Investigating Pronunciation Problems among 8th Level Basic Schools

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Abstract: *The study aims at investigating the problems of pronunciation for 8th level of basic schools students in Khartoum Locality, Sahafa Basic Schools. The study employed test research method where the researcher used English language such as vowels and consonants in pronunciation words in the experimental group to help explaining things when they were not clear . The findings of the research support the hypothesis that mother tongue interference, inconsistency, spelling and sound system /differences between L1 and L2 affect pronunciation and lead the learners of other languages to mis pronunciation.*

Keywords: *Mispronunciation, Mother Tongue Interference, Consonants and Vowels*

1. INTRODUCTION

English language is the language of international communication, and it is widely used in Sudan as a foreign language. English language remains the most important language .There are a lot of people all over the world who have strong desire to learn and speak English language.

In the Sudan there is a large group of people who are truly interested in English; among them are the students of English language Sudanese universities.

In order to learn or to study any language, one must be aware of pronunciation skills, which is of great importance for studying English language.

1.1. Statement of the Problem

Basic level students namely 8th level**s** **need** to use English for examination purposes and proceed to secondary schools. A close observation of English learners at 8th level students   disclosed that learners confused the pronunciation of some set of words.

e.g most of the English words that have sounds which don't exist in Sudanese spoken students e.g /P/ in experience / Ɵ/ in thank and /ə/ in this :-

It also observed that English learners at 8th level don't differentiate between some vowel sounds which have more than one way of pronunciation e.g. Vowel in (mat) and mate the replacement of bilabials (b and P) with each other so they usually use /b/ instead of /P/ and rarely /P/ instead of /b/ for instance word like (pupil, paper, apple) they pronounce them as /bju:beib/lble/.

Judging by this observation the researcher thought of studying the pronunciation errors and factors that caused them.

1.2. Objectives of the Study

The aim of this study is to investigate the relationship between pronunciation errors and factors such as mother tongue interference differences in sound system between first languages a second language inconsistency between spellings and sound especially Arabic and English. The objectives of the study are as follow:-

1. Identify the errors pronunciation among the learners at 8th level of basic schools at Sahafa Basic schools, Locality of Khartoum.

2. To find an experimental evidence of pronunciation problem by learners of English.

3. To discover reasons behind these problems.

4. To suggest a method of pronunciation which is useful for Sudanese learners of English?

5. To encourage English teachers and curriculum designers to pay more attention to pronunciation, way of teaching / and etc ……..

1.3. Significance of the Study

This study is very important for the teachers, who teach at the basic level. Pronunciation is very important because it is the first thing people notice when one speaks English.

This study will be significant for Sudanese English learners because it discovers the problematic areas of pronunciation and identifies the exact sounds that Sudanese learner's of English mispronounce and the reasons of this.

1.4. Hypothesis of the Study

1. Many students of Sudanese English learners don't pronounce the following consonant correctly :-

   /P/, /V/, /Ɵ/, /ə/

2. Some of the English learners confuse between the different pronunciations of some English sounds : / u , o /

3. Many English learners mispronounce (a , e , i , o ,u) .

4. Sudanese learners have difficulty in pronouncing /e/, /ə/.

1.5. Questions of the Research

1. Which English vowels cause problems to students of English language?

2. What are English vowels pronounced with some difficulty by the students?

3. Why English are consonant pronounced with some difficulty by the student of English language?

4. What are the difficulties the first year students at college of languages meet when they study English pronunciation?

1.6. Limitation

The target groups of the study is the problems of pronunciation at 8th level students of basic schools in Khartoum Locality, Sahafa schools for the year 2015 .

1.7. Methodology

The researcher used a descriptive approach in this research. The researcher followed a descriptive and analytic statistic method in this study. Descriptive: The researcher attempts to describe the problems of the phenomenon as it is described and explains its tools of data collection such as students' tes

1.7.1. Subjects

The samples of this study are 8ᵗʰ level Basic School students of Sahafa schools, Khartoum Locality.

1.7.2. Instruments

A test is used as instrument for gathering data.

1.7.3. Validity

The test is slightly different, but is practical, not above the student abilities.

The test was checked up by expert who confirms that , it is valid and asked according to its compatibility to the student perception.

1.7.4. Reliability

It is meant by the reliability of any test, to obtain the same results if the same , measurement is used more than one time under the same conditions. Also the reliability means when a certain test is applied on a number of individuals and the marks of every one were counted, then the same test applied another time on the same group and the same marks were obtained, then we can describe this test as reliable. Also reliability is defined as the degree of the accuracy of the data which the test measures.

1.7.5. Target group

It is known that the tool of any study is the instrument which any researcher uses test for collecting the required data for the study.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Several works have been conducted on the influence of first language L1 in learning English language (Moosa) (1972) and , Swan smith, 2001, repeated that /P/ and /P/ each one is distinguished by native speaker.

