Institute of Literature and Languages
Department of Foreign Languages
Branch: English

Investigating the Pronunciation Challenges Hindering EFL Students' Speaking Skills Enhancement

The Case of Third-year EFL Students at Mila University Centre

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfilment for the Higher Requirement of Master's Degree in
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Dedication

I dedicate this work to:

Myself the most beautiful and powerful girl that I have ever met.

My beloved parents for their support and encouragement.

My brothers (**Moussab, Hani, and Nadjem Eldine**).

My sisters (**Sorour, Maissa, and Ibtihal**).

Boutheyna

Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation

*To my lovely parents **Mahiedine** and **Fatima**, who's the source of my success. Which have*

always encouraged me during 17 years of study.

Thanks for your love, support and

Prayers. Your sacrifices and encouragement have inspired me to strive for excellence in

all that I do.

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encouragement.

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Oumayma

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Abstract

The current research attempts to investigate the challenges of pronunciation while speaking. It aims to explore the major challenges of pronunciation for English as a foreign language learners' encounter in speaking and to minimizing students 'difficulties and improving their pronunciation of the words accurately in speaking a language. Additionally, it seeks to gather insights from both students and teachers by using questionnaires to understand their perspectives. Accordingly, within the context of this study, three main research questions are raised: (1) What are the pronunciation challenges faced by students while speaking? And at what levels can these challenges be found? (2) How these challenges can be tackle? (3) What are teachers' perceptions in regarding pronunciation challenges in student speaking skills? To gather the necessary data, and in response to these questions a descriptive method is selected, two questionnaires are designed. The first questionnaire are submitted to fifty third-year English students in the Department of foreign languages at Mila University Centre, and the second questionnaire is administered to eight oral expression and phonetics teachers. The main findings of this study are to investigate the particular pronunciation difficulties that students encountered. It aims to identify the effectiveness of pronunciation challenges on their speaking skills in learning English as a foreign language. Hence, goal is to empower learners to develop confidence and proficiency in their communication skills within the language learning process.

Key words: Pronunciation, English as a foreign language, Speaking Skills, Challenges, Learners and Teachers' perceptions.

List of Abbreviations

CBI: Content Based Instruction

CCA: Communicative Language Teaching

CLT: Communicative Competence Approach

EFL: English as a foreign Language

EFT: English Language Teaching

FL: Foreign Language

 I.e.: I explain

IQ: Intelligence Quotient

L1: First Language

L2: Second Language

Q: Question

SL: Second Language

SLA: Second Language Acquisition

TBLT: Task-Based language Teaching

VMP: Voice Place Manner

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General Introduction

1. Statement of the Problem:

Language learning is intrinsically significant for successful communication. It includes a variety of skills, such as listening, reading, writing, and speaking. Speaking skills are particularly crucial as they directly enable communication and interaction in everyday situations. But mastering speaking skills in a second language can be challenging, especially when learners encounter difficulties with pronunciation. Pronunciation plays a crucial role in spoken communication, affecting intelligibility, comprehensibility, and the overall effectiveness of oral expression. Thus, understanding the impact of pronunciation challenges on students' speaking proficiency is essential for effective language teaching and learning. According to Avery and Ehrlich (1992), the mother tongue is the main reason of pronunciation difficulties when speaking a foreign langauge or second langauge. Therefore, mispronunciations can effects FL learners' speaking skills.

Pronunciation requires much oral practice to learn well and get improved. In the two modules oral expression and phonetics, both were designed to help students to improve their pronunciation. There are some obstacles those EFL learners should master them. It is commonly known that teachers of oral expression focus on the other facets of speaking and listening comprehension dealing implicitly with pronunciation, whereas teachers of phonetics place more emphasis on some theory and neglect oral practice.

When communicating with others, many English language learners may face challenges in speaking the language. Pronunciation is one of the most important components of effective communication, and if the speaker pronounces some words incorrectly, it can hinder understanding.

Pronunciation difficulties pose a significant challenge for many students as they develop their English speaking skills. These difficulties can hinder effective communication by impacting both intelligibility and the accurate transmission of meaning. The research proposed in this study aims to investigate the specific ways in which pronunciation issues hinder students' speaking fluency, confidence, and overall effectiveness in expressing themselves.

2. Aims of the study

The main aim of this study is to enhance EFL learners' speaking skills and to determine the specific difficulties in pronunciation that hinder students' speaking fluency, which can impact communication skills. By identifying, analyzing, and pinpointing pronunciation challenges experienced by third-year EFL students at AbdElhafid Boussouf University Centre of Mila, Where can they overcome pronunciation challenges and enhance their speaking skills.

3. Research Questions

The current research seeks to answer the following questions:

Q 1: what are the pronunciation challenges faced by students while speaking? And at what levels can these challenges be found?

Q 2: How these challenges can be tackled?

Q 3: What are teachers' perceptions in regarding pronunciation challenges in student speaking skills?

4. Research Methodology

In this study, to answer the research questions and reach the aim of the study, a descriptive method is adopted with two questionnaires: a teachers' questionnaire and students' questionnaire. The students' questionnaire is administered to third-year students at the

Department of Foreign Languages, AbdElhafid Boussouf University Center Mila. To shed light on investigating their pronunciation challenges that faced them while speaking English language. For teachers' questionnaire is designed for Oral Expression and phonetic teachers in the Department of Foreign Languages at the same university.

5. The Structure of the study

This dissertation is divided into two chapters with a general introduction and a general conclusion. The general introduction includes the statement of the problem, along with the aims of the study, the research questions, and the instruments used to conduct this research as well as the structure of the dissertation.

The first chapter is divided into two sections that form the theoretical part. Both of them cover up the literature review, while the second chapter is the practical part of the work. It is also divided into two sections.

The first section in theoretical part is about speaking skill. It includes definitions of speaking in general and speaking skill in specific. It covers the five main types of speaking skills along with their definitions, characteristics, and functions; it also addresses the difficulties of speaking skill, teaching speaking skill. Various approaches of teaching speaking skill are discussed, as well as the different roles teachers' play in teaching speaking. Finally, the section concludes by highlighting the importance of speaking skills. Additionally the second section provides the presentation of English pronunciation. It includes general overview, aspects, and difficulties of pronunciation, the importance of Pronunciation for EFL learners, The English Pronunciation rules, and the importance of teaching Pronunciation.

The practical part is the second chapter of this research. It consists of two sections namely: Teachers' questionnaire and students' questionnaire. It includes the description of the research methodology, administration, analysis, and discussion of the results through the questionnaires. It also draws up interpretations through the main findings. This is to answer

the research questions and reach the main purpose of the study. At the end of the chapter, some recommendations are addressed to students, teachers, and future researchers.

Chapter One: Theoretical Part

Introduction

Speaking and Pronunciation skills are essential for language learning since they allow for efficient communication. Speaking involves expressing ideas and engaging in dialogue, but pronunciation involves comprehending and correctly articulating language sounds. Learners may encounter difficulties such as anxiety, lack of confidence, and lack of motivation in communication. Mastering pronunciation improves communication clarity and comprehension. Together, these skills are required for proficient language acquisition.

The current chapter is divided into two major sections. The first section sheds light on the concepts of speaking skills, including the definition, types, components, and functions. It also discusses the difficulties and introduces the approaches and the importance of speaking skills. The second section is about pronunciation. It introduces pronunciation in general. It deals first with the definition of pronunciation. Then, it discusses segmental and supra-segmental aspects. Whereas segmental aspects include vowels and consonants, supra-segmental aspects include stress, intonation, and rhythm. Also it covers up the pronunciation difficulties, the importance of pronunciation for EFL learners, and the English pronunciation rules. At the end of the section, the importance of teaching pronunciation to EFL learners is discussed.

1.1. Section One: Speaking Skills

1.1.1.   Definition of Speaking Skills

Learning any language involves four macro skills divided into two categories: productive (speaking and writing) and receptive (listening and reading). According to Bueno, Madrid, and McLaren (2006, as mentioned in Govindasamy, 2020), speaking is the most important ability to master when learning a foreign language, it allows for effective communication.

(Chaney, 1998) defined Speaking as it is the process of creating and sharing meaning using verbal and nonverbal signals in a range of circumstances.

"Speech is an interactive process of constructing meaning that includes producing, receiving, and processing information (Brown, 1994; Burns & Joyce, 1997)

1.1.2. Types of Speaking

According to Brown, there are five types of speaking, which can be illustrated in the following:

1.1.2.1. **Imitative Speaking** it refers to the ability to imitate words, sentences, and phrases. It about repeating back what you hear.

1.1.2.2. **Intensive Speaking** it involves producing a limited and regulated amount of language. For example, read-aloud and directed response tasks.

1.1.2.3. **Responsive Speaking** it refers to conversational engagements in which a person reacts or responds to another person, such as greetings, comments, and requests.

1.1.2.4. **Interactive Speaking** is more complicated and interactive. It consists of lengthy chats and numerous exchanges between individuals (conversation participants).

1.1.2.5. **Extensive Speaking** relates to more extended modes of communication that are formal, lengthy, and detailed. Examples include speeches, debates, lectures, and oral presentations.

