learners in their attempt to learn the L2 and, we assume is due to the similarities of certain norms in the L1 and L2. However, the second type is likely to hinder the learning process and likewise it is due to the overgeneralization of certain L1 rules which do not fit L2 norms. This latter type, we guess, is likely to be one of the reasons of the confusion between the /s/ and /z/ sounds we will discuss.

Of course, this type of transfer (negative transfer) has many consequences on the learning process. Among these consequences, stated by Odlin (1989, 30) are the two concepts: avoidance (underproduction) and over-use (overproduction).

1.2.3.3. Avoidance

It is a strategy an L2 learner may use when s/he finds himself unable to use correctly one of the L2 items. Avoidance refers to the influence of the L1 on the TL; it appears neither in the facilitation nor in the production of errors but, rather in the omission of some structures that do not exist in the L1. Ellis (2008: 357) describes the phenomenon as follows:

Learners also avoid using linguistic structures which they find difficult because of differences between their native language and their target language. In such cases, the effects of the L1 are evident not in what learners do (errors), but in what they do not (omission).

For instance, Middle Eastern' learners avoid using words containing the voiceless **p** for the fear of transferring the voiced **b** they have in their mother tongue (Beghoul, 2007: 25). Schachter (1974,205) has found that Chinese and Japanese produce less errors in the relative clauses than Persian and Arabic because they have used fewer relative clauses in their writings.

Such a claim gives rise to many reactions like that of Kleinmann (1977: 93) who argues:

An individual cannot be said to be avoiding a given syntactic structure, morpheme, or lexical item, which he does not have in his linguistic repertoire, any more than he can be said to be avoiding doing anything which he is unable to do. To be able to avoid ... presupposes being able to choose not to avoid.

1.2.3.4. Overuse

Overuse or overproduction is sometimes the consequence of avoidance. A learner, who avoids using some structures in the TL, will use other structures that are not frequent (Ellis, 2008: 358). For instance, the learner who avoids using relative clauses in English will find himself obliged to use many simple sentences and connecting them with conjunctions

1.2.3.5. Markedness Theory

Eckman (1977 cited in Brown, 2007: 254) introduces a method to encounter for 'directionality of difficulty' i.e. relative difficulties that are related to universal grammar, and

which he names Markedness Differential Theory (MDT). The following quotation from Celce-Murcia and Hawkins (1985: 66) explains it clearly:

It distinguished members of a pair of related forms or structures by assuming that the marked member of a pair contains at least one more feature than the unmarked one (...). For example, in the case of English definite articles ('*a*' and '*an*'), '*an*' is the more complex or marked form (it has addition sound) and '*a*' is the unmarked form with the wider distribution.

Eckman (1977) argues that the marked item is rather more difficult to be acquired. He further adds that there is correspondence between degrees of markedness and difficulty. That is to say the more marked (having more distinctive features than the marked one) an item is the more difficult it is. If we apply this in our study, we would say that the sounds /s/ in English is more marked than in French where its use is usually governed by certain rules. In this respect, we expect that our students, who are familiar with French norms, might encounter more difficulties in recognizing its realizations in English language.

1.2.3.6. Factors Affecting Language Transfer

The following are the main factors influencing language transfer:

a. Language Level (learners' level of proficiency)

b. Prototypicality (which lexical items are prototypical).

c. Language Distance (the actual distance between the two languages 'origin of languages, which in turn determine the degree of affect).

d. Markedness (marked and unmarked forms).

e. Sociolinguistic Factors (the sociolinguistic setting of L2)

f. Developmental Factors (interaction of transfer with the strategies developed by L2).

Conclusion

The study of CA and EA as two significant approaches in the learning of L2 shows that none of the approaches is complete by itself because of the weaknesses of each approach; rather they should be viewed as complementing each other. Transfer is a useful notion that is adopted by both perspectives as one means for diagnosing the errors that are committed by the learners in the process of acquiring a L2 or FL. In the next part we will deal with the sound system of the two languages (French and English) as a major step for achieving the purpose of this work before taking the students in errors analysis.

1.3. The Sound System and Stress of French and English

1.3.1. Principles for Classifying Sounds

Generally speaking, sounds are divided into two major categories: vowels and consonants. Such a division is made according to the way the sounds are articulated. Sounds may be voiced or voiceless (sometimes referred to as 'unvoiced'). Voiced sounds occur when the vocal cords in the larynx vibrate, and this is in the case of all vowels. In the case of consonants, some are voiced, while others are voiceless. In what follows, the sounds of the two languages will be described using some principles.

1.3.1.1. Vowels

We will use the system of Cardinal Vowels the “Specific vowel qualities which are used as reference points for locating any given vowel articulation” (Carr, 2008: 24), suggested by the British phonetician Jones (1997) who was strongly influenced by the French phonetician Paul Passy to classify the English vowels on the claim that the set of Cardinal Vowels is rather similar to the vowels of educated Parisian French of the time (Roach, 2002:11). Vowels are then classified according to three dimensions:

- a. The part of the tongue in the mouth which is raised: Whether it is the front, the centre, or the back of the tongue that is raised to the palate or lowered from.

- b. The vertical distance between the upper surface part of the tongue and the palate, or as it is termed “the size of your jaw opening” (Dane, P. and Poms, L 2005:17). That is, whether the distance is close, intermedial, or far. This distance determines whether a vowel is close, half-close, half-open, or open. Some phoneticians prefer to locate half-close and half-open in one intermedial position as the distinction between some vowels is not clear, hence producing only three positions to be called high, mid and low.

- c. The shape of the lips: Whether the lips are rounded or spread. The shape of the lips determines whether the vowel is rounded or unrounded.

In some languages, such as the French one, further criterion have been added taking into account whether the vowel is oral; that is the air moves only through the oral cavity, or nasal; in such case the air escapes only through the nose.

1.3.1.2. Consonants

Five criteria are generally used by phoneticians and phonologists in the classification of consonants (Beghoul, 2007: 75), which are:

a. The state of the glottis or the vibration of the vocal cords: Whether the vocal cords vibrate or not (voiced vs. voiceless). Sometimes, they are referred to as lenis /fortis.

b. The passage of the air: Whether the air moves only through the oral cavity (oral), only through the nasal cavity (nasal), or through both of them (nasal).

c. The place of articulation: referring to the point of contact between the speech organs in the production of the sound (bilabial, labio dental, dental, alveolar, post alveolar, palatal, velar, uvular, pharyngeal, laryngeal, and glottal).

d. The manner of articulation: It refers to the way in which the air stream flows out of the oral cavity (continuant or stop with their subdivisions) and whether the articulation is consonantal or is vocalic. It is consonantal when it is with a major obstruction to the airflow, if, on the other hand, it is without a major obstacle, it is vocalic. In the latter case, the consonant may be classified as a semi-vowel, or semi-consonant in the sense that it is phonetically vowel i.e. produced without a major obstacle to the airflow, but, phonologically (functionally), consonant as it occurs at the margins of syllables, not at the centre, they are also called **approximants** (Ben Ammar, 2006:27).

e. Syllabicity: Whether the consonant may be syllabic or not, i.e. whether it may phonologically function as a vowel and be the centre of a syllable, hence it is called syllabic consonant or not since it is the vowel that generally occupies the center. The most frequent

syllabic consonant is the consonant /l/ as in the word 'middle' [mɪdl], in such case, the sound/l/ functions as a vowel occupying the center of the word.

1.3.2. French

The French sound system consists of 37 sounds: 16 vowels, 3 semi- vowels and 18 consonants. What characterizes this sound system is the presence of nasal vowels in addition to the oral vowels. Four nasal vowels make the difference between the French sound system and other languages' sound systems such that of English.

1.3.2.1. Simple Vowels

Léon, P and Léon, M (1961:5) state that among the vowels under the sound system of French, a dozen are used by the French people in communication, where the rest of vowels express regional, dialectal or individual variants. While some phoneticians claim that Standard French, commonly known as Parisian French, includes 16 simple vowels (Léon, P and Leon, M, 1961:5, Leon, P. 2007:21), some others state that there exists only 15 vowels (Delattre 1968:48, Casagrande 1984:21). The reason behind this discrepancy is the confusion created by the use of posterior /ɑ / or what was called “the anterior/a/as opposed to the posterior /ɑ/”. Some phoneticians who are taking a synchronic approach such as Delattre tend to exclude the vowels they see that they are no longer used or used as some sort of allophonic variation. As such, they find that the most confusing contrast is between the anterior /a/and the posterior/a/as in the pair cinéma /sinema/: ‘cinema’ and base /baz/ ‘base’. Delattre (1957:142) states that the posterior/a/ should be neglected, hence excluded and substituted by anterior /a/.

Since we will deal with the transcription of the words in the test, the 16 vowels will be described for the sake of exhaustiveness. Since the main concern of this research work is the

way the letter 's' is pronounced in the different word forms, i.e. when it is pronounced /s/ and when it is pronounced /z/, more attention will be paid to the graphemic rules that govern pronunciation of the letter 's' in French and to check if there exists a general rule that govern the pronunciation of the letter 's' in English. Hence, our description of all the sounds will be brief. The vowels will be classified using the symbols that are part of the International Phonetic Alphabet adopted by the International Phonetic Association both abbreviated as IPA, taking into consideration the principles we have mentioned before. We have chosen to classify the vowels in an alphabetical order, starting with simple letters and moving on to more complex letters. We will then deal with the correspondence between the spelling of one sound (its written form), and the way it is pronounced (its spoken form) taking into consideration the graphemic patterns of each vowel. Of course, some spellings occur much less regularly than others do as table 10 illustrates.

Vowel	Oral	Front	Central	Back	Close	Mid	Open	Rounded	Unrounded
ɑ	+	-	-	+	-	-	+	-	+
a	+	-	+	-	-	-	+	-	+
e	+	+	-	-	-	+	-	-	+
ɛ	+	+	-	-	-	-	+	-	+
ə	+	-	+	-	-	-	+	-	+
i	+	+	-	-	+	-	-	-	+
o	+	-	-	+	-	+	-	+	-
ɔ	+	-	-	+	-	-	+	+	-
ø	+	+	-	-	-	+	-	+	-
œ	+	+	-	-	-	-	+	+	-
u	+	-	-	+	+	-	-	+	-
y	+	+	-	-	+	-	-	+	-
ã	-	-	+	-	-	-	+	-	+
ẽ	-	+	-	-	-	-	+	-	+
õ	-	-	-	+	-	-	+	-	+
œ̃	-	+	-	-	-	-	+	+	-

Table 10: Phonetic Features of French Vowels (Beghoul, 2007:85)

Now, we will consider the different graphemes of each sound with an example for each realization classified according to whether the grapheme is initial, medial or final (table 11).

Vowels	Different Graphemes	Initial	Medial	Final
ɑ	a+s / a+z / a+ v /	âne	Las/ case/ cave/gâteau	
a	a / à / e	ami	car / femme	cobra / déjà
e	e / é / er / ed / œ	effet/ écho	généreux / phœnics	chanter/ pied
ɛ	e / è / ê / ai / aî /	aide / aîné	mèche/extreme/chaîne	balai/ mer/ juillet
ə	e / on		petit / monsieur	
i	i / î / ĩ / y / ea /	idée / île	héroïque / lycée / jean	radis
o	a / o / au / eau / ô	hall / oasis	jaune	râteau / bientôt
ɔ	o / au / u /	objet / saur	cloche	album
ø	eu / eux / eue /œu	européen / œuf	peur / vœux	yeux / queue
œ	e/ i / u/ eu /œi	œil	club / fleuve	manger
u	ou / où / oût	où	chou / goût	
y	u / û / eu		Illusion / mûr	eu
ã	an / am /en /em /ent	ancien / encre	camp / temps	absent
ẽ	in / im / aim/ ain/ ein	infintif	simple / maintenant	faim / plein
õ	on / om / ond / ont	oncle / ombre	bonjour	bond / pont
õe	un / um		emprunte	parfum

Table 11: Graphemes of French Vowels

1.3.2.2. Diphthongs

There is no evidence that there exists diphthongs in French in the sense that there is a movement or a glide from one vowel to another within a single syllable nucleus, the tendency is rather to combine the two glide consonants /j/ and /w/ with a vowel just as it is the case of the English diphthongs in the American phonetic tradition. A word like 'loi' is then transcribed as /lwa/, and a word like feuille is transcribed as /fœj/, we will deal with 10 diphthongs with their orthographical representations, illustrating each grapheme by an example (table 12).

Diphthong	Different	Initial	Medial	Final
aj	ail / aille			travail / bataille
ej	eil			pareil
ɛj	eille			abeille / oreille
œj	œil / euille	œil		feuille
uj	ouille			rouille
jɛ	ie / iè		siège	
jɛ̃	ien			bien
jø	ieu / eux			dieu / yeux
wa	oi / oy / oix / oigt	oiseau	royal	voix / doight
wɛ̃	oin			loin

Table 12: Graphemes of French Diphthongs

1.3.2.3. Triphthongs

Triphthongs are also not so evident because they include one consonant as one of the glides, 7 triphthongs are then supposed to be dealt with, as table 13 shows.