In Arabic language, the situation is different, because there is only the phoneme /b/ so is the reason why most tertiary levels speakers mispronounce words with this sound Sudanese Student face the same problems.

Students confuse between /p/ e.g words like ("park" bark), (pen, bin) that is to say they pronounce /b/ instead of /p/ and sometimes /p/ is used in the place of /b/ this rarely happens.

Many other sounds are influenced by the mother tongue of foreign learners.

In near past (Brown, 200) found that a second language learner meets some difficulties, because his/her first language L1 affects his/her second language L2 specially in adult- hood .

Where L1 and L2 rules are in conflict, errors are expected to be committed by foreign learners.

So many learners use /p/ as /b/ other use /s/ for /Ɵ/ and (7) for (ə) and (6) for (v) e.g. (face /faith) , (clothe/ close), (very, berry).

In addition to the post works (o, Conner) 2003,) Yule 2003 power 2003(have studied pronunciation problems and the of L1.

So many sounds such as /p/ and b , (s) and /Ɵ/ , (z) and /ə/ts/ and S/ and /b/ are confused e.g (pit , bit), thin , sin) question / action) , leaser bather, (very, berry). Mispronunciation of the results of over practice of the first language. Process of fossilization the adult vocal musculature is the set to pronounce foreign sound with all accent Yule, o, Conner 2003) reported that the main problem of English pronunciation is to build a new set of sounds corresponding English, and to break down the arrangement of sound which the habits and the systems of our L1 have strongly built up.

The point mentioned above altogether share concept that learners confuse such sounds replace each of them- with other sounds that dare said to be nearest ones to them (o) conna 203) here are some examples of such replacement of sound /p/ (Ɵ) force, fei) (faith, fei/ pass paes) (path poe6) (sink), (think) /p/ and b/ v/ and /ff/ / cover/ knvar/ suffer/ safor/.

The problems and reasons according to the results of previous research it can be said that many of students mispronounce the above problems in the pronunciation of /p/, /6/ǎ/ts/v/originally the researcher assumed that some student above consonant because they aren't exist in their L1.

On the other hand these sounds are not in student spoken so the learner tend to pronounce the sound of their language get stiff from pronouncing particular sound of the L2 that why many speakers of other language mispronounce the sounds that to not exist in their L1 connar, 20

2.1. Data Analysis

- **Display, analyze and discuss the results**

Table1. *Sex*

Sex	Frequency	Percentage	Figure
Male	12	48%	
Female	13	52%	
Total	25	100%	

The table and figures show that the majority of male respondents have accounted for 52% followed by the females in their own language where percentage 48%.

Table2. *Examining the pronunciation of the vowel ( ):) .*

Vowel	Word	Frequency	Percentage	Figure
b):n	Burn	1	4%	
	Born	24	96%	Burn, 4% / Born, 96%

The table and figures show that the majority of respondents believe that the correct word Born spoken word Burn they have accounted for 96%, while the percentage of those who believe that the word Burn is correctly is only 4% and this confirms that the word is correct Born in pronunciation.

Table3. *Examining the pronunciation of the vowel (eə).*

Vowel	Word	Frequency	Percentage	Figure
heər	harp	0	0%	
	hair	25	100%	hair 100% / harp ,0%
Total		25	100%	

The table and figures show that the majority of respondents believe that is the correct word thin Born spoken word thing they have accounted for 100%, while the percentage of those who believe that the word Burm is correctly to 0% and this confirms that the word is correct thin in pronunciation.

Table.4 *Examining the pronunciation of the vowel (i:).*

Vowel	Word	Frequency	Percentage	Figure
Fi:linz	fillings	0	0%	
	feelings	25	100%	fillings ,0% / feelings, 100%
Total		25	100%	

The table and figures show that the majority of respondents believe that is the correct word feelings spoken word thing they have accounted for 100%, while the percentage of those who believe that the word is fillings correctly to 0% and this confirms that the word is correct thin in pronunciation.

Table5. *Examining the pronunciation of the vowel (ai) .*

Vowel	Word	Frequency	Percentage	Figure
Vain	Vine	25	100%	
	wine	0	0%	wine, 0% / Vine , 100%
Total		25	100%	

The table and figures show that the majority of respondents believe that is the correct word Vine spoken word thing they have accounted for 100%, while the percentage of those who believe that the word is wine correctly to 0% and this confirms that the word is correct Vine in pronunciation.

Table6. *Examining the pronunciation of the vowel (ei) .*

Vowel	Word	Frequency	Percentage	Figure
meid3ə	major	25	100%	
	mayor	0	0%	
Total		25	100%	

The table and figures show that the majority of respondents believe that is the correct word major spoken word thing they have accounted for 100%, while the percentage of those who believe that the word mayor is correctly to 0% and this confirms that the word is correct major in pronunciation.