1.1.3. The components of Speaking Skill

1.1.3.1. **Pronunciation.** Is a technique that allows students to communicate with more clarity, it indicates that a learner can speak effectively with strong pronunciation and intonation despite having a limited vocabulary and grammar. Pronunciation is the usual or customary utterance of words. According to this statement, pronunciation is the process by which pupils produce intelligible utterance words when speaking (Kline, 2001:69). English pronunciation does not imply mastery of a collection of

sounds or separate words. Instead, it entails understanding and applying the unique English method of making a speaker's thoughts easy to follow (Gilbert, 2008:1).

Furthermore, pronunciation encompasses all characteristics of speech that contribute to a clear flow of speech, such as segmental articulation, rhythm, intonation, and phrasing, as well as gesture, body language, and eye contact (Fraser, 2001:6). Pronunciation encompasses numerous factors, including articulation, rhythm, intonation, and phrasing, as well as gesture, body language, and eye contact.

1.1.3.2.**Vocabulary.** A large vocabulary is necessary for effective second language use because without it, we cannot apply the structure and functions we have learned to create understandable conversations. The power of words might be considered a key to communicative success. Vocabulary refers to the suitable diction or the most significant element in a language, particularly when speaking; also, knowing a wide range of a vocabulary makes it simpler to convey our ideas orally and in writing. The vocabulary in spoken language is usually known and ordinary (Turk, 2003:87).

It indicates that in spoken language or speaking, the vocabulary used must be very familiar and utilized in everyday speech in order to comprehend the spoken discourse. Students must understand words, including their definitions, spelling, and pronunciation. Thus, when teaching vocabulary, teachers need to make sure to clarify the meaning, spelling, and pronunciation. Vocabulary refers to the comprehension of word definitions within a language. This concept is complicated by the fact that words might be oral or written.

Oral vocabulary is the collection of words for which we know the meanings when we speak or read them aloud. Written vocabulary comprises of words whose meanings are recognized when we write or read quietly. These are significant distinctions since the vocabulary that beginning readers are familiar with consists primarily of vocal representations. As students

learn to read, written vocabulary becomes more important in literacy than spoken vocabulary (Hiebert and Kamil, 2005:3).

1.1.3.3. Grammar. Grammar is required for students to produce acceptable sentences in speech, both written and spoken. Grammar is defined as a systematic method of accounting for and forecasting an ideal speaker's or hearer's knowledge of the language. This is performed by applying a set of rules or principles to generate all well-formed or grammatical utterances in the language (Purpura, 2004:6). Furthermore, Greenbaum and Nelson (2002:1) Grammar is the set of rules that allow us to combine words in our language into larger units. A language's grammar describes how words can change forms and be integrated into sentences (Harmer, 2001:12). Thus, based on the assertions above, grammar's job is to order the correct meaning of phrases based on context; it is also used to avoid misunderstanding in each communication. Furthermore, Nelson (2001:1)'' defines grammar as the study of how words join to make sentences ". Thus, given the preceding statement, it is possible to deduce that grammar is a rule that students must follow in order to combine correct sentences in discourse, both written and spoken. Grammar refers to the underlying rules and structure of the language, such as clear and correct sentence formation and suitable word forms (Batko, 2004:24).

1.1.3.4. Fluency. The ability to talk clearly, fluently, and communicatively is known as fluency. The term "fluency" typically refers to the unrestricted use of oral language. During the teaching and learning process, the teacher should not interrupt pupils when they are speaking in order to assess their fluency. The goal is to support pupils in speaking naturally and fluently. The teacher does not correct right away since it is believed that excessive correction will impede the flow of the discussion (Pollard, 2008:16).

1.1.3.5. Comprehension. Comprehension is the ability to build representations of the meaning of sentences and to observe and analyze long stretches of talk. Studying

comprehension of a second language is more challenging since it cannot be directly observed; instead, it must be deduced by overt verbal and nonverbal cues, artificial tools, or the teacher's or researcher's intuition. The ability of participants to comprehend the nature of the research study, especially in the face of complex and even dangerous procedures, is referred to as comprehension. [Cohen and others, 2005:51].

1.1.4. Functions of speaking

Richards (2008) found that majority of foreign language learners prioritize mastering their English-speaking skills. In the same vein, Experts have attempted to categorize the purposes of speech in human interaction.

Brown and Yule's paradigm (based on Jones 1996 and Burns 1998) identifies three functions of speaking: interaction, transaction, and performance. According to Richards (2004, p. 24), each speaking activity has a unique shape and function, necessitating diverse instructional methods.

1.1.4.1. Talk as Interaction. Talk as interaction refers to what is stated in a conversation. Interactive communication occurs spontaneously between two or more people. This refers to how people transmit their message to others. To communicate with others, individuals must employ their speaking skills. This function's primary goal is to facilitate social relationships. The speakers' presentation style takes precedence over the message itself.

1.1.4.2. Talk as Transaction. During a conversation, the emphasis is on conveying the message clearly and properly to ensure understanding. In this style of spoken language, students and teachers tend to focus on meaning and comprehending rather than interacting.

1.1.4.3. Talk as performance. Talk as performance speaking actions are mostly focused on monologue rather than dialogue. Speaking performances include speeches, public addresses, and storytelling.

1.1.5. *Speaking skills difficulties*

1.1.5.1. Linguistic barriers. Thornbury (2005, p. 11) suggests that being skilled requires a certain level of understanding. Knowledge connected to speech can be characterized as linguistic or extra-linguistic knowledge. He emphasizes the importance of linguistic understanding for effective speaking. If any aspect of this information is lacking, learners may experience difficulties with their speaking growth. The challenges stem from a lack of vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammar mistakes.

   1. Lack of vocabulary. According to Thornbury (2005, p. 22), spoken language contains a significant amount of vocabulary and expressions. Learning a foreign language demands extensive vocabulary knowledge. Students sometimes struggle to express themselves due to limited words and expressions. Vocabulary limits affect oral performance.

   2. Grammar mistakes. Grammar knowledge is crucial for professional speaking skills, and EFL learners must master it to improve their oral abilities. Students may avoid using ungrammatical terms due to fear of scorn from teachers and classmates. According to Davies and Pearse (2000, p. 82), many individuals struggle with speaking in front of large groups. This is especially important while speaking in a foreign language, as we may be concerned about expressing ourselves correctly. Grammatical mistakes are an impediment to EFL students' speaking performance. Students struggle to improve their speaking skills when studying a language. Munjayanah (2004) identifies the following issues related to speaking skill;

    ✓ **Inhibition.** Learners may be hesitant to speak in a foreign language in class due to fear of making mistakes or the potential for negative attention. Learners struggle to participate in the classroom due to several barriers. According to Littlewood (1999, p. 93), the foreign language classroom can lead to inhibition and anxiety, including feelings of shyness and fear of making mistakes due to poor communication skills and a sense of linguistic inferiority.

✓ **Nothing to say.** FL/SL learners often utilize phrases like "I have nothing to say," "I don't know," "no comment," or remain mute when asked to engage in a discussion. These expressions indicate a lack of motivation to express themselves or debate the chosen issue.

✓ **Mother tongue use.** According to Bakers and Westrnp (2003, p. 12), barriers to learning might arise when students transfer cultural rules from their mother tongue to a new language, either intentionally or unintentionally. Learners who continue to use their native tongue will struggle to properly use the foreign language. Learners often borrow words from their original language due to a lack of target language vocabulary.

3. Pronunciation mistakes. Pronunciation is crucial for students while speaking English, as it is the first thing they are graded on. They must understand the rules of sound, such as stress and intonation. According to Bada, Genc, and Ozkan (2011, p. 122), proper pronunciation is crucial for effective communication, especially when speaking with limited time to recall words. Pronunciation is typically addressed during the speaking process.

Students' unpronounceable speech may be due to a lack of familiarity with English sounds, rhythms, and words, poor listening skills, or the teacher's mispronunciation as a non-native speaker. Pronunciation errors are a significant barrier to pupils engaging in stress-free speaking activities. This is what causes the difficulties in participation.

1.1.5.2. Psychological barriers. Learners' oral performance is influenced by psychological elements like motivation, anxiety, and self-confidence.

1. Lack of motivation. "Motivation" is a slippery notion to define. Researchers struggled to agree on a single definition. Gardner (1985) defines motivation as understanding the reasons behind an organism's behavior. Motivation consists of four components: a goal, effort, desire

to achieve the objective, and a positive attitude towards the action. This is significant since it defines a learner's level of active participation in learning.

According to Nunan (1999), motivation for studying can impact students' reluctance to speak English. Motivation is essential for effective communication. Research indicates that students with strong motivation to achieve outperform those with lower motivation, highlighting the importance of developing students' motivation to learn for all teachers.

According to Babu (2010), a lack of passion for studying might lead to pupils becoming hesitant to speak English in class. According to him, the dilemma stems from teachers' failure to push students to communicate effectively in English. Teachers' teaching performance has a significant impact on student motivation. Teachers should improve their teaching skills to motivate pupils to learn and speak English.