Triphthongs	Different Graphemes	Initial	Medial	Final
eje	eiller			veiller
ɛjã	eillant			malveillant
jɛj	ieille			vieille
waje	ahier / oyer			cahier/ envoyer
wajɛ	oye / oyelle			moyen / voyelle
wajɛ̃	oyau / oyeux			noyau /joyeux
ɥije	uyé			appuyé

Table 13: Graphemes of French Triphthongs

1.3.2.4. Consonants

The French sound system comprises 18 consonants in addition to 3 semi-consonants

(semi- vowels) which are /j/, /ɥ/ and /w/ .We will then classify the consonants according to the principles mentioned before in an alphabetical order.

Cons.	Voiced	Oral	Bilabial	Labio-dental	Dental	Alveolar	Palato Alveolar	Palatal	Velar	Glottal
b	+	+	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
d	+	+	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	-
f	+	+	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-
g	+	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-
k	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-
l	+	+	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	-
m	+	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
n	+	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	-
p	-	+	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
r	+	+	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	-
s	-	+	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	-
t	-	+	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	-
v	+	+	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-
z	+	+	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	-
ʃ	-	+	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-
ʒ	+	+	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-
ɲ	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	-
j	+	+	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	-
ɥ	+	+	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
w	+	+	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Table 14: Phonetic Features of French Consonants (Place of Articulation)

(Beghoul,2007:97)

Consonants	Stop	Affricate	Fricative	Lateral	Approximant	Consonantal	Syllabic
b	+	-	-	-	-	+	-
d	+	-	-	-	-	+	-
f	-	-	+	-	-	+	-
g	+	-	-	-	-	+	-
k	+	-	-	-	-	+	-
l	-	-	-	+	-	+	-
m	+	-	-	-	-	+	-
n	+	-	-	-	-	+	-
p	+	-	-	-	-	+	-
r	-	-	-	-	-	+	-
s	-	-	+	-	-	+	-
t	+	-	-	-	-	+	-
v	-	-	+	-	-	+	-
z	-	-	+	-	-	+	-
ʃ	-	-	+	-	-	+	-
ʒ	-	-	+	-	-	+	-
ɲ	+	-	-	-	-	+	-
ŋ	+	-	-	-	-	+	-
j	-	-	-	-	+	-	-
ɥ	-	-	-	-	+	-	-
w	-	-	-	-	+	-	-

Table 15: Phonetic Features of French Consonants (Manner of Articulation)

(Beghoul,2007: 98)

We will consider the different graphemes of each consonant with the possible examples of each. Of course, some consonants have much graphemes than others, yet, what we can notice is that there is a regular correspondence between the sounds and their spellings in French as table 16 illustrates.

Consonant	Different Graphemes	Initial	Median	Final
b	b / bb	bon	table / robbin	club
d	d / dd	dans	addition	lad
f	f / ff / ph	pharmacie	profound / affaire	œuf
g	g / gu / gg / gh / c	garage / ghetto	figue / second	gag
k	c / cc / qu / k / ch/	chlore / kilo	occasion / disque	lac / stock
l	l / ll	lune	hélas / alliance	football
m	m / mm	mais	ami / commencer	islam
n	n / nn	naïf	animal / antenne	amen
p	p / pp / b	page	appétit / absurde	cap
r	r / rr / rh	radio / rhyme	fourré	tour
s	s / ss / c / ç / sc / t	soleil / science	garçon/ portion	stress
t	t / tt / th	tabac / thème	attente	but
v	v / w	vite / wagon	suivre	
z	z / s / x / zz	zèbre	raison / deuxième	jazz
ʃ	ch / sch / sh	schéma	déchet	match / flash
ʒ	J / g / ge	gèant	objet / pigeon	age
ɲ	gn / ni	nièce	champagne /	
ŋ	ng			parking
j	y / i / ill / il	yoga	confiance / fille	ail
ɥ	ui			lui / minuit
w	w / ou	oui / whist		

Table 16: Graphemes of French Consonants

1.3.2.5. Stress

The accentual pattern or stress of French is considered as fixed because the stress always falls on the last syllable; expect in case where the center of the last syllable is a schwa /ə/. In such case stress may fall on the first or the second syllable. This case corresponds to the

sentence stress in English. For instance, in the word *commerçant* the stress is on the last syllable, whereas in *Un commerçant intelligent* the stress falls on the second syllable of the last word.

1.3.2.6. The graphemic Rules of the Sound /s/

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

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

1.3.3. English

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

1.3.3.1. Vowels

British English or what is commonly known as Received Pronunciation (RP) consists of 25 vowels though Gimson (1980) restricted the number to 21 vowels excluding triphthongs. All the vowels are voiced; produced without interruption of the air, and all of them are oral in the sense that the passage of the air is solely through the oral cavity. They are classified into 12 simple vowels (pure vowels), 9 diphthongs (a combination of two simple vowels) and 5 triphthongs (a combination of three simple vowels). The description will take the same criteria we have used in the description of the sound system of French. The sounds will be ranged from the simple to the most complex; the different graphemes will be in alphabetical order.

a. Simple Vowels

Based on Roach (1998) simple vowels, or as some call them **pure vowels** (Kelly: 2000, 29) or **monophthongs** (Ben Ammar, 2006:40), can be divided into 7 short vowels they are /ɪ, e, æ, ʌ, ɒ, ʊ, ə/ and 5 long vowels they are /i:, ɜ:, ɑ:, ɔ:, u:/ (table 17).

Vowel	Front	Central	Back	Close	Mid	Open	Rounded	Unrounded
ɪ	+	-	-	+	-	-	-	+
e	+	-	-	-	+	-	-	+
æ	+	-	-	-	-	+	-	+
ʌ	-	+	-	-	-	+	-	+
ɒ	-	-	+	-	-	+	+	-
ʊ	-	-	+	+	-	-	+	-
ə	-	+	-	-	+	-	-	+
i:	+	-	-	+	-	-	-	+
ɜ:	-	+	-	-	+	-	-	+
ɑ:	-	-	+	-	-	+	-	+
ɔ:	-	-	+	-	-	+	+	-
u:	-	-	+	+	-	-	+	-

Table 17: Phonetic Features of English simple Vowels (Beghoul, 2007:104)

The different graphemes of each vowel with a one example for each grapheme depending on its situation in the word; initial; medial or final is illustrated in table 18.

Vowel	Different	Initial	Medial	Final
ɪ	e / i/o/u/y/ae/ai/ay/ea	idea /	bit/women/busy	coffee/donkey/sunday
e	a/e / u / a/ ai/ ea / ee/	any/ error	set/leopard/head/bury	
æ	a/ i /ai/ al/ ea		have/meringue/ plaid	
ʌ	o / u / oe / oo /ou	one /	run/cut/ above/ hunt	
ɒ	o/ a/ e/ au/ eo/ ou/ ow/ ach	olive	swallow/rendezvous/ because/yacht	
ʊ	o /u /oo/ ou/oul		woman/ put /book/	
ə	a/ e/u/ai/au/a/aw/ ea/ eo/ ia /ie/ io/ oi/	Upon/above	balloon/camera/ocean Europe/awry/forgive	honour / thorough
i:	/i / ay/ea/ee /ie /oe /	ease	theme/machine/chief/	Quay/see
ɜ:	er/ ir/or/ ur / ere/ our		serve/ bird / worm	were/ err
ɑ:	a /al /ar/ ire/au/are	aunt/ are	fast/ half /hard	repertoire
ɔ:	a/ o / al / au /oor		chorus /cause / walk	door / tall
u:	o/ u/ au/ ew/ oe/ oo		move / june/ beauty	chew/ shoe / too

Table 18: Graphemes of English Vowels

As we can see from the table above, the English vowels are characterized by a more complex relation between the graphemes and the phonemes, each vowel can be realized by more than 5 graphemes, the vowel / ə/ for example which is mid, central, unrounded and the vowel /ɪ/ which is close, front, unrounded are realized by more than 10 graphemes. This

complexity is what makes English sounds difficult when it comes to pronouncing words that include them.

b. Diphthongs

Diphthongs are two vowel sounds that are pronounced together, making one sound; produced as a result of a glide from one vowel to another. Ben Ammar (2006: 40) referred to them as **gliding vowels**. They are categorized into: centering and closing diphthongs. Centering diphthongs are those which end with a central vowel /ə/. They are three, which are /ɪə/, /eə/ and /ʊə/. Closing diphthongs are those ending with a close vowel. They are five, which are /eɪ/, /aɪ/, /ɔɪ/, /əʊ/, /aʊ/. Now we will consider the different graphemes of each diphthong with some examples as table 19 shows.

	Diphthongs	Graphemes	Initial	Medial	Final
Centering Diphths.	ɪə	ea /eo / ia / ir /ear		theory /fierce	souvenir/clear/
	eə	a /ao/ ar /air /ayor	air	vary	mayor/there
	ʊə	u/ eu/ ue/oor/ou our /ure		rural/cruel/ soul	moor/cure/ tour
Closing Diphths.	eɪ	a /e / ae/ ai/ ao/ au/	aim /	race /vein	day
	aɪ	i /y /ai/ ei /ie / eye	ice/aisle/	type/ night/	tie /high/ buy
	ɔɪ	oi /oy /uoy	boy /oil	voice	buoy
	əʊ	o /au/ew /oa/ ou/ow / ough		bone/mauve/b oat / soul	sew/below/ though
	aʊ	au/ou/ow/owe /ough		mouse/now	

Table 19: Graphemes of English Diphthongs

c. Triphthongs

Triphthongs are the most complex vowels and are rather difficult to be pronounced and recognized. They are sounds which consist of a glide from one vowel to another, and then to a third one. They are all pronounced quickly without interruption. A triphthong starts with one of the five closing diphthongs and ends with the monophthong /ə/. Table 20 presents the different graphemes of each triphthong with some illustrating examples.

Triphthongs	Graphemes	Initial	Medial	Final
eɪə	ayer /eyer/aya		betrayal	layer / grayer
aɪə	ia/ ie /io/ ire/ iro		bias/riot/society/ irony	liar /fire/
ɔɪə	oyer/ oyou/ oya		joyous/ royalty	employer
əʊə	ower			grower/ follower
aʊə	our/ owe/ owa /auer/ owar /ower	our	vowel/nowadays/ coward/ power	hour

Table 20: Graphemes of English Triphthongs

1.3.3.2. Consonants

There are 24 consonants in the English sound system, three of which are called semi-vowels or semi-consonants. Kelly (2000: 53) called them also **approximants**. They are /r/, /j/, /w/. Consonants will be classified taking into account the principles we have set before as tables 21 and 22 show.

Cons.	Voiced	Oral	Bilabial	Labio-dental	Interdental	Alveolar	Palato Alveolar	Palatal	Velar	Glottal
b	+	+	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
d	+	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
f	-	+	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-
g	+	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-
k	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-
l	+	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
m	+	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
n	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
ŋ	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-
p	-	+	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
s	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
t	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
v	+	+	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-
z	+	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
ʃ	-	+	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-
ʒ	+	+	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-
θ	-	+	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	-
ð	+	+	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	-
h	+	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+
tʃ	-	+	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-
dʒ	+	+	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-
r	+	+	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	-
j	+	+	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	-
w	+	+	+	-	-	-	-	-	+	-

Table 21: Phonetic Features of English Consonants (Place of Articulation)

(Beghoul, 2007:113)

Consonants	Stop	Affricate	Fricative	Lateral	Approximant	Consonantal	Syllabic
b	+	-	-	-	-	+	-
d	+	-	-	-	-	+	-
f	-	+	+	-	-	+	-
g	+	-	-	-	-	+	-
k	+	-	-	-	-	+	-
l	-	-	-	+	-	+	-
m	+	-	-	-	-	+	-
n	+	-	-	-	-	+	-
ŋ	-	-	-	-	-	+	-
p	+	-	-	-	-	+	-
s	-	+	+	-	-	+	-
t	-	-	-	-	-	+	-
v	+	+	+	-	-	+	-
z	-	+	+	-	-	+	-
ʃ	-	-	+	-	-	+	-
ʒ	-	-	+	-	-	+	-
θ	+	-	+	-	-	+	-
ð	+	-	+	-	-	+	-
h	+	-	+	-	-	-	-
tʃ	-	+	-	-	-	+	-
dʒ	-	+	-	-	-	+	-
r	-	-	-	-	+	-	-
j	-	-	-	-	+	-	-
w	-	-	-	-	+	-	-

Table 22: Phonetic Features of English Consonants (Manner of Articulation)

(Beghoul, 2007:114)

Table 23 below presents the different graphemes of each consonant with some illustrations taking into account whether the grapheme is initial, medial or final.