Table7. *Examining the pronunciation of the vowel (æ) .*

Vowel	Word	Frequency	Percentage	Figure
ræm	rum	0	0%	
	ram	25	100%	
Total		25	100%	

The table and figures show that the majority of respondents believe that is the correct word ram spoken word thing they have accounted for 100%, while the percentage of those who believe that the word is rurm is correctly to 0% and this confirms that the word is correct ram in pronunciation.

Table8. *Examining the pronunciation of the vowel (3:) .*

Vowel	Word	Frequency	Percentage	Figure
w3:d	word	25	10%	
	worried	0	0%	
Total		25	100%	

The table and figures show that the majority of respondents believe that is the correct word "word" spoken word thing they have accounted for 100%, while the percentage of those who believe that the word is worried is correctly to 0% and this confirms that the word is correct word in pronunciation.

Table9. *Examining the pronunciation of the vowel (ə) .*

Vowel	Word	Frequency	Percentage	Figure
fəget	Forget	25	100%	
	Forged	0	0%	
Total		25	100%	

The table and figures show that the majority of respondents believe that is the correct word forget spoken word thing they have accounted for 100%, while the percentage of those who believe that the word is firged is correctly to 0% and this confirms that the word is correct frorget in pronunciation.

Table10. *Examining the pronunciation of the vowel (ai) .*

Phonetics	Word	Frequency	Percentage	Figure
ais	eyes	4	16%	
	ice	21	84%	
Total		25	100%	

The table and figure shows that the majority of respondents believe that is the correct word ice spoken word thing they have accounted for 84%, while the percentage of those who believe that the word is eyes is correctly to 16% and this confirms that the word is correct ice in pronunciation.

Table11. *Examining the pronunciation of the vowel (u:) .*

Phonetics	Word	Frequency	Percentage	Figure
hu:z	whose	24	96%	
	house	1	4%	
Total		25	100%	

The table and figures show that the majority of respondents believe that is the correct word whose spoken word thing they have accounted for 96%, while the percentage of those who believe that the word is goues is correctly only 4% and this confirms that the word whose is correct pronunciation.

2.2. Findings

This research attempted to identify the exact sounds that cause pronunciation problems to the Sudanese learners of English when they pronounce English sounds and words and find the main causes behind this in addition to suitable ways that help Sudanese learners improve their English pronunciation .So at the beginning of this research the researcher assumed that the pronunciation errors among most of the Sudanese learners of English are due to a number of factors such as mother tongue interference (MTI), inconsistency of many English sounds, the influence of spelling on the pronunciation the sound system differences between Arabic and English. The findings of the research support the hypothesis that mother tongue interference, inconsistency, spelling and sound system /differences between L1 and L2 affect pronunciation and lead the learners of other languages to mispronunciation. The results are confirmed with the findings of the previous works . Referring to the results of the main tool of this study (the recorded test), we find that the results support the hypothesis because the test results show that many Sudanese learners of English face difficulty in the pronunciation of some English sounds.

There are five English consonants which are not present in Sudanese spoken Arabic (SSA). As you can see in table no. (4-10) all of the Sudanese learners of English have problems with the pronunciation of these consonants (/p/ ,/b/,/f/, / v/, /s /, /z/,/ e /, /ô/as it is shown in table (4-2) only 3 (3 %) of the Sudanese learners of English out of 100 subjects pronounced the voiceless bilabial plosive. /p/ correctly, while 48 (48%) of the subjects failed to pronounce it correctly. pronounce the voiced bilabial plosive /b/ instead of /p ./One possible explanation is that most of the Sudanese learners, mispronounce this sound because it is not present in the Sudanese spoken Arabic, so the students tend to replace /p/ with /b/ as the closer sound in the place of production; so in many words such as map, pupil the pronounce them as map pupil. Another which we assumed that SSEs mispronounce when they are speaking or reading English is the labiodentals /v/ so we expect they replace this sound with (f) in words like have, van, marvel. The finding of the previous studies support the view that such

sound is difficult or students of other languages mispronounce it, because they don't have it in their mother tongue .The results support the view because in the recorded test we have only (2%) subjects out of (100) who were able to produced the sound /v/ correctly in the above words,while (26) (26%) of the subjects failed to pronounce it correctly they replaced it with /f./.

3. CONCLUSION

The primary focus of spoken language is communication, where listening represents the most important skill in both listening to understand and listening to imitate. Skills such as these can successfully be developed through language laboratory. Moreover, when listening to a foreign language, it is necessary to know the sounds, rhythms, tunes and stress patterns of that language.

A language laboratory will provide the right environment where the learners can practice such pronunciation tasks, which will benefit the students' intelligibility. Teachers should be trained to handle these matters of pronunciation effectively.

Further study is also needed to investigate the possibility of giving more space to English pronunciation in the curriculum.

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