According to Dornyei (2011, p. 77), enhancing the attractiveness of assignments is crucial for exciting and enjoyable learning. People usually appreciate a task if they have an important role in it. Class conversations can be engaging for those who participate and dull for those who do not. To make learning more engaging and pleasurable, scenarios should be created to encourage active participation and improve students' linguistic abilities. One crucial psychological component to consider is a student's "aptitude" to learn a foreign language.

2. **Lack of aptitude:** Richard and Renandya (2008, p. 205) identify several characteristics that contribute to "lack of aptitude." Age is a significant predictor of success or failure in a second language (L2). The aging process may reduce adult learners' capacity to pronounce the target language fluently. Adult learners lack the same innate language skills as children in terms of fluency and natural spoken language acquisition.

According to Littlewood (2008, p. 62), the term "ability" should be interpreted more broadly than previously thought. The phrase "learning ability" typically refers to a person's cognitive talents, such as IQ and language aptitude. Littlewood refers to a range of

characteristics that, given similar motivation and opportunities, contribute to some individuals' superior learning abilities. Learning a new language varies widely in terms of speed, effectiveness, and approach. Individuals who start learning a second language later in life may experience significant heterogeneity in rates, outcomes, and processes (Ortega, 2009:145).

According to Richard (2000. p. 31) in the Longman Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics, aptitude refers to the interaction between a learner's own strengths and weaknesses in learning and the learning circumstances, such as the type of program.

3. **Anxiety.** Researchers define "anxiety" as the tension, apprehension, and discomfort that comes with learning a foreign language. It is a significant psychological aspect that impacts pupils learning a foreign language, especially while speaking. According to Tan Veer's study (2007, p. 1), foreign language learners frequently make similar claims that foreign language teachers are already familiar with. Many students struggle to learn and speak a second or foreign language, as seen by these claims. Many learners struggle to master a second/foreign language and may admit to failure. According to Horwitz et al. (1986, p. 125), these learners may excel at other abilities but struggle to learn another language due to a mental block. What prevents them from successfully learning a second or foreign language? Stress, anxiety, and uneasiness can negatively impact pupils' language acquisition and performance. Second language acquisition (SLA) studies have found that anxiety is linked to learning and speaking a foreign language, distinguishing it from learning other skills or subjects. Anxiety is a significant barrier to learning another language, as acknowledged by both teachers and pupils. The definition of anxiety varies greatly across researchers. Other researchers, like Horwitz (1991) and Sylvia and Tiono (2004), have found that anxiety plays a significant role in students' learning. He argues that fear of speaking a

language can impact pupils' performance. It can impact spoken language production, making people look less proficient than they are. This explanation suggests that teachers should aim to establish a comfortable learning environment for students.   Regarding the reasons behind anxiety, (Horwitz and Cope, 1986. np) based on the conclusions of their study, found three primary causes of students' anxiety: i.e. test anxiety, communication apprehension, and fear of negative evaluation. Communication apprehension refers to pupils' capacity to communicate in their target language. Students often experience anxiety due to their lack of proficiency in this area. The second cause, test anxiety, refers to pupils' fear of taking tests.

The final cause is based on the evaluation of other pupils. As previously indicated, students typically experience anxiety due to other students' evaluations. Fear of being evaluated by teachers is another aspect that contributes to student anxiety. Teachers should prioritize understanding their pupils and conducting the classroom effectively.

According to Harmer (2001. Np.), teachers can lessen anxiety by identifying each student's strengths and weaknesses and creating a learning technique that suits all pupils in the classroom.

 4. Lack of Confidence. Dornyei (2011, p.86-87) suggests that "confidence" is linked to self-esteem, self-efficacy, and anxiety. Self-confidence is essential for constructing a strong foundation. Without it, even cutting-edge technologies will fall short. Students who have self-doubt will not be able to "bloom" as learners, regardless of your inventive motivational ideas. Students' lack of confidence often stems from miscommunication with their conversation partners or other speakers. Building student confidence is crucial for teachers to focus their attention. Dornyei goes even further and suggests that teachers should learn from both theories and real-world experience to help students gain confidence. Research suggests that students' lack of confidence stems from their inability to communicate

effectively in English. Many students believe they have poor English skills and struggle to communicate effectively. According to Brown (2001), another factor contributing to pupils' lack of confidence is a lack of encouragement from teachers. Many teachers believe it's unnecessary to convince kids of their English proficiency. According to Brown, this might lead to kids feeling demotivated rather than motivated to learn. Encouraging pupils to communicate well in English can positively impact their learning outcomes. According to Dornyei (2011, p. 89), supporting learners and minimizing language anxiety might help them gain confidence in their learning.

1.1.6. Teaching Speaking Skills

Teaching is the process of transferring knowledge and skills from one person to another through active engagement or information transmission. It is a combination of art and science, requiring both creativity and procedure to facilitate learning. Brown (2014) defines teaching as a systematic process that helps learners acquire knowledge and skills for effective communication in a specific language and culture (p. 1). Teaching speaking skills is crucial for good second language communication. Effective speaking includes using both verbal and nonverbal signals to convey meaning in many cultural and social circumstances. Kayi (2006) defines teaching speaking as training foreign learners, particularly EFL learners, to produce English speech sounds, phrases, and sentences with proper stress, intonation patterns, and rhythm. Learners must choose appropriate words and sentences based on the social setting, the audience, the subject matter, and the scenario. They should also think clearly and use language to communicate their ideas and opinions. Fluency, or the ability to speak swiftly and fluently with few pauses, is essential (Nunan, 2003). Thus, teaching speaking skills is an integral part of the EFL learning process. It entails teaching learners how to successfully communicate in the target language. Teachers play a crucial role in strengthening students' speaking skills by creating a supportive learning atmosphere and implementing effective

teaching tactics. Acquiring effective speaking abilities prepares learners to communicate in different settings.

To conclude, teaching speaking skills is essential for language acquisition since it equips learners with effective communication abilities in their target language. Teachers must help students express themselves effectively and accurately, using acceptable pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, and to consider cultural standards. This prepares learners to succeed in a worldwide environment by enhancing their interaction skills.

1.1.7. Approaches to Teaching Speaking Skills.

Language teaching methodologies vary based on the skill development and the goals of the learner. Richards (2001) identified four approaches to language teaching: structural, functional, interactive, and task-based. This article will focus on recent techniques for training speaking skills.

1.1.7.1. Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT). Willis and Willis (2007) propose that TBLT promotes language learning by engaging learners in meaningful tasks that require them to utilize the language to achieve a specific goal. This method helps EFL learners practice speaking skills in a communicative setting, improving their ability to use the language in real-life situations. TBLT is an effective way to improve speaking skills by making language learning more engaging and practical. Task-based language teaching (TBLT) focuses on authentic tasks to enhance language learning. Willis and Willis (2007) propose that TBLT promotes language learning by engaging learners in meaningful tasks that require them to use the language to achieve a goal. This method helps EFL learners practice speaking skills in a communicative setting, improving their ability to use the language in real-life situations. TBLT is an effective way to improve speaking skills by making language learning engaging and enjoyable.

1.1.7.2. Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). Richards and Rodgers (2014) suggest that language instruction should aim to improve learners' ability to communicate effectively in their target language through conversation. Communicative language teaching emphasizes communication as the primary goal of language acquisition. CLT promotes communicative language learning, with teachers serving as facilitators and providing opportunities for learners to communicate. According to Celce-Murcia, Brinton, and Goodwin (2014), this strategy improves speaking skills by allowing students to interact with others and apply language in real-life scenarios.

1.1.7.3. Communicative Competence Approach. Canale and Swain (1980) define communicative competence as the ability to use language appropriately in a certain setting. The Communicative Competence Approach focuses on teaching students sociolinguistic and pragmatic aspects of language use in addition to grammar and word standards. According to Richards and Schmidt (2010), the Communicative Competence Approach effectively promotes speaking skills by equipping students with the knowledge and skills needed to utilize language effectively in various social contexts. The Communicative Competence Approach focuses on developing students' social skills while training them to speak. To increase linguistic competence, learners should have opportunities to utilize language in real-world circumstances, such as role-playing and discussions.

1.1.7.4. Content-Based Instruction. Snow and Brinton (2017) suggest that language acquisition is most effective when learners are engaged in relevant content. This technique uses subject matter content as a foundation for language training, allowing learners to explore new ideas and concepts in their target language. CBI promotes speaking skills by allowing learners to practice language in real-world contexts (Grabe & Stoller, 2011).

1.1.7.5. Interactive Approach. Long (1996, as cited in Loewen & Sato, 2018) argues that interaction is crucial for language learning because it allows learners to negotiate meaning and

receive feedback on their language use. The interactive approach uses strategies like pair and group work to encourage learners to interact in the target language. The interactive approach promotes speaking skills by allowing learners to practice language in a supportive and participatory atmosphere. According to Richards and Rodgers (2014), the interactive approach prioritizes students and empowers them to actively participate in their own learning.