Consonants	Different	Initial	Medial	Final
b	b / bb	bell	robbery	
d	d / dd	d own	lady	add
f	f /ff/ gh/ ph	fall / ph ase	cafe	off / rough
g	g /gg/ gh	g reat/ gh ost	baggage	dig
k	c/ k/ cc/	calm / k ind	accurate /ache	rock
l	l / ll	long	alone	ill / pool
m	m / mm	make	n ame/ comm unity	sum
n	n / nn	n ose	m anner	sun
ŋ	n-c /n-g/n- k		in come	si ng/ si nk
p	p / pp	p rice	a pple	cup
s	c /s /sc /ss	ce nt / sci ence	also / ass ume	boss
t	ed / t / tt	ta ble	at tract	hel ped
v	f /v/ ph	ve il	na vy / ste phen	
z	s /x/ z/ ss	xe rox/ zo om	wise / de ssert	
ʃ	c/s/t/ch/	sh ine	official/ reac tion/ ma chine/ con scious	fish
ʒ	g / s		be ige/ me asure	
θ	th	th ink	ba throom	tooth
ð	th/the	th ese	mo ther	with
h	h /wh	he llo/ wh ose	be hind	
tʃ	t ch tch	ch urch	N ature	ma tch
dʒ	d/g/j/dg/dj/	j ames	sol dier/ lar ger/ jud ge/ ad jective/ sugg est	
r	r/rr	ra tional	arr ange	far
j	u/y /ew	us ual/ y oung	s uit	few
w	o /u/ w/ wh	wo od/ wh at	qu een/ sw allow	

Table 23: Graphemes of French Consonants

1.3.3.3. Stress

Unlike French which has a fixed stress, English has a movable stress. Many phoneticians settle on a three-level distinction between primary stress, secondary stress, and unstressed (Kelly, 2000: 69). Stressed syllables are those which have a strong vowel as their centre, in such case the stress may fall on the first syllable as in the words *teacher*, or at the second syllable as in *above* and *concise* as it can falls on the last syllable as in *education*. Unstressed syllables are those have a weak vowel such as /ə/ as their centre as in *vowel* and *wise*. Another division can be made between the grammatical categories (noun, verb, adjective) in the case of the stress of a minority of verbs where stress generally falls on the second syllable whereas it falls on the first syllable in the case of nouns. Hence, a distinction can be made between the verb *increase* where the stress falls on the first syllable and the noun *increase* where the stress falls on the second syllable.

1.3.3.4. Graphemic Rules of the Sound /s/

Lack of correspondence between the graphemes and the phonemes in English makes it so hard to set rules that govern the pronunciation of the sounds. Unlike in French, where we can find a general rule that governs the pronunciation of the sound /s/, no general rule can be adopted for the pronunciation of this sound in English. The only general rule is that the 's' is pronounced with /s/ if it appears both at the beginning and at the end of the words. In the other cases, it depends on the word, rather than on the position of the 's', for instance the verb *use* is pronounced with /s/, while the noun *use* is pronounced with/z/. Some linguists such as Chomsky (1968), and Lilly and Viel (1977) made some attempts to set up some rules that may help the students in identifying the correct pronunciation of words that include this sound. Chomsky (1968:95) claims that the /s/ which is a voiceless, oral, alveolar, fricative, non-syllabic sound may become voiced when the preceding vowel belongs to one of the verb-forming prefixes (pre/re/de) illustrating by the words: *presume*, *preserve*, *resist*, *resemble*,

resolution, design, desire. This suggestion is helpful in recognizing the pronunciation of many words. Yet, it cannot be considered as a general rule since it does not cover all the words where the /s/ is intervocalic. Moreover, there are many words which are pronounced with the voiceless sound /s/ and not with /z/ though the 's' appear after a vowel that belongs to one of the verb-forming prefixes that we have mentioned before. Words such as *research, presuppose...* are pronounced with /s/ rather than /z/. Hence, this rule cannot be generalized. Lilly and Viel (1977:82) suggest some rules where the letter 's' is pronounced with /s/ and where it is pronounced with /z/. They set up the following:

a. The consonant 's' is pronounced with /z/ in two cases:

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

b. The consonant 's' is pronounced with /s/ in these cases:

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

Lilly and Viel (1977) have given a list that includes 30 words to be considered as an exception to the rules we have mentioned before such as *useful, increase...*

This attempt is helpful since the pronunciation of many words can be predicted using such rules. Yet, these rules cannot be applied to all the words. For instance, although the 's' appears before a syllabic consonants in the words *bison*, *nursery*, *basin*...it is pronounced with /s/, in words like the verbs *close* and *lose* for instance, though the 's' is between two vowels, it is pronounced with /z/, in addition there are many words that Lilly and Viel did not consider such as the words *houses*. In short, although there were attempts to find the suitable rules that may help learners learn the pronunciation of words that include the letter 's', there is some confusion in applying these rules to all the words because of the complexity between the graphemes and the phonemes. For this reason, words in English cannot be dealt with using general rules, but it rather needs dealing with each word on its own.

Conclusion

The description of the sound systems of French and English has highlighted some of the similar and different points between the two languages. While French and English appear to share many sounds in matter of articulation, they are different in stress and in spelling representation, that is, the relation between the spelling of one sound and the way it is pronounced. In French, the relation between the graphemes and the phonemes is more regular; whereas, this relation looks more complex in English showing high degree of irregularity in the pronunciation of sounds. This explains the existence of general rules that govern the pronunciation of one sound in French, such as the rule of the sound /s/, and the absence of such regular rules in English. For this reason, we believe that the mastery of these rules in French will affect the students' performance in English and might lead to interference.

CHAPTER II

Error Analysis

Introduction

The purpose of this analysis is to test the research hypothesis. That is: Do third year students of English mispronounce words containing the letter 's' and the combination 'ss' especially those with which they are not familiar, because of their tendency to transfer from French by applying its graphemic rules?

It is of a great importance to select subjects who serve the purpose of the research. Our focus has been then on students who know at least the way words are pronounced in French, by mastering some graphemic rules.

Since the main concern of this research is to investigate the nature of some common errors that appear at most students' pronunciation, it will be more appropriate to choose both testing and a questionnaire as research tools.

The scores obtained have been analyzed and interpreted taking into account the performance of students in both French and English. This is in order to find out whether the degree of achievement in the pronunciation of words containing the letter 's' or the combination 'ss' in French corresponds with the high degree of transfer in English.

2.1. Subjects

The population chosen for this study is a group of 3rd year LMD students at the Department of English, Mentouri University of Constantine. They have been selected from students of Applied Language Studies because it is assumed that these students have had French as their first foreign language starting from their 4th year in the primary school. It

means that they had studied French for nine years before attending the university. It is also assumed that they master the minimum rules of French lexical pronunciation notably words including the letter's' and 'ss'. We have also chosen them because they are supposed to have their BA degree at the end of this year. We believe that they have had enough input in phonetics and oral expression in the first two years to become aware of their mistakes and to improve their pronunciation. Finally, the selection of the students is based on the fact that if they succeed and pass to the first year Master's they will again deal with phonetics as they will specialize in applied language studies in contrast to those specializing in language sciences where the focus is on the strategies of teaching, or in civilization and literature where more the focus is on the study of British and American civilizations and literatures.

The test is administered to twenty students belonging to one group of thirty three students. The sample is randomly chosen: we have decided to give the test to the first twenty students from the list. The sample with which we have worked consists of 16 females and 4 males.

2.2. Research Tools

The main concern of this research is to investigate the phenomenon of transfer from French to English. That is, whether the students of English transfer the French graphemic rules whenever they come across the pronunciation of words containing the letter's' and 'ss' especially those with which they are not familiar. It is, therefore, more appropriate to use testing as a tool of research. It would have been more exhaustive and more reliable to use a full transcription test as well but because of time constraints we have sufficed with only one section where the answers are in Roman alphabet and one section in phonetic one.

Two tests are administered to the students, one in French and the other one in English. Both tests consist of two sections. In the first section, students are given ten sentences and are asked to transcribe the underlined words that include the letters 's' and 'ss'. We have been concerned only with the transcription of the letter's' and the combination'ss'. In the second section, the students are asked to classify a group of twenty words including the letters's' and 'ss' in one of two columns, one for words pronounced with the sound /s/ and one for words pronounced with the sound /z/. Concerning the test in French, the model chosen is Standard French. For the English test, the model of pronunciation chosen is Received Pronunciation as one of the academic varieties of pronunciation. Hence, we have excluded all the words that may be pronounced both /s/ and /z/ in order to avoid being confused by an unwanted variable as in the case of the word 'transitive', pronounced with /z/ in British English and as /s/ in American English. Details of both tests are in appendices....In order to know the real reasons behind the common errors made by the students; we have administered a questionnaire to the same sample of students. The questionnaire consists of ten sentences and the students are asked to mark the correct answer. (See appendix 3).

2.3. Analysis and Interpretation of the Results of the Tests

Two tests are administered to the students, one in French and the other in English. The test in both languages has been scored out of 20. Both tests consist of two sections. Each section has been scored out of 10. In the 1st section, each correct transcription of the words in the ten sentences has been marked one mark; in fact, we have decided to give one mark for each student who does answer correctly about how the letter 's' is pronounced even if he/she fails to transcribe the rest of the word. This is because our interest is in how the letter's' is pronounced rather than how the whole word is. In the second section, each correct classification from the list of 20 words has been marked only half a mark. Then we

have tried to find if there is a relation between the students' classification of words and the explanations they have given concerning the rules of pronunciation they rely on.

2.3.1. Performance in French and English

The scores achieved by students in the two tests are presented in table 24 ranking from the high marks to the low ones.

A.F: Average of Scores in French Test

A.E: Average of Scores in English Test

Scores in French from High to Low	Scores in English from High to Low
18.50	12.50
18	12
18	11.50
18	11
17.50	10.50
17.50	10
17	09
16.50	08.50
16.50	08
16,50	08
16.50	07.50
16	07.50
16	07.50
14.50	07
14	07
13.50	07
13	06.0
12.50	06
12	06
08	04
A.F=15.50	A.E=8.35

Table 24: Scores in French and English Tests from High to Low

The table shows that the performance of students in French test is better than their performance in English test as the total average of marks indicates ; 15.5 is the total average of students' marks in the French test, and 8.35 is the total average of students' marks in the English test. This can be further illustrated by the marks achieved by

individuals, where almost all students have had marks above the average ranging from 12 to 18.50, and only one student has not have had the average in the French test (only 8). However, as we can see in the table, the majority of students have not had the average in the English test; among 20 students, only 6 students have had the average with marks between 10 and 12.50 while the rest (14 students) have not had the average with marks between 4 and 9. The representation of the scores in French and English in a diagram (curve) as two variables (X and Y) gives the impression that the relationship between the two variables is very weak as the direction of the dots shows (Figure 1).

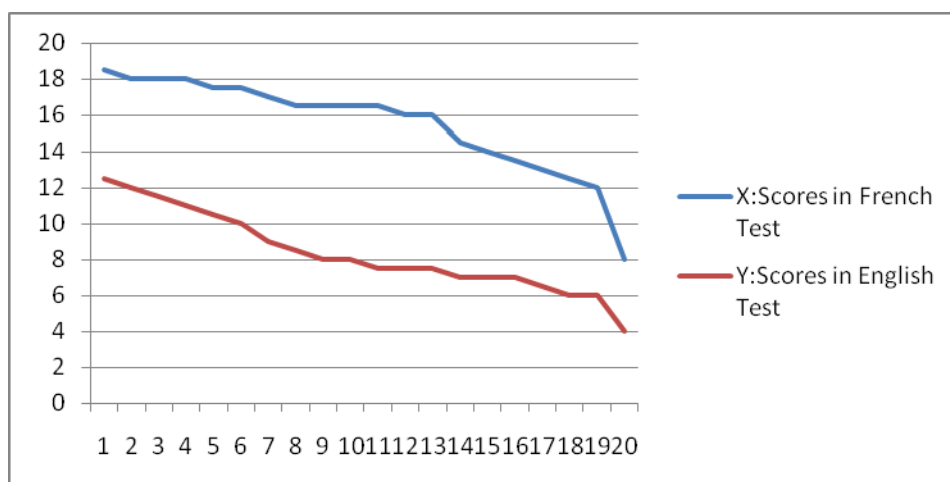


Figure 1: Correlation between French and English Scores

This may be explained by the nature of the tests given, which has been helpful for a good performance in the French test in contrast to the test in English. In other words, students were supposed to do well in the French test since they master the rules that govern the pronunciation of words including the letter ‘s’ and the combination ‘ss’ as indicated by the explanations they have given when classifying the words, whereas they have found a difficulty in the English test illustrated by the bad marks they have had. This leads us to think of the reasons that lie behind their failure in the test in English.