1.1.7.6. Lexical Approach. Lewis (1993) defines lexical competence as the capacity to utilize language and phrases naturally and communicate effectively. The lexical approach stresses teaching vocabulary in chunks and giving learners opportunities to utilize it in a communicative environment. The lexical method effectively promotes speaking abilities by providing learners with the necessary vocabulary and phrases for efficient communication in the target language. According to Richards (2014), the lexical approach efficiently promotes speaking abilities by focusing on essential words and phrases for real-world communication. Teaching speaking is a complex process that requires a variety of approaches. The effectiveness of each strategy varies based on factors such as learner needs, learning context, and teacher goals. Understanding diverse approaches to teaching speaking allows teachers to make informed judgments on how to enhance speaking skills in their students.

1.1.8. The Roles of Teachers in Teaching Speaking

Speaking is an essential skill for EFL learners to thrive academically and professionally. Teachers play a crucial role in helping students to improve their speaking skills. Teachers are responsible for determining what students should learn in speaking skills and how to teach it as well. Nunan (2013) recommends that teachers choose speaking activities based on their students' competence levels, interests, and learning objectives. Teachers can employ role-playing, discussions, debates, and presentations to improve students' speaking skills.

Teachers play an important role in fostering a learner-centered atmosphere that encourages active participation. They can encourage students to speak up by giving them the opportunity

to practice and communicate with their peers. This helps students enhance their fluency, accuracy, and pronunciation. Teachers are also said to strengthen students' communication abilities over grammatical precision (Richards & Rodgers, 2010). They must evaluate their students' speaking ability. They should create evaluative activities that appropriately assess students' speaking skills. Typical tasks including presentations, conversations, and interviews. Additionally, teachers can boost evaluation by encouraging learners to conduct self and peer assessments. According to Brown (2004), receiving regular feedback from teachers can also help students identify their strengths and weaknesses, allowing them to develop their speaking skills by their own. Finally, teachers are responsible for the well-being of their students. They should foster a secure and supportive learning atmosphere where students feel comfortable when expressing their opinions and ideas. Establishing an open and trusted relationship with students might drive them to engage in speaking activities and improve their skills too (Freeman, 2016).

As a conclusion, teachers' roles in teaching speaking extend beyond delivering factual information to learners. These tasks include determining what students should learn, assisting their learning, assessing their speaking skills, and ensuring their well-being. To be effective in these roles, teachers must employ tactics that develop learners' speaking abilities and foster a supportive learning environment. Teachers can assist learners in developing confidence and proficiency in communicating effectively in various situations.

1.1.9. The Importance of the Speaking Skill.

Humans are naturally sociable. They speak with each other often to express their emotions, ideas, and opinions. Speaking is the most important of the four macro skills (speaking, listening, reading, and writing), as it allows for a successful communication. (Bueno, Madrid, and McLaren, 2006; stated in Govindasamy, 2020). Speaking is often the most challenging

skill to acquire for EFL learners. According to Brown and Yuel (1983), speaking is a productive talent that requires both sound production and the use of grammar and pragmatics.

Speaking enables EFL learners to interact and negotiate meaning in real-life circumstances. It is an important part of language learning. EFL learners often measure their performance based on their spoken language ability, which reflects their true level. Understanding a language requires the ability to speak it, as it is the most fundamental kind of communication (Celces-Muricia, 2001). According to Celce-Muria (2001), communicating is key to success in both professional and personal contexts.

1.2. Section Two: Pronunciation

1.2.1. Definitions of Pronunciation

Pronunciation is one of the major concerns in language learning studies. It has many definitions.

Pronunciation for Cook (1996, cited in Pourhosein Gilakjani, 2016) the process of making sounds in the English language. Another definition of is suggested by Paulston and Burder (1976) which mentioned that it is the process of creating a sound system that does not obstruct good communication from the standpoint of either the speakers or the listeners.

According to Richard et al. (2002), Pronunciation is known to be a phonology which includes the individual sound and sound segments. In English they are known as the segmental and supra-segmental aspects and all together making an accurate pronunciation.

1.2.2. Aspects of Pronunciation

Kelly (2000) proposed a distinction between two major aspects; the segmental and supra-segmental aspects. Whereas vowels and consonants phonemes are segmental aspects, stress, intonation, and rhythm are supra-segmental aspects.

1.2.2.1. Segmental Aspects of Pronunciation

1.2.2.1.1. Phonemes: According to Crystal (2008, p. 36), a phoneme is "the minimal unit in the sound system of language." Namely, one of the smallest units of speech that distinguishes one word from another. For instance, the distinction between the two words "hit" and "hat" is based on the vowel or various phonemes /I/ and /æ/. There are 44 phonemes in the English language, consisting of 20 vowels and 24 consonants.

1.   **Vowels:** according to Roach (1991), " are spoken sounds that when created, do not impede the flow of air". In English, vowels fall into three groups. A monophthong, diphthong, and triphthong. Monophthong is a single vowel sound contained within a syllable; a diphthong is a set of two vowel sounds within a syllable; and a triphthong is a combination of three vowel sounds inside a syllable.

There are twenty-five vowel sounds in English. According to Kelly (2000), "all vowel sounds are voiced". And they can be single, diphthongs, or triphthongs single vowels.

Monophthongs: are divided into two types short and long vowels sound.

Short vowels: it consists of seven vowels sounds which are (/ə/, /e/, /æ/, /ʌ/, /ɪ/, /ʊ/, /ɒ/). Eg: hand, luck, put.

Long vowels: it consists of five vowels sounds which are (/ɑː/, /ɔː/, /uː/, /ɜː/, /iː/). E.g.: part, talk, move.

Diphthongs: are classified into two types: closing and centering diphthongs.

Closing Diphthongs: are (/eɪ/, /aɪ/, /ɔɪ/, /aʊ/, /əʊ/). E.g.: Rain, Like, Boy, house, Go.

Centering Diphthongs: are (/ɪə/, /eə/, /ʊə/). E.g.: weird, care, sure.

Triphthongs: are made of the five closing diphthongs mentioned in the previous part, with schwa/ə/ added at the end.

/eɪ/ + /ə/ = /eɪə/ E.g.: layer, player.

/aɪ/ + /ə/ = /aɪə/ E.g.: tyre, fire.

/ɔɪ/+ /ə/= /ɔɪə/ E.g.: employer.

/aʊ/+ /ə/ = / aʊə/ E.g.: tower, power.

/əʊ/+ /ə/= /əʊə/ E.g.: lower, shower.

2. **Consonants:** Oxford University Press Dictionary (2008) provided two definitions of a Consonant. The first one mentions that it is "a speech sound that is articulated with complete or partial closure of the vocal tract. It is a unit of sound that depends on language to create meaning". While the second one defines consonant as "a speech sound in which the breath is abstracted; it can be combined with a vowel to form a syllable".

Roach, (2009) states that consonants are phonemes that impede the passage of air through the vocal tracts. They are also referred to the elements in the phonemic system in which the articulation is characterized by the obstruction of air flow at some level between the lungs and the mouth, including the larynx, velum, roof of the mouth, and lips.

In English, there are 24 consonants' sounds. They are classified into two categories: voiced and voiceless consonants. Which are divided into 15 voiced i.e. (vibrated) and 9 voiceless (non-vibrated). The following are the transcriptions of English consonants:

/p/ /b/ /t/ /d/ /k/ /g/ /tʃ/ /dʒ/ /f/ /v/ /θ/ /ð/ /s/ /z/ /ʃ/ /ʒ/ /h/ /m/ /n/ /ŋ/ //l/ /r/ /j/ /w/

✓ **Voiced and Voiceless Consonants**

Crystal (2008), when the vocal cords are pushed so tightly that they vibrate when pronouncing some sounds, like the consonants /v/ and /d/, the sound is voiced. While voiceless consonants, such as the consonants /t/ and /d/ are generated when the vocal cords are not vibrating.

The elements discussed so far about phonemes are covered in detail in the following figure and table:

Figure 1: English phonemes (Steve, 2017).

Voiced consonants	Examples	Voiceless consonants	Examples
/b/	Bad, bat	/p/	Paper,
/C/	Care, come	/t/	Tall, sweat
/d/	Down, dear	/f/	Fat, fun
/g/	Gap	/s/	Sun,
/v/	Van	/h/	Hot, hat
/ʒ/	Vision	/k/	Calm, cap
/dʒ/	Judge	/ʃ/	Chop, she
/ l /	Light	/θ/	Thing, death
/m/	Male	/tʃ/	Choke, check

/n/	Nice	/	/
/ŋ/	Bring	/	/
/ð/	This, weather	/	/
/w/	Warm, water	/	/
/y/ /j/	Yes, yam	/	/
/z/	Zip, zoo	/	/

Table 1: classification of voiced and voiceless consonants sounds.

1.2.2.2. Supra-Segmental Aspects of Pronunciation

Supra-segmental features, as described by Kelly (2000), refer to features applicable to segmental groups in speech. These features as outlined by Roach (2009) are intonation, pitch, loudness, tempo, rhythm, and stress, which are aspects of sound that are added to individual segments (vowels and consonants). They are essential to convey the meaning and nuance in speech.

1.2.2.2.1. Stress. A great number of researchers have deeply discussed this feature. According to Finch and Lira (1982), stress is a "supra-segmental or prosodic feature in phonetics, along with rhythm and intonation (p. 87)." Stress is a feature that illustrates particular language aspects. There are two varieties of it: sentence stress and word stress. Firstly, word stress describes the level of emphasis placed on particular syllables within a word (Underhill, 1994, P51). Secondly, Dale and Poms (2005) defined sentence stress as those particular words in a phrase that are underlined or pronounced more loudly in order to draw attention to them.

1.2.2.2.2. Intonation. Intonation conveys the speaker's purpose, attitude, and mood, it is an aspect of speech that facilitates communication and makes speech understandable. Lass (1976) defined intonation as the variations in the English speaker's voice pitch that are used to indicate the intended meaning through rise and fall (as stated in Arias Marulanda, A. B.. &

Potes Restrepo, A. M. 2018). In a nutshell, intonation conveys the speaker's intention. Consequently, it plays an important role to apply distinct intonation patterns depending on the situation in order to accurately convey information in English stated differently. The speaker's intentions during a speech are revealed by their tone. It indicates if they are stating something, posing a query, or issuing a directive. In addition, it aids in identifying emotions as surprise, disappointment, or rage.

1.2.2.2.3. Rhythm. Ball and Rahilly (1999, p. 119) defined a rhythm as "a plus that occurs at a more or less equal interval of time." According to Skandera and Burleigh (2005, p. 87) the rhythm of language is the recurrence of prominent elements of speech at what are perceived to be regular intervals of time. Depending on the particular language, the prominent elements are usually either stresses or syllables.

According to the Oxford Dictionary (2008, p, 379) rhythm is "a regular pattern of beats and movements". English has several patterns of stressed and unstressed syllables in the use of words in speech and writing, which create a sense of musicality and flow.

1.2.3. Pronunciation Difficulties

Daily communications necessitate proper pronunciation. As far as learning English is concerned, learning its pronunciation always poses serious problems for students. Much attention should be paid to learning proper pronunciation because even there is a proper usage of vocabulary and grammar, but mispronouncing words distorts the meaning of the message. Although explaining difficulties in pronunciation is no easy task, but students in particular are said to pronounce words correctly. One of the many ways to do that is by changing the way sounds are perceived i.e. using audios and earphones. There are some important factors that affect the pronunciation learning; Motivation and exposure, and Mother Tongue Influence.

1.2.3.1.Motivation and exposure. The age at which a language is acquired the learner's motivation for learning the language, and the cultural group they identify with and

spend time with all play a role in determining whether the learner will achieve native-like pronunciation. Studies have shown that having personal or professional goals for learning English can impact the learner's desire and necessity for achieving native-like pronunciation (Bernaus, Masgoret, Gardner, & Reyes, 2004; Gatbonton et al., 2005; Marinova-Todd et al., 2000; Masgoret & Gardner, 2003).

1.2.3.2.Mother tongue influence. Avery and Ehrlich (1992) propose that pronunciation patterns of learners' first language (L1) can influence their pronunciation in the second language. Therefore, when learners use their first language to communicate in a second language (L2), it can lead learners to make mistakes in pronunciation of English words, affecting the sounds, rules, stress, and intonation of the second language. The sound system of the native language can impact how learners pronounce English words correctly without any mistakes, making it difficult for them to produce or even recognize certain sounds.

Overall, there are various factors that can impact how non-native speakers pronounce words, such as motivation, exposure, and the influence of their mother tongue. Motivation plays a crucial role in encouraging learners to dedicate effort to improving their English pronunciation. Exposure is also key, as it allows EFL learners to listen to and practice the correct pronunciation of new words. The influence of one's mother tongue can pose challenges and lead to pronunciation issues for learners. Non-native speakers should strive to enhance their English pronunciation through consistent practice and dedicated effort

1.2.4. *The Importance of Pronunciation for EFL learners*

For English Foreign Language Learner's (EFL) pronunciation is intrinsically important for various reasons. Therefore, it is a significant aspect of learning English as a second language (SL). According to Pachler, Evans, Redondo and Fisher (2014), there are three main reasons why pronunciation is important.

To begin with, focusing on pronunciation does not only help to pronounce words correctly, but it also enhances accuracy in speech. For instance, producing vowel sounds correctly make a distinction between two words like "bit" and "beat". The difference in vowel sounds changes the meaning of the words. While mispronouncing words makes it difficult for the speaker to be understood. Thus, when a sound in a word is mispronounced, the meaning is totally altered which leads to understanding issues. Generally, learners who are able to pronounce words correctly feel more confident, encouraged, and motivated because they achieve both accuracy and fluency.

In a nutshell, pronunciation is necessary for the speaker to produce the sounds correctly in order to communicate effectively, convey clear massages, and make themselves understandable. Therefore, pronunciation is more significant. It is not just a language design.

1.2.5. *English Pronunciation Rules*

English language has inconsistent rules for pronunciation, making spoken and written words different. It has more phonemes than letters. This means that a single phoneme can be realized differently when uttering it (Learning unlimited Austalia pty.Ltd, 1996). It is important to accurately produce English consonants following the VPM, i.e., voice place manner description, and to identify the exact vowel sounds based on tongue height, position, lips, and length. The Research of "Basic English Pronunciation Rules" (2011) provides potential lists of pronunciation rules. They are presented below:

a) **Pronunciation of "y"as /aɪ/ or/ɪ/**

➢ Y is pronounced as /aɪ/in one word syllable as in words like my; cry.

➢ Y is pronounced as/ɪ/ in two word syllable such as funny; party.

b) **Pronunciation of "c "as /s/ or /k**

➢ C is pronounced as /s/ when is followed by an "e" or "y" as in the following words century; cycle; cypress.

➢ C is pronounced as /k/ when is followed by "o or u" in words like couple; cup.

c) Pronunciation of G

➢ G is pronounced as /dʒ/ when it is followed by an "e, I" or "y" like in the following words gem; giant; gym.

➢ G is pronounced as /g/ when it is followed by an "u" or "a" as in gum; gas.

d) Pronunciation of "l " consonant

➢ When the consonant "l" is in the initial position of the word is pronounced as a clear consonant.

➢ When the consonant "l" is before a consonant and at the final position of the word is pronounced as a dark consonant.

e) Pronunciation of vowels

o **Pronunciation of the vowel A**

➢ Is usually pronounced as the short vowel sound/æ/ like in the following words bat, pam, fan, map and wag.

➢ A is pronounced as the diphthong /eɪ/ when the word ends with "e" such as gate, base and face.

➢ When the word ends with the " r "letter the vowel A is pronounced as the long vowed sound /ɑ:/ in words like tar, jar, car, far.

o **Pronunciation of the vowel I**

➢ The vowel is pronounced as the short vowel sound /ɪ/ in one syllable words as in bib, pig, pin and kit.

➢ The vowel is pronounced as the diphthong /aɪ/ when the word ends with "e" such as bike, ride and dine.

o **Pronunciation of the vowel O**

➢ The vowel O is pronounced as the short vowel /ɔ/ in words as mop, hot and mob.

➤ The vowel O is pronounced as the diphthong /əu/ when the word ends with "e" for example rose, hope and pole.

o **Pronunciation of the vowel U**

➤ The vowel U is pronounced as the vowel sound /ʌ/ in words like cup, fun and mug.

➤ The vowel U is pronounced as the long vowel /u: / when the word ends with "e" in words as cute, cube and tune.

1.2.6. The Importance of teaching pronunciation for EFL learners

Pronunciation is crucial for effective language communication. Mispronunciations can cause misunderstandings and hinder communication. In English language teaching, addressing and correcting pronunciation mistakes is essential for effective learning.

Binmustafa & Aljaroooshi (2020) mentioned that Zimmermann (2004, p. 29) stated that "Pronunciation is very important, as it is usually the first thing people notice about the language of English learners". It is common to find that many learners ignore pronunciation in language learning. Unfortunately, a large number of teachers also ignore it. However, the reasons for this vary greatly.

According to Szynalski and Wójcik all learners of English claim that they do not need to study pronunciation. Many of them are convinced that it is just a waste of time. Subconsciously, listeners make quickly (often unfair) judgments about a speaker's English ability based on his pronunciation. No matter how accurate a learner's grammar is, and no matter how rich and expressive his/her vocabulary is, If his/her pronunciation is poor, then this immediately gives a negative impression of his/her overall language level. Actually, poor pronunciation is difficult to listen to, as it demands greater effort and concentration on the part of the listener.

Furthermore, poor pronunciation can cause misunderstandings. However, there is a positive reaction to speakers who pronounce words clearly. The fact that, listeners tolerate

grammatical and other errors make them recognize the speaking proficiency of the speaker far more favorably. Moreover, proper pronunciation is an asset to the speaker himself, as it provides him with a valuable confidence boost. It is important to note here that "good proper" pronunciation does not mean "native-like" pronunciation. In fact, if an English learner aims to sound like a native, he will soon be disappointed, as this is neither a realistic goal nor a necessary one. Instead, the aim should be to acquire a "listener- friendly" pronunciation i.e. one which listener can understand without effort and which can be used to maintain meaningful conversation possible. If the listening task is too effortful, listeners will unconsciously stop listening.