The performance in the French test has been totally different from that in the English one as the percentage of students who have had a mark that is equal to or above the average indicates. In the French test, 19 students among 20 have had the average with a percentage of 95%, and only 1 student (5%) has had less than the average, whereas in the English test it has been almost the opposite with 6 students (30%) having marks between 10 and 12.50, while the majority (14) with a percentage of 70% have not succeeded in getting marks above the average (from 6 to 9) and only 1 student have had 4. These percentages are shown in Figures 2 and 3.

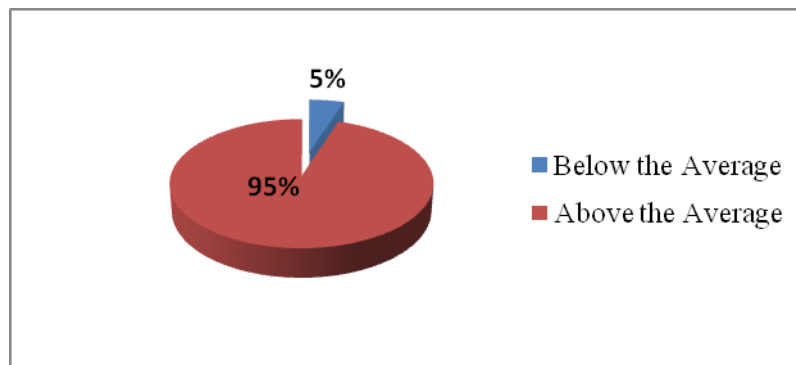


Figure 2: Students' Averages in the French Test

As we can see, the percentage of students who have had the average in the test in French is very high (95%) and only 5% of students have failed to obtain the average.

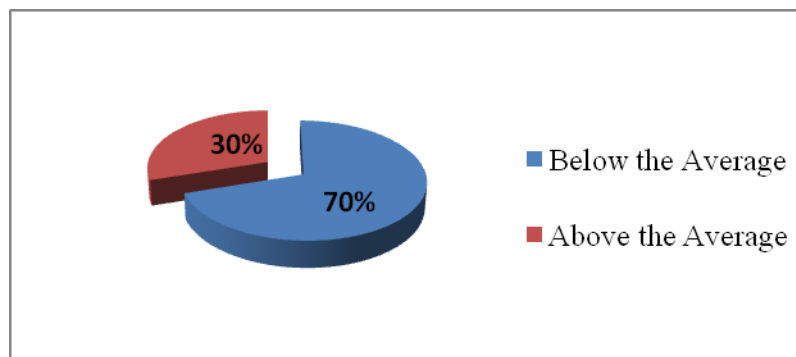


Figure 3: Students' Averages in the English Test

As we can see, the percentage of students who have not have had the average in the English test is very high (70%), whereas those without the average is (30%). This means that the percentage of students who have not have had the average is more than half which clearly shows the difference between the performance of the students in French and their performance in English.

2.3.1.1 Individual Performance in the Two Tests

If we compare now the performance of each student in the test in French with the test of English, we will find the results shown in table 25.

Scores From Highest to Lowest in the French Test	Corresponding Scores in the English Test	Difference in Performance
18.50	07	+11.50
18	06.50	+10.50
18	06	+12
18	04	+14
17.50	11	+6.50
17,50	07.50	+10
17	08.50	+10.50
16.50	08	+08.50
16.50	08	+08.50
16.50	07.50	+09
16.50	07.50	+09
16	07	+09
16	06	+10
14.50	10.50	+04
14	09	+05
13.50	11.50	+02
13	10	+03
12.50	12	+0.50
12	12.50	-0.50
08	07	+01
Average Of French Scores =15.50	Average Of English Scores =08.35	Difference in Performance= +07.15

Table 25: Correlation between French and English Tests

From Table 25, we can notice the big difference between students' performance in the test in French and their performance in the English test indicated by the high degree in the average difference in performance (+07.15). Examining the results reveals that the majority of students who have had very good marks in the French test have had very low marks in the test in English with the exception of one student who has obtained good marks in both languages. This is illustrated by the big difference in their performance (up to +14). One example is the student of the third row obtaining 18 in French and 4 in English. Students, on the other hand, who have had average marks in the test in French, have had almost the same marks in the test in English as the difference of performance shows (from -0.5 to + 5). This gives the impression that their level is approximate in the two languages as indicated by the marks of each of them (for instance, the students who have had 12.50 in English and 12 in French). Finally, we have the only student who has not had the average in French (8) as well as in English (7).

The results are shown in Figure (4)

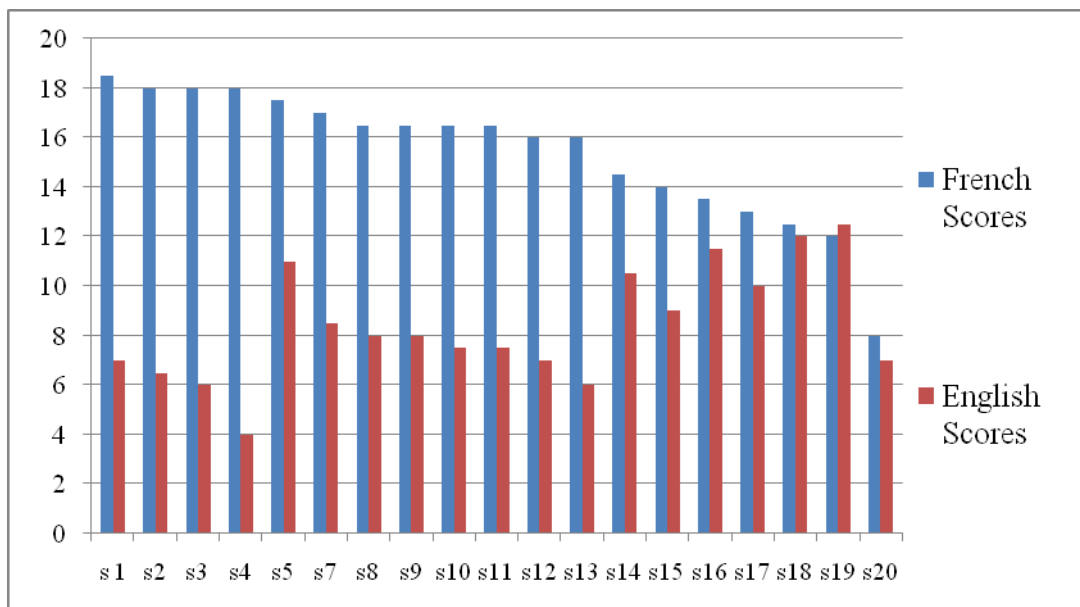


Figure 4: Results of Each Student in the Two Tests

The diagram above shows that the correlation between the best marks students have had in the French test and their achievement in the English test is very weak as illustrated by the differences in the height of the designs .We can notice then the approximation in some students scores which is more or less average shown by the same height of the designs. Finally, we can see the approximate results of the last student indicated by small approximate height.

2.3.2. Degree of Achievement in French

Students' achievement in the French test can be classified at three levels: the top level consists of students who have had marks between 16 and 18.5, the intermediate level consists of students who have had marks between 12 and 14.5 and the low level consists of students who have had marks under the average (Table26).

Levels	Number of Students	Percentage
Top level	13	65%
Intermediate Level	06	30%
Low level	01	5%
Total	20	100%

Table 26: Classification of Students' Levels in French

We can notice from the table that the highest percentage of students, which is 65%, have a top level, 30% have an intermediate level, whereas 5% of students have a low level

2.3.2.1. Top Level

This level includes students whose performance in the test in French has been perfect in comparison with their marks in English (table 28).

X: Scores in French test. Y: Scores in English test. N: Number of Students

D: Difference in Performance

X	Y	N	D
18.5	07	1	+11.50
18	06.50	1	+10.50
18	06	1	+12
18	04	1	+14
17.50	11	1	+6.50
17.50	07.50	1	+10
17	08.50	1	+9.50
16.50	08	2	+8.50
16.50	07.50	2	+9
16	07	1	+9
16	06	1	+10
X (mean)=17.11	Y (mean)=7.27	N=13	D (mean)=+9.84

Table 27: Top Level Students' Scores

It is clear from the table that the students' performance is totally different in the two languages as the D (mean) indicates (+9.84); top level students have performed very well in the French test as the average of their marks shows (17.11). However, their performance in English test is not as such. The 7.27 average indicates clearly the weak performance of the majority of students classified in that level. Only one student has had a mark that is above the average (11), while the rest have had marks between 4 and 8.50. We believe that students have done well in the French test because they master some French graphemic rules that govern the pronunciation of words including the letter 's' and the combination 'ss'. The precise explanation of the rule relied on provided by the students belonging to that level makes things clearer. Students are, then, thought to have had recourse to their previous knowledge to perform well in the French test. Students, on the other hand, have not performed well in the English test because we think they have applied what they know of the French rules. This is clearly understood from the explanations they give; that is the rules of pronunciation they trust when pronouncing words including the letter 's' and

the combination 'ss', which have been the same rules they apply in French. It is our belief, then, that students transfer from French by applying the rules of French they know to the English test. Unfortunately they have failed in that as their transfer is negative which induces their errors.

The results of the top level students can be divided into 4 categories according to the scores achieved in English, as table 28 illustrates.

Score in English	Number of Students	Percentage
≥ 10	1	7.69%
≥ 8 and <10	3	23.07%
≥ 6 and < 8	8	61.54%
< 6	1	7.69%
Total	13	100%

Table 28: Scores of Top Level Students in the English Test

The results show that the majority of students who have had perfect marks in the French test have had very bad marks in the English test; 61.54% of the students have had marks between 6 and 8. Students seem to be affected by their knowledge in French that leads them to mispronounce the words. The second category, 23.07%, is the one which includes students who have had marks between 8 and 10 with only a certain degree of interference. The next category with 7.69% consists of students who have had marks above the average represented by only one student. We think that such a student relied on his/her knowledge in English which has helped him/her succeed to some extent in avoiding interference from French. The last category with 7.69% is represented by one student represents the highest percentage of interference as the marks he has had (18 in French/4 in English) indicate, with no doubt, that he/she has relied on the rules s/he knows in French applying them to almost all words in English.

2.3.2.2. Intermediate Level

At this level we have classified the students who have had marks between 12 and 14.50 i.e. students we believe have had average marks in the test in French. The results appear in table 29.

X	Y	N	D
14.50	10.50	1	+4
14	09	1	+5
13.50	11.50	1	+2
13	10	1	+3
12.50	12	1	+0.50
12	12.50	1	-0.50
X (mean)=13.25	Y (mean)=10.91	N=6	D (mean)=+2.33

Table 29: Scores of Intermediate Level Students

Table 29 shows that the degree of difference in performance for the intermediate level is less than that of the top level students as its value indicates. +2.33 is the average value that distinguishes the students' marks in the French test from their marks in the English test; 5 students among 6 belonging to that level have had marks above the average, and only student obtained 9. Students who belong to the intermediate level seem to be weak in French compared to the top level students as indicated by the average marks they have had in the French test. However, what we can notice is that 5 out of 6 students have had marks above the average and these marks are almost the same marks achieved in the French test. A high correlation between the scores achieved in French and those obtained in English can be explained by the restricted knowledge students at this level have had in French. This has made them rely on their capacities in English, trusting their knowledge and, hence, avoiding some degree of interference. The students' explanations of the rule they rely on in their classification shows that they do not rely on knowledge they have in

French. They rather try to show some individual capacities and trust of the knowledge they acquire in their new language (English). The result is achievement in pronouncing correctly what others from the top level students have failed to achieve. We can say that the students belonging to the intermediate level transfer successfully some of the little knowledge they have in French to their performance in the new language (FL2). This is in addition to the same knowledge they have in English which has made their performance in both tests look similar (approximate). However, this will not make us say that even students of that level have been misled by some of the words that no one has realized their correct pronunciation. We will deal later on with this in details.

The results of the intermediate level students can be divided into three categories, according to the scores achieved in English (Table 30).

Scores	N	Percentage
≥ 12	2	33.33%
$10 \geq$ and < 12	3	50%
$10 <$	1	16.66%
Total	6	100%

Table 30: Scores of English Test at the Intermediate level

As the results show, students' marks in the intermediate level are so closely related to the ones obtained in French, which demonstrates a high correlation between the two performances; this may be illustrated by the percentage of those who have had marks between 10 and 12 (50%). Students who have had marks 12 and less represent the second high percentage of 33.33 % which corresponds to 2 students. In fact, one of them is the exception in having a mark in English that is equal or better than the mark in the French test even if the marks are nearly the same (12 in French and 12.5 English). This may be explained by the student's tendency to know the pronunciation of words without applying

the rules. This is proved by his/her successful pronunciation where the majority of students failed. The last category, representing 16.66%, includes the student who has had a mark that is under 10. The student has had 9 which is very close to the average and indicates that s/he has relied on some knowledge of English rather than transferring from the French rules as illustrated success in some difficult words.