The way we speak immediately conveys something about ourselves to the people around us. Learners with proper pronunciation in English are more likely to be understood despite they make errors in other areas of the language. Whereas learners whose pronunciation is difficult to understand will not be understood, even if they master all the grammar rules. We also often judge people by the way they speak. So, learners with poor pronunciation may be judged as incompetent, uneducated or lacking knowledge, even though listeners are only reacting to their pronunciation. Yet, many adult learners find pronunciation one of the most difficult tasks in English and they explicitly need help from teachers (Morley 1994; Fraser 2000). A surveys of student needs show that our learners feel the need to work on pronunciation in the class (e.g. Willing 1993). Thus, some sort of pronunciation work in class is essential.

The way people pronounce words and communicate not only influences how others perceive us, but also significantly impacts our overall language comprehension and effectiveness.

Conclusion

Mastering oral communication in English requires ability in both speaking and pronunciation. English learners frequently struggle in these areas due to linguistic challenges such as grammar faults and a limited vocabulary, as well as psychological barriers such as fear of making mistakes and public speaking anxiety. In order to overcome these barriers teachers are said to create a supportive learning environment that encourages practice, interaction, and the growth of learners' confidence and resilience. Furthermore, it is essential for effective communication to have effective pronunciation, which includes both segmental aspects such as vowels and consonants and supra-segmental aspects such as stress, intonation, and rhythm. Understanding the different aspects that influence pronunciation, such as phonetic environment, individual variance, and language contact, is critical for both students and teachers. By addressing these interconnected aspects, teachers can prepare English learners to navigate oral communication with confidence and proficiency.

Chapter Two: Practical Part

Introduction

The previous chapter presented an in-depth look into the main theoretical points of speaking and pronunciation the present chapter represents the practical part of the research. It includes the investigation of two questionnaires. The first is a data collection method directed to third-year students and oral expression while the second is about teachers of phonetics which is meant to investigate the effect of pronunciation challenges on learners' speaking skills and to answer the research questions.

The present chapter covers up the administration, population, description, analysis, and discussion of the teachers and students' questionnaires. It ends up with additional recommendations for teachers, students and for future researchers based on the analysis and interpretation of the obtained results.

2.1. **Section one: Students' Questionnaire**

2.1.1. Population and Sample

In this research work, the students' questionnaire is designed for third-year students of English language in the Department of Foreign Languages at Abdelhafid Boussouf University Centre of Mila for the academic year 2023/2024. The sample under investigation consists of 50 students from a general population of 205 students. The selection of this population dedicated to third-year learners who have pronunciation challenges in speaking skills. In addition, the research sample has been studying the English language for three years, which means that they are more likely to respond to teachers 'corrections. The questionnaire was administered to fifty students of third-years EFL. The data was collected using hard copies.

2.1.2. Description of the students' Questionnaire

The questionnaire is consisted of 17 questions which includes close-ended and multiple choices questions. The questionnaire divided into four sections: Background Information,

Speaking skills, English Pronunciation, and The Relationship between Speaking skills and Pronunciation.

Section One: Background Information (Q1- Q3).

The aim of this section is to gather general information about the participant being studied. The students are asked to specify their gender, and the evaluation of their level in English, then the learners' experience in learning English language.

Section Two: speaking skills (Q4- Q10).

The current section aims at investigating the students' participation in oral expression class and how do students evaluate their general speaking skill. Also, it is raised to figure out the practice learners and the challenges they are facing in this skill.

Section Three: English pronunciation (Q11- Q16).

The third section aims at investigating English pronunciation accuracy and learning habits. They cover methods of checking accuracy, frequency of looking up pronunciations, its difficulties, and specific challenging sounds. They provide insight into your pronunciation learning process and areas for improvement.

Section Four: The Relationship between Speaking skills and Pronunciation (Q17).

This section covers up the relationship between speaking skill and English pronunciation. It includes only one question about the effectiveness of pronunciation in speaking skill.

2.1.3. Analysis and Interpretation of the results

Part One: Background Information

Question One: Gender:

Table 2

Gender

Options	Number	Percentage
Male	11	22%

Female	39	78%
Total	50	100%

It is clear that most of the population (78%)—more than half—consists of females' learners. Whereas a small number of the participants (22%) are males. The outcomes in Table 2 indicate that females represent the majority of English language learners within our sample. The findings show that females have a greater propensity to study English as a foreign language than males. Because of that females are more interested in and motivated to learn English language.

Question Two: How do you consider your English language ability?

Table 3

Students' English language ability

Options	Number	Percentage
Below Average	1	2%
Average	21	42%
Good	24	48%
Very Good	4	8 %
Total	50	100%

This question aims to examine learners' abilities in the English language. The results shown in table 3 shows that 48% of the participants considered their English ability to be good, whereas 42% said it was average. 8% declared that they are very good at English language. (2%) described their ability as poor. It is obvious from the highest percentage that third-year

students have an acceptable ability in English. This also suggests that they face some difficulties and complexities in learning the language.

Question Three: How long have you been learning English language?

Table 4

Students' experience with learning English

Options	Number	Percentage
10 years	36	72%
11 years	0	0%
12 years	9	18%
More	5	10%
Total	50	100%

The current question aims to investigate some aspects of students' backgrounds. It asks how many years students spent in learning English. Table 4 shows that the majority of the students i.e. (72%) have been learning English for 10 years. Due to most of the students who studied English in the middle school for four years, followed by three years in the secondary school and three years at the university. In addition, (18%) the learners spent 12 years learning English, and some of the students repeated the years. Around (10%) representing students who has been studying English for more than 12 years. Whereas no participants responded to 11 years in the process of learning English.

Section Two: Speaking Skill

Question Four: How do you feel when speaking in classroom?

Table 5

Students' feeling when speaking in classroom

Options	Number	Percentage
Anxious	15	30%
Motivated	21	42%
Confident	14	28%
Total	50	100%

The purpose of this question is to investigate the feelings of third-year students when speaking in classroom. The data from table 5 represent the majority of respondents i.e. (42%) indicated feeling motivated during speaking in the classroom due to many factors. For instance, their interest in the subjects and their desire to participate and share their experiences. Additionally, (30%) of them reported feeling anxious. And only (28%) of the respondents declared that they felt confident when speaking in the classroom. These results show that third- year students feel that when it comes to classroom speaking, motivation is the most common emotion, followed by anxiety and confidence. Teachers can help with classroom activities and support learners to improve understanding the curriculum in a natural manner.

Question Five: How do you evaluate your general speaking skill?

Table 6

Students' speaking skill level in general

Options	Number	Percentage
Excellent	2	4%
Good	23	46%
Average	25	50%
Below average	0	0%
Total	50	100%

The current question is designed to assess students' speaking skills. As shown in table 6, a percentage of (50%) stated that their speaking skill level in general is average, and (46%) said that their level in speaking is good. Only (4%) say their overall speaking skill is excellent. Lastly, there were no participants who chose below average. According to these findings, the majority of third-year university students have some difficulty in speaking, and they make many mistakes, which require more practice to reduce them.

Question Six: In speaking, do you focus more on?

Table 7

Students' focuses

Options	Number	Percentage
Fluency	12	24%
Accuracy	5	10%
Both	33	66%
Total	50	100%

As shown in the table 7, the vast majority of the students (66%) believed that fluency and accuracy are important in speaking English language. While (24%) of the informants declared that their focus is more on fluency. Whereas (10%) of the learners chose accuracy. This indicates an understanding that speaking clearly requires both of fluency and accuracy.

Question Seven: How often do you participate Oral Expression class?

Table 8

Learners' participation in Oral Expression class

Options	Number	Percentage
Always	12	24%

Often	33	66%
Never	5	10%
Total	50	100%

The question reveals students' involvement in oral expression classes. Based on table 8 the majority of participants (66%) often participate in oral expression classes, whereas (24%) of respondents who always participate in Oral Expression sessions demonstrate a high level of commitment to enhancing their speaking skills. These participants regularly participate in Oral Expression activities, which can lead them to improve their communication abilities in the second language, increase their confidence, and enhance their speaking skills. On the other hand, only (10%) of the participants never participate in Oral Expression classes, they might face some challenges like fear of making mistakes, lack of vocabulary, and lack of confidence. Also, there are some of learners they didn't like to engage in Oral class.

Question Eight: In your opinion, what are the biggest challenges you faced in speaking?

a. Pronunciation

b. Vocabulary

c. Grammar

d. Speed of speech

e. Confidence

Table 9

Students' language challenges in speaking

Options	Number	Percentage
A	3	6%
B	13	26%
C	2	4%

D	2	4%
E	4	8%
A+B	5	10%
A+D	1	2%
A+E	2	4%
B+C	1	2%
B+D	6	12%
B+E	4	8%
D+E	2	4%
A+B+E	1	2%
B+D+E	2	4%
A+B+D+E	2	4%
Total	50	100%

The question covers up learners' language difficulties which they faced in speaking. The data presented in table 9 states that less than half of students have only one problem, whereas others face more than one challenge. Students choose two, three, and four options. (52%) the majority of the students face different obstacles in speaking, which indicates that those respondents have a lack of vocabulary, grammar, speed of speech, pronunciation, and confidence. Then, (26%) of the participants have difficulties with vocabulary. When it comes to speaking, this means that they have lack of vocabulary that can hinder their communication and lead to problems in expressing their ideas accurately. (8%) of the respondents have low confidences in speaking. This indicates that fear of making mistakes while speaking can impact their confidence. Moreover, (6%) declared that they have difficulty with pronunciation, which means that incorrect pronunciation can lead them to misunderstanding

by native speakers. Lastly, only (4%) i.e. the minority percentage which balanced between the two options grammar and speed of speech. It indicates that lack of mastering grammar rules can affect the clarity of the sentences and the coherence of speech too.

Question Nine: Do you practice how to say a given word in your mind before speaking it?

Table 10

Learners' opinion in saying a given word in their minds before speaking

Options	Number	Percentages
Yes	43	86%
No	7	14%
Total	50	100%

The purpose of this question is to know students' opinions if whether they practice given word in their mind before speaking and that means here to know the correct pronunciation of the words. The results in table 10 suggest that the overwhelming majority of the students (86%) claimed that they practice how to say a given words in their mind before speaking. This indicates that they pronounce words in their minds, therefore, aiming for accuracy in pronunciation, this likely lead to clear communication, and take times to mentally repeat words and sentences to ensure that they are pronounced correctly. This practice is beneficial for developing pronunciation skills, communication clarity, and overall language proficiency. In contrary, the minority of respondents (10%) claimed that they do not practice how to say a given word in their minds before speaking. They might have different strategies for managing their language production.

Question Ten: How do you usually practice your Speaking skills?

a. Speaking with natives

b. Language learning app

c. Online course

d. Classroom setting

Table 11

Learners' practicing their speaking skills

Options	Number	Percentage
A	5	10%
B	11	22%
C	2	4%
D	12	24%
A+B	5	10%
B+D	8	16%
B+C	4	8%
A+B+D	3	6%
Total	50	100%

The purpose of asking this question is to know how learners usually practice their speaking skills and how they improve it. To start with, table 11 shows that (40%) of students choose two and three options. This indicates that they may utilize a mixture of methods to practice their speaking. 24% declared that they like participating in classroom settings, while (22%) of the respondents utilize language learning apps. This indicates that those apps may often offer interactive activities, pronunciation practices, and various conversations to improve speaking abilities. It is also observed that (10%) represents those who prefer to speak with native speakers. There are some students who engage in conversations with native speakers to practice their communication abilities. Only (4%) of respondents who participate in online courses. This may indicate that they want to enhance their speaking abilities.

Eventually, only five of participants who mentioned others when they practice their speaking. They use social media, listen to English podcasts, watch English movies without translation, whereas others talk with AI this indicates that they found it more beneficial to improve their communication abilities, also speaking with one`s self in front of the mirror. Therefore, learners' improve their pronunciation, fluency, and confidence by using different methods of spoken language.

Section Three: English Pronunciation

Question Eleven: How do you usually check your accuracy?

Table 12

Learners' checking their accuracy

Options	Number	Percentage
By recording yourself	8	16%
By teachers	15	30%
By comparing your pronunciation to a native speaker	27	54%
Total	50	100%

The purpose of this question is to determine how learners' check their accuracy. As it is shown in table 12 (54%) of the respondents stated that they compare their pronunciation to native speakers. It can help and improve accuracy and fluency. 30% of them claimed that teacher reviewing helps maintain accuracy i.e., teachers can provide help for learners in order to improve their pronunciation accuracy. Lastly, only (16%) of the informants declared that they checked their accuracy by recording themselves. This indicates that it may reflect a more

independent learning styles or desire for self-assessment. It can also be useful for identifying pronunciation mistakes and practicing speaking in a controlled environment.

Question Twelve: Do you recall how your teacher pronounced a given word?

Table 13

Learners' recall their teachers in pronouncing new words

Options	Number	Percentage
Yes	44	88%
No	6	12%
Total	50	100%

Based on the responses of table 13 (88%) of learners claimed that they recall how their teachers pronounced a given word, whereas (12%) declared that they do not recall their teachers pronunciation. This indicates that the majority of respondents pay attention to the pronunciation of given words by their teachers. It may also indicate that teachers have an important influence on how students perceive and use language.

Question Thirteen: How many times you recognize that words are pronounced correctly?

Table 14

Students' recognize that words are pronounced correctly

Options	Number	Percentage
Very often	10	20%
Often	36	72%
Rarely	4	8%
Total	50	100%

Question 13 is designed to know how many times learners' perceive their words are pronounced correctly. The findings from table 14 showed that the majority of students (72%) recognize correctly pronounced words often. In addition, (20%) of learners stated that they recognize correctly pronounced words very often. On the other hand, only (8%) of the students, which is the smaller percentage in the outcomes claimed that they rarely recognize that words pronounced correctly.

Question Fourteen: How often you look up the pronunciation of new words?

Table 15

Students' looking up for pronunciation of new words

Options	Number	Percentage
Always	10	20%
Sometimes	35	70%
Rarely	5	10%
Never	0	0%
Total	50	100%

Table 15 shows the state of students' who look for pronunciation of new words. The data reveals that the majority of respondents (70%) declared that they sometimes look for the pronunciation of new words. This indicates that most of individuals willing to look up the correct pronunciation of new words when necessary, suggesting a proactive approach to developing their vocabulary and language skills. 20% of participants stated that they always research for pronunciation of new terms. This responds to the importance to confirm their correct pronunciation, also this level of commitment to ensure that they pronounce words accurately. According to findings in the table, (10%) of the students said that they rarely checked the pronunciation of new words. At the end, none of participant indicated that they

never search for the pronunciation of new words. Because of some factors, such as confidence in their own pronunciation abilities and a lack of the resources that hinder individuals' ability to verify their pronunciation.

Question Fifteen: How often do you find difficulty in pronouncing new words?

Table 16

Students' difficulties in pronounce new words

Options	Number	Percentage
Very often	5	10%
Sometimes	35	70%
Rarely	10	20%
Total	50	100%

The question aims to investigate the challenges learners face when pronouncing new words. According to the data in Table 16, the majority of respondents (70%) reported encountering difficulty in pronouncing new words at times. This highlights the complexities and hurdles associated with mastering accurate pronunciation for students. Additionally, 20% of participants stated that they rarely struggle with pronouncing new words, suggesting that they may face fewer difficulties during the language learning process. On the other hand, the minority percentage of 10% who reported facing difficulties very often may require additional support and resources to effectively overcome their pronunciation obstacles.

Question Sixteen: Which specific English sounds do you find most challenging to pronounce?

Table 17

Learners' specific challenging sounds to pronounce

Options	Number	Percentage

The sound / Th / /ð/	16	32%
The sound / sh / /ʃ/	8	16%
The sound / ch/ /tʃ/	15	30%
The sound / v/	7	14%
None of them	4	8%
Total	50	100%

The objective of this question is to identify the specific English sounds that students struggle with when pronouncing. According to the data in Table 17, the most challenging English sound for participants was "the sound /th/ /ð/", selected by 32% of respondents. This suggests that the majority of third-year learners have difficulty pronouncing this sound, often substituting it with the "d" sound. Additionally, 30% of participants chose "the sound /ch/ /tʃ/", indicating obstacles in mastering this specific English sound. Furthermore, 16% of the participants encountered difficulties in pronouncing "the sound /sh/ /ʃ/", while only 14% found "the sound /v/" challenging to pronounce. Interestingly, 8% of learners stated that none of these sounds were difficult to pronounce and that they could articulate all sounds correctly. It's worth noting that some learners mentioned having difficulty with other sounds, such as the "gh" in the word "enough," which they may pronounce as the French "r" sound.

Section Four: Relationship between Speaking skill and Pronunciation

Question Seventeen: In your view, how much does pronunciation affect speaking skill?

Table 18

Students' opinions toward the effectiveness of pronunciation in speaking skill

Options	Number	Percentage
Major	27	54%
Intermediate	16	32%

Minimal effect	7	14%
Total	50	100%

The purpose of this question is to explore the impact of pronunciation on overall English speaking skills. According to the data from Table 18, more than half of the respondents (54%) believe that pronunciation has a significant impact on speaking skills, indicating that students consider pronunciation to be a crucial factor in effective communication. Additionally, 32% of participants indicated that they believe pronunciation has a moderate effect on speaking skills. Only 14% of respondents expressed the view that pronunciation has a minimal impact on speaking skills, suggesting that a minority of participants consider pronunciation to be less important in achieving effective communication in English.