2.3.2.3. Low Level

This level includes only one student who has had a mark under the average (8). In fact, such a student can be considered the least successful student considering the obtained marks in the two tests (8 in French and 7 in English). Yet, we can say that such a student shows some strong correlation indicated by the approximate marks s/he has had.

2.3.3. Analysing Students' Errors

The results obtained from the students' tests in French and English show that the percentage of marks obtained in the two sessions is more or less the same. In the French test the percentage of scores achieved in section 1 (53.14%) is closer to that achieved in section 2 (46.86%). In English we can notice that the percentage of the scores obtained is almost the same. It is 48.21% in section 1 and 51.78% in section 2. This can be explained by the nature of the questions in the two tests as they target the way how the letters 's' and the combination 'ss' are pronounced in different spelling contexts i.e. when the 's' is between two vowels, when between a vowel and a consonant, or between two consonants and when it is the geminate consonant 'ss'. Hence, we will treat the two sections as one; we will be dealing with 30 words in each language. We will take into consideration most errors in the students' performance. We will start with the French test since it is the dependent variable and the English one is the independent one; both the written transcription and the classification of the errors will be taken into consideration.

2.3.3.1. Analysis of Students' Errors in the French Test

Students are thought to produce fewer errors in this test since they have been exposed to French 5 years before English; they are likely to master the pronunciation of a fair number of words since they are familiar with the rules that govern the pronunciation of words that include the letter 's' and the combination 'ss'. This is proved by the explanations they give in their classification. In this analysis, the words will be classified according to the percentage of wrong answers that appear in the students' papers (table 31).

Words	Wrong Answers		Correct Answers		No Answers	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
observation	18	90%	2	10%		
soubresaut	18	90%	2	10%		
tournesol	9	45%	10	50%	1	5%
vraisemblable	8	40%	11	55%	1	5%
poison	8	40%	12	60%		
exclusive	7	35%	13	65%		
transit	7	35%	13	65%		
saisi	6	30%	13	65%	1	5%
bison	6	30%	13	65%	1	5%
basic	5	25%	15	75%		
oasis	4	20%	16	80%		
comparaison	3	15%	17	85%		
dessert	3	15%	17	85%		
persistence	3	10%	17	85%		
excuses	2	10%	17	85%	1	5%
abusées	2	10%	17	85%	1	5%
precision	2	10%	18	90%		
trésor	2	10%	18	90%		
maïs	2	10%	18	90%		
parasol	2	10%	18	90%		
analyse	2	10%	18	90%		
chaussure	2	10%	18	90%		
casino	2	10%	18	90%		
desert	1	5%	19	95%		
thèse	1	5%	19	95%		
hypothèse	1	5%	19	95%		
base			20	100%		
résultats			20	100%		
possessifs			20	100%		
précise			20	100%		
Total	126	21%	468	78%	06	1%

Table 31: Correct and Wrong Answers of Each word in the French Test

We can notice from the table that the majority of students have succeeded to a large extent in the French test which is indicated by the few wrong answers they have produced. 216 answers (21%) are wrong among 600; the correct answers constitute 468 (78%) while only 6 questions have not been answered (1%), as it can be seen in the circle (Figure 5).

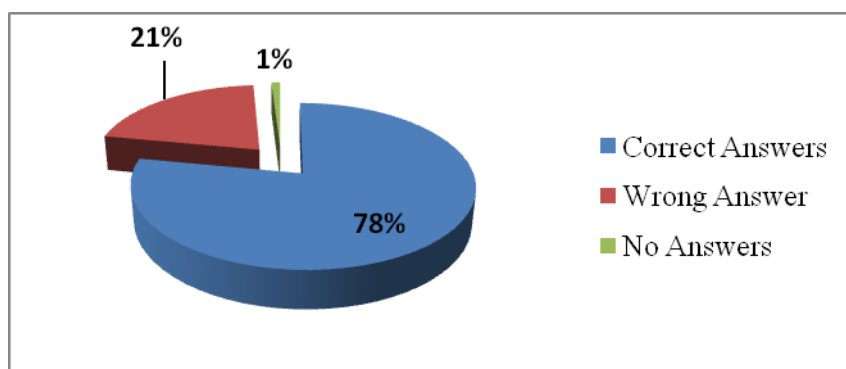


Figure 5: Answers in the French Test

The circle shows how the students are successful in the French test, as the high percentage of correct answers indicates. It is almost four times the percentage of wrong answers. Few words are left without answers (6), most probably because students have forgotten them.

Now, we will consider the areas where students have succeeded and where they have failed, shedding light on the wrong answers that occur in students' responses since our aim is to recognise the nature of these errors. Where all students have succeeded in realizing the correct pronunciation of some words such as: **base**, **précise**, **résultats** and **possessifs** achieving total percentage, the majority of them (90%) have failed in recognizing the correct pronunciation of the word **observation** and the word **soubresaut**, with/s/ sound, instead of /z/. Their performance has been as follows:

a. Observation

Wrong Pronunciation	percentage	Correct pronunciation	Percentage
18	90%	2	10%

Table 32: Correct and Wrong Answers for the Word ‘Observation’

It appears from the percentage of wrong answers that there is a reason behind students’ failure to recognize the correct pronunciation of the word **observation**. Our belief is that the students have mispronounced the word **observation** because they were misled by the same word in English **observation** /,ɒb.zə'veɪ.ʃən/ which is pronounced with/z/; We believe that students’ mispronunciation of the word **observation** is due to negative transfer ‘interference’ from the target language, English, on French, their native like language.

b. Soubresaut

Wrong Pronunciation	percentage	Correct pronunciation	Percentage
18	90%	2	10%

Table 33: Correct and Wrong Answers for the Word ‘Soubresaut’

We can notice from the table that the majority of students have not realized the correct pronunciation of the word **soubresaut** as the percentage indicates. 18 students (90%) have mispronounced the word **soubresaut**; instead of pronouncing it with /s/, they have pronounced with /z/. We believe that this is not because of transfer from English as in the word **observation**, but mainly because they are not familiar with the word ‘soubresaut’. Hence, when this word is introduced to them, they tend to over generalize one of the rules of the letter ‘s’ they know which is that it is pronounced with/z/sound if it occurs between two vowels. Unfortunately, their assumption is wrong, as they have

mispronounced the word. In fact, students may be said to do the right choice since they do not know how the word is pronounced, yet, they have forgotten to rely on one rule. This rule states that the letter 's' is pronounced with/s/ sound when it is found in compound words such as **toursole** and **parasol**.

In short, concerning the words **observation** and **tournesol**, we can explain the high proportion of wrong answers by the following main points:

1- Transfer is not only from NL habits or knowledge to TL performance as students' may affect their performance in NL or SL in the case of French.

2-Errors are not only due to language interference, as they can be intraligual, occurring within the same system, such as the overgeneralization of the rules.

2.3.3.2. Analysis of Students' Errors in the English Test

Just like we have done in the French test, we will gather all the words from the two sections and then classify them according to the number of wrong and correct answers (table 34).

Words	Wrong Answers		Correct Answers		No Answers	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
precise	20	100%				
precisely	19	95%		5%	1	5%
concise	19	95%	1	5%		
close	19	95%	1	5%		
houses	19	95%	1	5%		
casino	19	95%	1	5%		
loose	19	95%	1	5%		
increase	19	95%	1	5%		
dessert	18	90%	2	10%		
dissolve	18	90%	2	10%		
comparison	18	85%	2	10%		
excuses	18	85%	2	10%		
oasis	18	85%	2	10%		
useless	17	85%	2	10%	1	5%
cease	9	45%	8	40%	3	15%
abuse	9	45%	9	45%	2	10%
isolate	9	45%	10	50%	1	5%
disappear	8	40%	10	50%	2	5%
fantasy	8	40%	10	50%	2	10%
crises	8	40%	11	55%	1	5%
exclusive	8	40%	11	55%	1	5%
decisive	8	40%	11	55%	1	5%
incisive	8	40%	11	60%	1	5%
bison	8	40%	12	60%		
hypnosis	7	35%	12	60%	1	5%
poison	7	35%	13	65%		
basics	3	15%	17	85%		
basis	3	15%	17	85%		
desert	2	10%	18	90%		
wise	1	5%	18	90%	1	5%
Total	366	61%	216	36%	18	3%

Table 34: Correct and Wrong Answers in the English Test

It is clear from the table that students, in contrast to the test in French, have made more wrong answers in their production. While in French the percentage is 21%, in English it is 61% which corresponds 366 wrong answers out of 600. The total number is almost three times larger. Students have succeeded in 216 answers achieving 36%. This percentage is very low which indicates that the test has been more difficult to students than we had expected. The remaining percentage which is 3% represents 14 non answered words. Figure 6 shows these percentages.

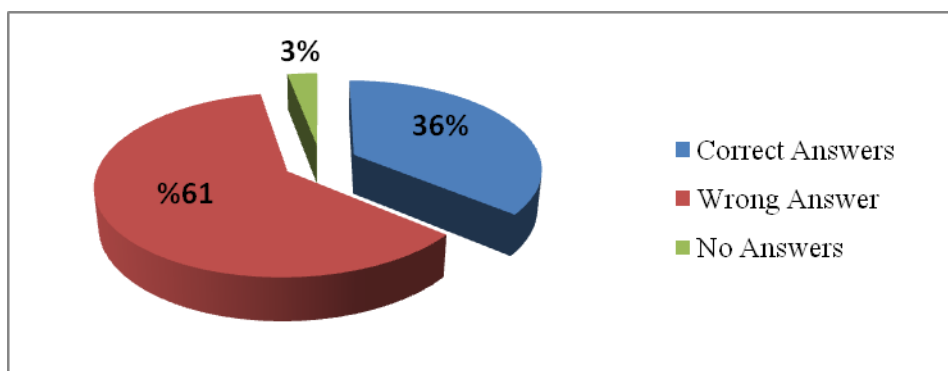


Figure 6: Percentages of Answers in the English Test

As the figure shows, the largest area is that of wrong answers. It is almost three times larger than the area of the correct answers.

If we consider the words in which the majority of students have succeeded and those in which they have failed, we will find that 90% have correctly transcribed the words **wise** /waɪz/, **desert** /dezət/ with /z/ and 85% have transcribed the words **basis** /ber'sɪs/, **basics** /ber'sɪks/ with /s/. As for the words **cease**, **isolate**, **abuse** and **disappear**, the percentage is between 45% and 50%.

Since our focus is on investigating the nature of the errors, notably those errors that are common to all students, we have decided to work with the first words from (table 11). In other words, we will deal with all the words where the percentage of wrong answers is between 85% and 100%. In this way we will analyse 14 words on the basis of some similarity between half of them such as **precise** and **precisely** (same root); **dissolve** and **dessert** (written with a double 's'); **excuses**, **comparison** and **oasis** (cognates of French); the remaining half consists of **concise**, **casino**, **houses**, **loose**, **increase**, **useless** and **close**. We will deal with 10 categories of words starting with the words in which the students have made the greatest number of errors (see table 35 above).

a. Precise / Precisely

Words	Wrong Answers		Correct Answers		No Answers	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Precise	20	100%				
precisely	19	95%			1	5%

Table 35: Answers about ‘Precise’ and ‘Precisely’

From the table above, we can see that most of the students have not succeed in either transcribing or classifying the two words; All 20 students have pronounced precise with /z/ (100%) and 19 students (95%) have pronounced precisely with /z/. The remaining 5% have not answered at all). We believe that the sample of students we have dealt with have not realized the correct pronunciation of the words **precise** and **precisely** for many reasons: Firstly, we think that students’ failure is due to their belief that this word is pronounced just as the word **précise** in French which has the nearly the same spelling and the same meaning too. It is pronounced as /presiz/ with /z/ sound, students seem to be affected by their knowledge in French and by its graphemic rules. Hence, a total transfer appears in their performance leading them to the mispronunciation of the word **precise** as well as the word **precisely** which is the adverb derived from the adjective **precise**. We can say that negative transfer or interference from French to English is due to the similarity between **precise** in English and **précise** in French. Secondly, we think that students’ errors are due to the teachers’ misleading pronunciation of the words in the classroom; we think that teachers themselves pronounce the two words wrongly thinking that it is the correct pronunciation. This belief is based on our classroom observation of teachers and on interviewing some postgraduate students as teaching assistants. Students seem to be the victim of their imitation of their teachers’ pronunciation. In short, students’ mispronunciation of the words **precise** and **precisely** can be interpreted in two ways:

1-They are due to the similarity between English and French (**precise/Précise**).

2-They are due to teachers' fossilization. In other words, their wrong assumption that what they believe to be correct is not, which in turn leads to students' fossilization.

b. Concise

Word	Wrong Answers		Correct Answers		No Answers	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Concise	19	95%	1	5%		

Table 36: Answers about the Word 'Concise'

As we can see from the table, most of the students (95%) have not realized the correct pronunciation of the word **concise** /kən'saɪs/. Hence, instead of classifying it with /s/ they have classified it with /z/ pronouncing it / kɔ̃n'saɪz/. Among 20 students, only one student has correctly classified this word, even though we think that the student has done so under the influence of how the word has been spelt by him/her (consice). Our belief is that students have not recognised the correct pronunciation of the word **concise** mainly because their teachers pronounce the word with /z/ sound instead of /s/. In fact, the word **concise** and the preceding word **precise** generally go together especially in E.S.T (English for Science and Technology) discourse. We believe that teachers are making false hypotheses about how the word is pronounced misleading their students who are supposed to imitate their teachers' way of pronunciation, keep the same wrong idea in their minds which becomes with time part of their knowledge. Another interpretation of the students' failure to realize the correct pronunciation of the word is that students tend to transfer from French by applying its graphemic rules whenever they face situations of words with which they are not familiar, though we think that the affect of teachers has much more impact.

In short, students' mispronunciation of the word **concise** can be interpreted in two ways:

- 1-Teachers' misleading pronunciation to their students or *induced errors*, as Stenson (1974) termed them, resulting from their fossilization that leads to the students' false hypothesis.
- 2- Language interference that is the negative transfer of the French graphemic rules when pronouncing the word.

c. Close

Word	Wrong Answers		Correct Answers		No Answers	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Close	19	95%	1	5%		

Table 37: Answers about the Adjective ‘Close’

The high percentage of wrong answers as indicated in the table above shows that students have met difficulties to determine the correct pronunciation of the word **close** through transcribing it correctly; 19 students out of the 20 (95%) have not correctly transcribed the adjective **close** /kləʊs/ with /s/ transcribing it as /kləʊz/ with /z/. We believe this is not because of the application of French graphemic rules, but, we assume, that students do not make a distinction between the verb **close**, which is pronounced with /z/, and the adjective **close**. May be they have thought that both are pronounced with/z/. In such case, the interpretation of the students' failure can be their unawareness of the rule rather than a matter of transfer and interference, though some students may have justified their transcription of the word by the graphemic rules that govern the letter “s” they master in French.

d. Houses

Word	Wrong Answers		Correct Answers		No Answers	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Houses	19	95%	1	5%		

Table 38: Answers About of the Word ‘Houses’

Again, another case where students are assumed to be misled is the case of **houses** the plural of the singular word **house**. In fact we have chosen the word precisely so to know the students’ responses to the different word forms they may meet. Only one student out of the 20 (5%) has realized the correct pronunciation of this word pronounced as /haʊzɪz/, whereas 19 students (95%) have transcribed it /haʊsɪz/ or / haʊsɪs/. We believe that the reason behind the mispronunciation of the word **houses** is that students made a false hypothesis which is that since the singular form is pronounced /s/, so is the plural one. Some students have transcribed the word as /haʊsɪs/ showing inadequacy in transcribing even the /s/ of the plural when the singular ends with a sibilant.

e. Casino

Word	Wrong Answers		Correct Answers		No Answers	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Casino	19	95%	1	5%		

Table 39: Answers about the Word ‘Casino’

As the table above illustrates, 19 students out of 20 (95%) have failed in the classification of the word **casino**, and only one student has classified the word in the right column. We believe that the students have not recognized the correct pronunciation of the word **casino** which is /kə'si:nəʊ/ mainly because they have been affected by the word

casino in French which is one of its cognates pronounced with /z/. Another interpretation to such a case is that students are not familiar with such word in English. Hence, when this word is introduced to them, they are unable to find any other solution but applying the graphemic rules of the letter ‘s’ they master in French.

f. Loose

Word	Wrong Answers		Correct Answers		No answers	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Loose	19	95%	1	5%		

Table 40: Answers about the Adjective ‘Loose’

The table above shows that 19 students out 20 (95%) have not realized the correct transcription of the word **loose** which is/ lu:s/ rendering at as / lu:z/ instead. Only one student has realized it the correctly. We believe that students’ failure to achieve the correct transcription is because they do not differentiate between the verb **to lose**, spelt with one ‘o’, pronounced with/z/, and the adjective **loose** spelt with ‘oo’, pronounced with /s/. We assume that they distinguish between the verb **lose** and the noun **loss**, but not the adjective **loose**. Another interpretation may be that the students have applied French graphemic rules that govern the letter ‘s’.

g. Increase

Word	Wrong Answers		Correct Answers		No Answers	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Increase	19	95%	1	5%		

Table 41: Answers about the Verb ‘Increase’

As it appears in the table, 19 students out of 20 (95%) have classified the verb **increase** with /z/ instead of /s/, and only one student has pronounced the word correctly as /ɪn'kri:z/. We believe that students' failure may be due to their false assumption that the verb **increase**, unlike its noun, is pronounced with /z/. We also think that some students have the belief that both the verb and the noun are pronounced with /z/. Teachers are also thought to be responsible for such deviations in their students' based on our classroom observation. Teachers often mislead their students' performance because of their false hypotheses about how the word is supposed to be pronounced rather than how it is actually pronounced. Interference due to the application of the graphemic rules of French cannot also be denied since students still consider that the rules that govern the pronunciation of the letter 's' can be found in English in almost the same instances, relying on the words that they are familiar with, which are pronounced with /z/ such as **wise**, **desert**, etc. having in their minds the wrong idea that whenever the letter 's' occurs in a word between two vowels, it is pronounced with /z/ just as in French, this means that students are making false hypothesis about the target language because of their limited experience.

h. Dessert and Dissolve

Words	Wrong Answers		Correct Answers		No Answers	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Dessert	18	90%	2	10%		
Dissolve	18	90%	2	10%		

Table 42: Answers about the Words 'Dessert' and 'Dissolve'

The percentage of the wrong answers in the words **dessert** and **dissolve** is 90%. The majority of students have not realized the correct pronunciation of the words which are /dɪ'zɜ:t/ and /dɪ'zɒlv/ and classified them in the /z/ sound column. Our decision group the two words in one category is because: Firstly, both of them include the combination 'ss',

and secondly, because the only two students who have recognized the correct classification of the word **dessert**, are also the ones who have recognized the right classification of the word **dissolve**. We assume that the majority of students have not realized the correct pronunciation of the words **dessert** and **dissolve** because they have been misled by the French cognate words **dessert** and **dissolvent** that are pronounced with /s/ based on their assumption that the graphemic rule of the combination ‘ss’ is French can be applied to English in all cases. In fact, there are many words in English that include the combination ‘ss’ and are pronounced with /s / such as **assist**, **assessment** .Yet, this does not mean that there is a general rule in English that states that, whenever we have a word that includes the geminate ‘ss’, it is always pronounced with /s/.

i. Excuses, Comparison and Oasis

Words	Wrong Answers		Correct Answers		No Answers	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Excuses	18	90%	2	10%		
Comparison	18	90%	2	10%		
Oasis	18	90%	2	10%		

Table 43: Answers about the Words ‘Excuses’, ‘Comparison’, and ‘Oasis’

We have chosen to group three words together for three main reasons: Firstly, because the letter ‘s’ in the three words occurs between two vowels. Secondly, because they have all cognate words in French which are: **excuses**, **comparison** and **oasis**, and, finally, because the percentage of wrong and correct answers is the same in the three words (90%). Only 2 out of 20 students (10%) have realized the correct pronunciation of the words, /ɪk'skju:si:z/, / kəm'pær.i.sən/ and / əʊ'eɪ.sɪs / respectively. Another important is that the 2 students are the ones who have realized the correct pronunciation of the three words. We believe that the majority of students have not realized the correct pronunciation, mainly

because they have been affected by the French cognates which are pronounced with /z/ transferring this knowledge to target language. Our belief is that total interference causes the deviation from the correct pronunciation of the words. Students are victims to their limited exposure to the target language and seem to have no other decision to make but to apply the rules of the letter ‘s’ they master in French.

j. Useless

Word	Wrong Answers		Correct Answers		No Answers	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Useless	17	85%	2	10%	1	5%

Table 44: Answers about the Word ‘Useless’

17 out of 20 students (85%) have not realized the correct pronunciation of the word by classifying it in the wrong column. Only two students have recognized the correct pronunciation of the word **useless** which is /'ju:sls/. We believe that most of the students have failed in pronouncing the word correctly for two reasons. The first reason is that the students have been misled by the pronunciation of the verb **use** which is pronounced /'ju:z/ with/z/. Students could have avoided such a deviation, if they had considered that adjectives are pronounced the same way as nouns in most cases not like verbs. Hence, they could have followed how the noun **use**/'ju:s/ is pronounced to perform better. The second reason is that we assume that the students have transferred from French by applying the French graphemic rules that govern the pronunciation of the letter “s”. Their limited experience has resulted in a permanent assumption that the same graphemic rules govern the pronunciation of English.

2.3.4. Discussion of the Findings of the Tests

From the analysis of students' answers in the test, we can draw the following:

1. The students' good performance in French may be a consequence of their familiarity with the rules that govern the pronunciation of the letter 's'.

2. The students' failure in pronouncing some words in French may be related to their unawareness or overgeneralization of some rules such as the case of the word **soubresaut**. It may also be due to the influence of the target language (English) because of the similarity, as the case of the word **observation**.

3. The students' success with some words in English such as **wise** and **desert** can be explained by their familiarity with these words compared to other words such as **casino** and **concise**.

4. The students' failure to achieve the correct pronunciation of some words in English has many sources:

a. Interference: Most of the instances of deviation are believed to be due to the interference of French graphemic rules especially with unfamiliar words such as **concise**, **casino** and **loose**. Students also seem to be affected by cognate words such as **precise**, **casino**, **excuses**, **comparison** and **oasis**.

b. Developmental Errors: Students' failure in the pronunciation of some words is assumed to be the result of learners' false hypotheses they develop about the target language. This is due to a limited exposure to English and notably occurs in words such as **houses**, **close** (adjective), **loose** (adjective) and **increase** (verb).

c. Teaching Induced Errors: Students' failure may result from the classroom. That is to say, the learner might make errors because of the teachers' misleading explanation or, faulty pronunciation of some words. The students' mispronunciation of some words such as **precise**, **concise** and **increase** (verb) may be related to their teachers' pronunciation fossilization since many of the teachers themselves pronounce them erroneously while thinking it is the right pronunciation. Hence, the teachers' role plays also a significant role.

In the following section, there will be further investigation through administering a questionnaire to the same sample. It may either confirm or infirm the interpretations we have given; it might show the students' attitudes towards the answers they have given in the test and to determine the reasons for answering as they have done. Since our focus is on the mispronunciation of some words in English, we will deal that the words that most of the students have failed to transcribe or classify in the English test. The words **observation** and **soubresaut** might be dealt with in further research.

2.4. Questionnaire

Introduction

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

2.4.1. Subjects

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

2.4.2. Description of the Questionnaire

The questionnaire consists of ten (10) sentences all of which are written in English. Each sentence consists of one of the words that most, if not all, of the students failed to pronounce either through transcribing or through classifying it in the right column in the test. The students' wrong answers in the English test come in 10 categories. Students are given four options in each sentence, and they are asked to put a mark in front of each correct answer; they can mark up to four answers if needed and where they think that no answer is correct they are supposed to leave the options (answers) unmarked (Appendix 3). We could have added one option that is that of no answers, but we were afraid the students may get aware of the wrong answers they made in the test. We decided to count the answers left unmarked as the correct ones.

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

2.4.3. Analysis of the Questionnaire

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

2.4.3.1. Question 1

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

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

Options	Number	Percentage
1	13	34.21%
2	14	36.84%
3	6	18.42%
4	4	10.53%
No Answers	0	0.00%
Total	38	100%

Table 45: Students' Answers to Question 1

The results obtained from student' answers to question 1 are: 34.21% of students have chosen the first answer 'because teachers pronounce the word with /z/', 36.84% have selected the second answer 'the same word in French **précise** is pronounced with /z/ sound', 18.42% have opted for the third answer 'because the letter 's' is placed between two vowels in that word', 10.53% have marked the fourth answer 'based on their knowledge of English', whereas 0% have provided no answer indicating that no student has realized the correct pronunciation of the word **precise**. We can notice that the percentages of answers are almost the same between 36.84% and 34.21% demonstrating that students' failure is due to many reasons. Some choices can be grouped as one common reason like the second and the third answers. The highest percentage of students (36.84%) have argued that the letter 's' in the word **precise** is pronounced with /z/ because the same word in French **précise** is pronounced with /z/; besides, 18.42% have claimed that the reason is that the letter 's' is occurring between two vowels. This is a good indication that

the students have transferred the rules they know in French to their target language (English). The students can be said also to be misled by cognate nature of the word. The second higher percentage of students, representing 34.21%, have justified their choices by their teachers' pronunciation of the word; students have claimed that their teachers pronounce the word with /z/; this implies that they are misled by their teachers' mispronunciation of the word; classroom observation shows that most of the teachers pronounce the word **precise** with /z/ /pri'saiz/ instead of /pri'sais/. The teachers' pronunciation becomes fossilized; that is their wrong assumption persists until it becomes the right rule in their minds. The remaining percentage of the students whose claim is based on their knowledge can be related to their teachers' role in the classroom, which in turn leads them to produce errors.

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

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

b. Teachers' misleading pronunciation as a result of their fossilization which in turn leads to students' mispronunciation as a result of their imitation to their teachers.

2.4.3.2. Question 2

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

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

Options	Number	Percentage
1	12	27.91%
2	15	34.88%
3	9	20.93%
4	6	13.95%
No Answers	1	2.33%
Total	43	100%

Table 46: Students' Answers to Question 2

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

individual knowledge resulting from listening or checking dictionaries. The remaining percentage of students (13.95%) have argued that there are words spelt like the word **concise** which are pronounced with /z/; they may have in their minds the idea that there exists a rule similar to the French one by which they can generalize to the pronunciation of all words that include the letter 's'. In short, students' failure to achieve the correct pronunciation of the word **concise** may be related to.

- a. Teachers misleading pronunciation as a result of its fossilization.
- b. Interference from French, through the application of its graphemic rules in English.
- c. Students' false hypotheses about the TL as a result of limited exposure to it.

2.4.3.3. Question 3

The letter 's' in the word **close** in "My new house is **close** to the school" is pronounced with /z/ because:

1. The letter /s/ in this word is placed between two vowels.
2. I know that it is pronounced with /z/ from my knowledge of English.
3. My teachers pronounce it with /z/.
4. The verb 'close' which is spelt in the same way is pronounced with /z/.

Options	Number	Percentage
1	9	32.14%
2	7	25.00%
3	1	3.57%
4	10	35.71%
No Answers	1	3.57%
Total	28	100%

Table 47: Students' Answers to Question 3

The results obtained from the answers to question 3 can be classified into: 32.14% of students have selected the first answer 'the letter 's' in the word **close** is pronounced with /z/ because it is placed between two vowels', 25% have marked the second answer

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

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

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

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

2.4.3.4. Question 4

The letter ‘s’ in the word **houses** is pronounced with /s/ sound because:

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

Options	Number	Percentage
1	17	56.67%
2	9	30.00%
3	1	3.33%
4	2	6.67%
No Answers	1	3.33%
Total	30	100%

Table 48: Students’ Answers to Question 4

The results obtained from the students' answers to question 4 can be divided into: 56.67% of students have chosen the first answer ‘the letter ‘s’ in the word **houses** is pronounced with /s/ sound because the word **house**, which is the singular form of **houses**, is pronounced with /s/’. 30.00% have selected the second ‘their experience in English’; 3.33% have chosen the third answer ‘teachers pronounce it with /s/ sound’, and 6.67% have marked the fourth answer ‘other words spelt in the same way are pronounced with /s/’, whereas the remaining percentage, representing 3.33%, consists of the unmarked answers, which corresponds in its number to the number of students who have transcribed correctly the word in the test, indicating their awareness of such a misleading question. The percentages obtained show that the students’ main reasons in pronouncing the word **houses** with /s/ are those found in the first and second answers. The highest percentage of students, 56.67%, has claimed that the word **houses**, which is in the plural form is pronounced

/haʊsɪz/ because the singular form is also pronounced /haʊs/. Students can be said to mispronounce the word **houses** due to the false hypothesis they make about how the word is really pronounced due to their familiarity with the singular form of the word **houses**, as well as with some rules governing the /s/ of the plural at the end of the words. Therefore, we suppose that they apply the sum of this knowledge in the word **houses** and pronounce it erroneously. The second highest percentage, 30%, has claimed that their knowledge of English allows them to know the answer. We think that this knowledge does not express their familiarity with the word, as they come into contact with it, but it rather shows some false hypothesis about the word based on limited experience; this claim can, then, be related to the first reason.

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

2.4.3.5. Question 5

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

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

Options	Number	Percentage
1	2	5.41%
2	18	48.65%
3	7	18.92%
4	9	24.32%
No Answers	1	2.70%
Total	37	100%

Table 49: Students' Answers to Question 5

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

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

2.4.3.6. Question 6

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

1. The letter 's' is located between two vowels in this word.
2. I know that it is pronounced with /z/ from my knowledge of English.
3. It is different in spelling from the word loss which is pronounced with /s/.
4. My Teachers usually pronounce it with /z/.

Options	Number	Percentage
1	8	29.63%
2	6	22.22%
3	10	37.03%
4	2	07.40%
No Answers	1	03.70%
Total	27	100%

Table 50: Students' Answers to Question 6

The results obtained from students' answers to question 6 are : 29.63% of students have chosen the first answer; 'The letter 's' in the word **loose** is pronounced with /z/ sound because it is located between two vowels in this word', 22.22% have selected the second answer 'based their answer on their knowledge', 37.03% have marked the third one answer 'it is different in spelling from the word **loss** which is pronounced with /s/', 7.40% have opted for the fourth answer 'teachers usually pronounce it with /z/', whereas the remaining percentage with 3.70% represents the students who have left the answers unmarked, showing correspondence to the number of correct answers in the test, what indicates that the student who correctly pronounced the word **loose** in the test, may be the one who has left all answers unmarked. The highest percentage of students, 37.03%, have claimed that the letter 's' in the word **loose** is pronounced with /z/ because it is different in spelling from

the word **loss** which is pronounced with /s/. Students seem familiar with the distinction between the verb **lose** which is pronounced with /z/ and the noun **loss** which is pronounced with /s/, but unfamiliar with the distinction between the verb **lose** which is spelt with one 'o' and the adjective **loose** which is spelt 'oo'. Hence they have treated the adjective **loose** as the verb **lose** pronouncing it erroneously, instead of pronouncing it /lu:s/, most students pronounced it /lu:z/. Student's failure can be related then to the false hypothesis they make based on their limited exposure to language. The second highest percentage of students with 29.63% have argued by the position of the letter 's' in the word **loose**; it occurs between two vowels, students' failure then is the result of the negative influence of applying the French grapheme rule. The other higher percentage of students, 22.22%, have justified by their knowledge of English, again we believe that this knowledge has to do more with their assumption that the word is pronounced with /z/ since it is placed between two vowels as well as it is spelt differently from **loss** which is pronounced with /s/.

In short, students' failure in pronouncing the word **loose** can be related to two major reasons:

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

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

2.4.3.7. Question 7

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

1. My teachers pronounce it with /z/ in the classroom.
2. Words that are spelt like this word are pronounced with /z/.
3. The letter 's' is located between two vowels in this word.

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

Options	Number	Percentage
1	7	21.21%
2	7	21.21%
3	8	24.24%
4	10	30.30%
No Answers	1	03.03%
Total	33	100%

Table 51: Students' Answers to Question 7

The results of students' answers as the table above shows vary; 21.21% of students have chosen the first answer, claimed that 'teachers pronounce it with/z/', the same percentage of students have preferred the second 'words that are spelt like this word: **surprise** and **please** are pronounced with /z/', 24.24% have marked the third answer claimed by 'the appearance of the 's' between two vowels', while 30.30% of students have opted for the fourth answer 'it is the noun **increase** which is pronounced with/s/', whereas the remaining percentage with 3.03% represents the unmarked answers which corresponds to the number of correct pronunciation in the test. The table shows that the percentages of the four answers are close to each others; indicating that different reasons have governed the students' justifications; the highest percentage of students with 30.30% have argued that the letter 's' in the verb **increase** is pronounced with/z/ because it is the noun **increase** which is pronounced with /s/. Students are thought to be familiar with the noun hence recognizing its correct pronunciation to be /'ɪnkri:s/, but not the verb **increase**. We can say that the students have assumed that the noun is pronounced with/s/, whereas the verb is pronounced with/z/. This false assumption can be associated with their limited experience in English. The second highest percentage of students, 24.24%, have argued by the position of the 's' in the word; since it is between two vowels, it is pronounced then with/z/. Students can be said to be impeded by the French graphemic rule they know, which have mislead them in pronouncing the word correctly in English. The next higher percentage of students with 21.21% have justified by their teachers pronunciation of the verb **increase**

/ɪn'kri:z/, teachers then are believed to mislead their students' pronunciation of the word because they themselves pronounce it erroneously, this makes us think that teachers also do not differentiate between the pronunciation of the noun and that of the verb, in all, their pronunciation will induce their students, who have the tendency to imitate them, hence produce the same error. Finally, the same percentage, 21.21% of students have claimed that words spelt like the word are pronounced with /z/, this indicates that students are trying to over generalize a rule they believed to exist in English, where in fact it does not. We can then say that students' mispronunciation of the word is also due to the interference of French.

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

- a) Students' false hypotheses based on their limited experience.
- b) The negative influence of French on the pronunciation of the word via applying its graphemic rules, students assume to exist in English as well, what makes them try to over generalize it to all words.
- c) Teachers' erroneous pronunciation which in turn mislead the students in their pronunciation as a result of their imitation.

2.4.3.8. Question 8

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

1. I know that they are pronounced with /s/ sound from my knowledge of English.
2. The combination 'ss' is always pronounced with /s/ sound in English.
3. The same words in French **dessert** and **dissolvent** are pronounced with /s/ sound.
4. My teachers pronounce them with /s/ sound.

Options	Number	Percentage
1	7	20.00%
2	10	28.57%
3	15	42.68%
4	1	2.86%
No Answers	2	5.71%
Total	35	100%

Table 52: Students' Answers to Question 8

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

with /s/ in English just as in French, hence when they come into contact with any word that includes the geminate ‘ss’, they will apply this rule, likewise pronounce such word with/s/.

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

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

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

2.4.3.9. Question 9

The letter ‘s’ in the words **comparison**, **excses**, and **osis** is pronounced with /z/ because:

1. The letter ‘s’ in the three words is placed between two vowels.
2. The same words in French comparison, excuses, and oasis are pronounced with /z/.
3. I know that they are pronounced with /z/ from my knowledge of English.
4. My teachers pronounce these words with /z/ in the classroom

Options	Number	Percentage
1	6	20.00%
2	17	56.66%
3	4	13.33%
4	1	3.33%
No Answers	2	6.67%
Total	30	100%

Table 53: Students Answers to Question 9

The results of the students’ answers to question 9 can be classified into: 20.00% have marked the first answer ‘the letter ‘s’ in the words **comparison**, **excses**, and **osis** is pronounced with /z/ because the letter ‘s’ in the three words is placed between two

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

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

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

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

2.4.3.10. Question 10

The letter 's' in the word **useless** is pronounced with /z/ sound because:

1. The letter 's' is placed between two vowels in that word.
2. I know that it is pronounced with /z/ from my knowledge of English.
3. The verb it is derived from (to use) is pronounced with /z/.
4. Teachers pronounce it with /z/ in the classroom.

Options	Number	Percentage
1	9	26.47%
2	7	20.59%
3	13	38.23%
4	3	08.82%
No Answers	2	5.88%
Total	34	100%

Table 54: Students Answers' to Question 10

The results obtained from the students' answer to question 10 vary: 26.47% of students have chosen the first answer 'the letter 's' in the word **useless** is pronounced with /z/ sound because it is placed between two vowels', 20.59% have preferred the second answer 'they based their justification on their knowledge of English', 38.23% have selected the third choice 'the verb it is derived from **to use**', 8.82% have justified by 'their teachers' pronunciation', the remaining percentage 5.88% represents the unmarked answers, which corresponds to the number of students who pronounced correctly the word **useless**, which is /'ju:sls/ in the test. The percentages show some closeness between the answers, indicating that students' failure has to do with more than one reason. The highest percentage of students, 38.24%, have argued that the letter 's' is pronounced with /z/ in the

word **useless** because the verb it is derived from which is **to use** is pronounced with /z/. We can say that students have made a false hypothesis about how the word is really pronounced, based on their limited exposure to the TL; students may be said to differentiate between the noun **use**, which is pronounced with /s/ and the verb **to use** which is pronounced with /z/, yet when it comes to the adjective **useless** they have failed to recognize its correct pronunciation, we believe that students' failure is due to treating with the adjective **useless** as the verb it is derived from rather than as the noun hence pronounced it with /z/. The second highest percentage of students, 26.47%, have justified by the position of the 's' which occurs between two vowels. Students' failure can be related to the negative influence of French in their performance in English through applying its graphemic rules. Other percentage of students with 20.59%, have claimed by their knowledge of English. We, believe that this knowledge is based on a false hypothesis they make about how the word **useless** is pronounced because of their limited experience rather than being familiar with the word hence, whenever came into contact with words that include the letter 's' that appears between two vowels, they pronounce with /z/.

In short, Students' failure to realise the correct pronunciation of the word **useless** can be interpreted to:

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

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

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

2.4.4. Discussion of the Findings

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

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

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

3- The answers have been given to some questions show some closeness between the choices, indicating that the students have different attitudes (reasons) behind one choice, as with the questions include the words: **precise** and **increase**.

4- The justification of the majority of the students to their answers to the questions show that the common errors they made are due to the interference of French both from the application of its graphemic rules as well as due to the cognate nature of the words; mainly the questions that include the words: **precise, concise, casino, increase (Verb), dessert, dissolve, excuses, comparison, oasis** and **useless**. They are the words that we believe students with which are not familiar.

5-Interference is not the only source of the learners' mispronunciation of the words, as some kind of false hypotheses are developed by the learners based on their limited

exposure to the target language, this mainly argued in the words: **close** (Adjective), **houses** (Plural), **loose** (Adjective) and **increase** (Verb).

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

Conclusion

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

Pedagogical Implications

The results of this research show that most of the students have problems in pronouncing some words that include the letter 's' and the geminate 'ss'. Therefore, in order to reduce such problems and to help the students in learning the correct pronunciations of these words as well as to support teachers in their task of teaching a foreign language, we would recommend the following pedagogical implications:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Limitations

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

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

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

3-A further research might be recommended in order to check if transfer among students takes another orientation that is the students may be affected by the TL due to the cognate nature of some words, as the case with the word **observation** in French.

4- A further research might take the performance of the teachers through administering them the same test given to the students, to stand for the reality of their pronunciation of the words, hence to judge the students' claim about their teachers' mispronunciation.

CONCLUSION

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

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

Based on the assumption that the students master some rules that govern the pronunciation of the letter 's' and the combination 'ss' in French, we hypothesize that if the Algerian students encounter words which they are not familiar with in English, they will made errors in pronouncing them as a result of the interference of the French graphemic rules.

This work is divided into two chapters: theoretical and practical. The former is devoted to the review of the literature, whereas the latter is devoted to the analysis of data. The theoretical chapter consists of three parts. In the first part, we have reviewed the status of French and English in Algeria and their role in the Algerian educational system. In the second part we have reviewed some concepts that serve the aim of the research such as

contrastive analysis, error analysis and language transfer. The third part is reserved to the description of the sound system of the two languages (French/English). It has highlighted the relation between the graphemes and the phonemes which clarify the existence of general rules that govern the pronunciation of some words including the letter 's' and the geminate 'ss' in French, but not in English. This gives some insights about the nature of the students' pronunciation to be influenced by the French rules.

The practical part is devoted to the analysis of data. In order to test the hypothesis of our research, two tests, one in French and another in English, have been administered to a sample of 20 students to compare the students' performance in the two test. The results of the test show that the students have made many errors in the English test as opposed to the French test; they are the words we believe that the students with which are not familiar. In order to know the real reasons behind such deviation; we have administered a questionnaire to the same sample of students. The findings of the analysis of the questionnaire have indicated that the primary cause of the mispronunciation of the words is the interference of French due to the application of its graphemic rules in English and this confirms the hypothesis of this research.

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

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1
Test in French

Section 1 : Transcrivez les mots soulignés dans les phrases suivantes :

1. L'enseignant a accepté l'excuse que son étudiant lui a donnée pour son absence.
2. La science est la base de toutes les civilisations.
3. Dans les pays sous-développés, les enfants sont abusés.
4. Le casino est un établissement de jeu et de réunion dans les stations balnéaires.
5. L'enseignant a demandé une réponse précise à sa question de l'examen.
6. Pour le retenir, j'ai saisi Omar par le bras.
7. Le tournesol est une plante dont la fleur jaune se tourne vers le soleil.
8. 'Notre' et 'leur 'sont des adjectifs possessifs.
9. On ne peut faire la comparaison entre le soleil et la lune.
10. Qu'est que vous préférez comme dessert pour aujourd'hui?

Section 2 :

1. Classez les mots suivants dans la colonne appropriée selon que la lettre /s/ et la combinaison /ss/ se prononcent /s/ ou /z/ :

Trésor – soubresaut – oasis – parasol – chaussure – résultat – mais – hypothèse – transit – observation – analyse – exclusive – désert – vraisemblable – basic – bison – thèse – persistance – précision – poison.

Son /s/	Son /z/

2. Expliquez sur quelle règle de prononciation vous vous basez pour le classement que vous avez effectué. Répondez au verso si besoin est.

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Appendix 2

Test in English

Section One: Transcribe the underlined words in the following sentences:

1. The other driver leaned out of the car and hurled abuse at me.
2. It is quite impossible to make a comparison with his previous book; they are completely different.
3. People who live in glass houses should not throw stones.
4. The sheep had got out and were loose on the road.
5. Nobody knows precisely how the accident happened.
6. He has played a decisive role in the peace negotiations.
7. Some schools lack money for basics such as books, pencils and chalk.
8. I know which friends I can turn to in times of crises.
9. Early to bed and early to rise makes a man healthy, wealthy and wise.
10. Our new house is close to the school.

Section Two:

1. Classify the following words in the appropriate column according to the way the letter /s/ and the combination of letters /ss/ are pronounced:

Dessert - Concise - excuses - bison - casino - oasis - incisive - cease - poison - fantasy - isolate - precise - hypnosis - disappear - increase - desert - exclusive - basis - useless - dissolve.

Sound /s/	Sound /z/

2. Explain on which rule or rules of pronunciation you have relied in your classification above. Write overleaf if needed.

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Appendix 3

Questionnaire

Dear students,

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

Question 1:

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

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

Question 2:

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

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

Question 3:

The letter 's' in the word **close** in 'My new house is *close* to the school' is pronounced with /z/ because:

- 1-The letter 's' in this word is placed between two vowels.
- 2-I know that it is pronounced with /z/ from my knowledge of English.
- 3-My teachers pronounce it with /z/.
- 4-The word function of this word in this sentence is adjective and not a verb.

Question 4:

The letter 's' in the word **houses** is pronounced with /s/ sound because:

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

Question 5:

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

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

Question 6:

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

- 1-I know that they are pronounced with /s/ sound from my experience in English.
- 2-The combination 'ss' is always pronounced with /s/ sound in English.
- 3-The same words in French **dessert** and **dissolvent** are pronounced with /s/sound.
- 4-My teachers pronounce them with /s/ sound.

Question 7:

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

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

Question 8:

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

- 1-My teachers pronounce it with /z/ in the classroom.
- 2-Words that are spelt like this word are pronounced with /z/.

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

4-It is a verb and not a noun **increase** which is pronounced with /s/.

Question 9:

The letter‘s’ in words *comparison*, *excuses* and *oasis* is pronounced with /z/ because:

1-The letter‘s’ in the three words is placed between two vowels.

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

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

4- My students pronounce the words with/z/ in the classroom.

Question 10:

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

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

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

3-The verb it is derived from **to use** is pronounced with /z/.

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

Appendix 4

Transcription of the Words Given in the Tests

Ordered Alphabetically

Words in French Test

Words	Transcription
abusées	/ abyzé /
analyse	/ analiz /
base	/ baz /
basic	/ bazik /
bison	/ bizɔ̃ /
casino	/ kazino /
chaussure	/ ʃosyr /
comparaison	/ kɔ̃mparezɔ̃ /
désert	/ dezɛR /
dessert	/ desɛR /
exclusive	/ ɛksklyziv /
excuses	/ ɛkskyz /
hypothèse	/ ipɔtɛz /
maïs	/ mais /
oasis	/ ɔazis /
observation	/ ɔbsɛRvasjɔ̃ /
parasol	/ parasɔl /
persistance	/ pɛRsisɔ̃s /
poison	/ pwazɔ̃ /
possessifs	/ pɔsesif /
précise	/ pɛRsis /
précision	/ pɛRsisjɔ̃ /
résultats	/ rezylta /
saisi	/ ʒezi /
soubresaut	/ subɛsɔ /
thèse	/ tɛz /
tournesol	/ turnɛsɔ /
transit	/ trãnzit /
trésor	/ trezor /
vraisemblable	/ vɛRɛsãblabl /

Words in English Test

Words	Transcription
abuse (Adj.)	/ ə'bjʊ:s /
basics	/ 'beisiks /
basis	/ 'beisis /
bison	/ 'baɪsn /
casino	/ kə'sinəʊ /
cease	/ 'si:s /
close (Adj.)	/ kləʊs /
comparison	/ kəm'pærisn /
concise	/ kən'sais /
crises	/ kraɪsɪz /
decisive	/ dɪ'saɪsɪv /
desert	/ 'dezət /
dessert	/ dɪ'zɜ:t /
disappear	/ dɪsə'piə /
dissolve	/ dɪ'zɒlv /
exclusive	/ ɪk'sklʊ:sɪv /
excuses	/ ɪk'skjʊ:sɪz /
fantasy	/ fæntəsi /
houses	/ 'haʊzɪz /
hypnosis	/ haɪp'nəʊsɪs /
incisive	/ ɪn'saɪsɪv /
increase (Verb)	/ ɪn'kri:s /
isolate	/ 'aɪsələt /
Loose (Adj.)	/ lu:s /
oasis	/ əʊ'eɪsɪs /
poison	/ 'pɔɪzn /
precise	/ pɪr'sais /
precisely	/ pɪr'saɪslɪ /
useless	/ 'ju:sls /
wise	/ waɪz /

Résumé

L'apprentissage de la prononciation de l'anglais n'est pas chose aisée pour ceux qui ont une maîtrise, combien même rudimentaire, de la langue française étant donné parfois les similarités qui existent entre l'anglais et le français. Ce travail étudie la nature et les mécanismes de certaines erreurs fréquemment commises par les étudiants de 3^e année anglais en prononçant les mots qui comprennent la lettre 's' ou la combinaison 'ss'. Notre hypothèse est que les étudiants maîtrisent les règles qui régissent la prononciation de ces mots en français et lorsqu'ils sont en face de certains mots en anglais dont ils ignorent la prononciation ils commettent des erreurs qui ont pour source l'interférence des règles graphémiques françaises. Afin de vérifier notre hypothèse, deux tests sont administrés à un échantillon d'étudiants, l'un en français et l'autre en anglais. Les résultats montrent que les élèves ont pratiquement échoué à la prononciation correcte des mots en anglais alors que la plupart d'eux ont bien prononcé en français. Pour confirmer encore plus notre hypothèse et connaître davantage les causes de ce phénomène, un questionnaire est administré pour le même échantillon d'étudiants. Les résultats de l'analyse indiquent que la principale cause de la déficience en matière de prononciation des mots en question est sans aucun doute l'interférence de la langue française. Certaines suggestions sont émises quant à un meilleur enseignement de la prononciation particulièrement celle des mots contenant la lettre 's' et la combinaison 'ss'.

الملخص

إن تعلم النطق في اللغة الإنجليزية بالنسبة للطلبة اللذين لديهم دراية ولو محدودة بقواعد نطق اللغة الفرنسية ليس أمرا سهلا نظرا لبعض التشابه بين اللغتين. تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى إلقاء الضوء على طبيعة وآليات بعض الأخطاء الشائعة التي يرتكبها طلبة السنة الثالثة إنجليزية عند نطقهم للكلمات الإنجليزية التي تحتوي على الحرف S أو الحرفين SS. إنطلاقاً من فرضيتنا وهي أن الطلبة اللذين يملكون دراية بقواعد النطق في اللغة الفرنسية يلجأون لتطبيقها على الكلمات الانجليزية الغير مألوفة قمنا باختبار عينة من طلبة السنة الثالثة بقسم الإنجليزية في نطق بعض الكلمات المذكورة آنفا في اللغتين على السواء. أظهرت نتائج تحليل الاختبار أن الطلبة فشلوا في تحديد النطق الصحيح للكلمات الانجليزية الغير مألوفة بينما نجحوا في نطق كلمات اللغة الفرنسية . لمعرفة الأسباب الحقيقية وراء هذا قمنا بتقديم استبيان لنفس الطلبة .و أظهر تحليل هذا الاستبيان أن السبب الرئيسي يعود إلى تطبيق قواعد اللغة الفرنسية على نطق الكلمات الإنجليزية التي تتضمن هذه الأحرف. وبناءاً على ما توصلنا إليه من نتائج قمنا ببعض التوصيات فيما يخص تدريس نطق اللغة الإنجليزية لا سيما نطق الكلمات التي تحتوي على الحرف S أو الحرفين SS.