2.1.4. Discussion of the Results

The students' questionnaire was a necessary and successful method that enabled getting an extensive view on the effects of pronunciation challenges that faced students in speaking skills. The insights gathered from students' responses provide valuable perceptions into their viewpoints on the effects of pronunciation difficulties that most students encountered in speaking skills. To improve communication abilities in oral expression classes and to pronouncing sounds correctly.

The primary findings indicate that the majority of third-year students are female and have a keen interest in learning the English language, regardless of their proficiency level. They are motivated to speak in the classroom and value assessments of their speaking skills. However, speaking appears to be a challenging skill for these EFL learners, as they encounter issues related to language systems such as limited vocabulary, lack of confidence, pronunciation,

and grammar mistakes. The speed of speech is also identified as a difficulty. Additionally, nearly all of the respondents frequently participate in oral expression classes.

The data showed that most students found difficulty pronouncing new words, particularly the sounds /θ/ ("th" voiced as in "the") and /tʃ/ ("ch" as in "church"). These difficulties were attributed to interference from their mother tongue. The students overwhelmingly agreed that pronunciation significantly impacted their speaking skills.

According to the information obtained from the questionnaire, third-year EFL learners clearly face a major obstacle when it comes to enhancing their speaking abilities particularly pronunciation. Several strategies can be used to properly address this problem. First of all, learners' articulation can be improved by including targeted pronunciation practice sessions in the curriculum, with a focus on frequently mispronounced consonants. Peer-to-peer feedback sessions and individualized feedback catered to each student's unique pronunciation challenges create a supportive learning atmosphere that encourages progress. Using technology to its full potential can help students become more self-aware and make progress. For instance, include speech recognition software and pronunciation applications. Students' comprehension and self-improvement techniques are enhanced when conversations about the linguistic and cultural subtleties that contribute to pronunciation difficulties are included. Building confidence in speaking out loud without fear of criticism and providing frequent practice using a variety of resources outside of the classroom are crucial elements in enabling students to get over pronunciation challenges and improve their communication skills in oral expression classes.

Section Two: Teachers' Questionnaire

2.2.1. Administration of the Teachers' Questionnaire

This questionnaire is planned for Oral Expression and Phonetics teachers of English in the department of foreign languages at Abdelhafid Boussouf University Center of Mila in order to investigate students' pronunciation challenges in speaking skills. It attempts to show teachers' views about the main pronunciation challenges that learners face in developing their speaking skills. It is submitted to eight teachers using hard copies and emails over a span of nearly two weeks. The selection of the teachers is based on the consideration that all Oral Expression teachers are knowledgeable about third-year students' pronunciation difficulties in speaking.

2.2.2. The Description of the Teachers' Questionnaire

The teachers' questionnaire is composed of 13 items that are a mixture of close-ended, open-ended and multiple choices questions. The questionnaire divided into four sections:

Section One: Background Information (Q1- Q2).

This section of the survey aims to gather the general information about teachers.it is consisting of two questions; the first question is specifically focusing on their academic background. While the second question planned to highlight the period of time that they have spent teaching at the university.

Section Two: Speaking Skill (Q3- Q7).

The second Section aims at teaching experiences and perspectives related to teaching speaking skills in English language teaching. The questions in this section aiming to gather teachers' perspectives, and it is also raised in order to determine the challenges that students face with speaking skill.

Section Three: Pronunciation (Q8-Q12).

The third question is devoted to investigating the pronunciation difficulties that students faced them during English language learning. It identifies the common pronunciation challenges faced by students and they can choose multiple options. Then, seeks to understand how pronunciation difficulties can impact students' speaking skills. This section aims to provide valuable perspective for improving students' pronunciation in English language learning.

Section Four: Teachers' Suggestions (Q13).

This section of the questionnaire is focused on gathering suggestions from the teachers regarding teaching speaking and pronunciation. It aims to gather perspectives, strategies, feedback, and recommendations on improving students' speaking and pronunciation skills. The respondents are invited to provide their viewpoints and share their ideas and suggestions that can improve and help teach speaking and pronunciation.

2.2.3 Analysis and Interpretation of the Results

Section One: Participants' General Information

Question One: What degree do you hold?

Table 19

Teachers' professional degree

Options	Number	Percentage
Master degree	2	25%
Magister degree	0	0%
PhD degree	6	75%
Total	8	100%

This question aimed to determine the respondents' academic qualifications, which is important to understanding the educational background of the research population. According

to the table 19, a significant majority of respondents 75%, declared that they have a PhD degree, while 25% have a Master's degree, and none have a Magister degree. According to the outcomes that show a highly educated cohort, primarily made up of persons with the greatest academic qualifications available, implying that the study involves a group with significant competence and possibly high levels of specialization and research experience.

Question Two: How long have you been teaching English?

Table 20

Teachers' years of experiences in teaching English

Options	Number	Percentage
1-5 years	2	25%
5-10 years	2	25%
More than 10 years	4	50%
Total	8	100%

The current question aims to determine the level of experience among the teachers who respond to the questionnaire, which is essential for assessing the extent of practical teaching expertise present among the participants. The table 20, it is obvious that (50%)of respondents had been teaching English for more than ten years, implying a significant amount of experience and maybe a greater understanding of the complexities of language teaching. Both the 1-5 year and 5-10 year categories are balanced in the percentages represented 25%, it indicates that a quarter of the participants are new to the area, while the other quarter have moderate expertise.

Section Three: Speaking skill

Question Three: How long have you been teaching speaking skill?

Table 21

Teachers' experiences in teaching speaking skill

Options	Number	Percentage
1-3 years	7	87.5%
3-5 years	1	12.5%
More than 5 years	0	0%
Total	8	100%

This question is intended to assess teachers' specific duration of experience in teaching speaking as a part of English language learning. This information is critical for investigating how specialized their teaching approaches may be in this particular area of language teaching. The results, it is clear that the majority of respondents (87.5%) have been teaching speaking skills for 1-3 years, showing that most teachers are new to focus on this particular skill. The minority percentage (12.5%) has slightly greater experience, ranging from 3 to 5 years. Notably, none of the respondents had been teaching speaking skills for longer than five years. This distribution implies a more inexperienced set of teachers when it comes to teaching speaking, which may have an impact on effectiveness, strategies, and confidence in conducting speaking classes.

Question Four: How do you feel about teaching speaking skill?

Table 22

Teachers' feeling about teaching speaking skill

Options	Number	Percentage
Comfortable	5	62.5%
Uncomfortable	1	12.5%
Neutral	2	25%
Total	8	100%

Question 4 aims to assess teachers comfort and confidence in teaching speaking skills, which is crucial for identifying possible areas for professional development and support. According to the findings, 62.5% of respondents felt comfortable teaching speaking abilities, demonstrating that the majority of teachers are confident in their ability to teach this component well. However, a lesser proportion, 12.5%, are uneasy, implying that there may be areas of difficulty or lack of confidence that may be addressed with focused training or resources. The 25% of respondents feel neutral, neither extremely comfortable nor uncomfortable, which may indicate a need for additional engagement or experience to form a stronger viewpoint.

Question Five: How would you describe third-year students' level in speaking?

Table 23

Teachers' views about students' level in speaking

Options	Number	Percentage
High	0	0%
Average	7	87.5%
Low	1	12.5%
Total	8	100%

The question 5 is purposes to examine teachers' assessments of students' speaking ability at a given point in their language learning journey. This evaluation is critical for determining the efficacy of current teaching methods and curriculum in developing speaking skills as students advance through their schooling. This question's insights can help teachers and curriculum makers discover strengths and shortcomings in the current language education

framework, as well as changing teaching strategies or resources to better support students in obtaining higher levels of speaking proficiency.

Question Six: What language difficulties do third-year students commonly encounter in speaking English?

Table 24

Learners' language difficulties in speaking

Options	Number	Percentage
Difficulties in grammar	0	0%
Lack of vocabulary	2	25%
Lack of pronunciation	1	12.5%
Interference of mother tongue	0	0%
B+C	2	25%
A+B+C	3	37.5%
Total	8	100%

The question 6 seeks to discover specific barriers to speaking fluency among intermediate-level language learners. According to the study, the primary challenge faced by (37.5%) of students is a combination of grammar mistakes, a lack of vocabulary, and pronunciation problems. This shows that these learners face many, interconnected problems that may have a major impact on their abilities to communicate successfully. Notably, (25%) of students struggle just with vocabulary, demonstrating the significance of lexical knowledge in speaking competency. Another 25% face combined vocabulary and pronunciation concerns, indicating problems with both word knowledge and word articulation. Interestingly, 0% of respondents indicated difficulty with grammar or interference from their mother tongue,

indicating that these may not be the most pressing challenges for pupils at this time, or that existing teaching approaches efficiently address them. However, the presence of all three key challenges (grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation) in more than one-third of the students emphasize the importance of integrated language training that supports all areas of language learning, ensuring a balanced approach to improving speaking abilities. This research guides educational initiatives toward complete language support that takes into account how interrelated language components influence speaking proficiency.

Question Seven: In your view, students avoid participating in Oral Expression because of?

Table 25

Teachers' perceptions about students avoid participating in oral expression classes

Options	Number	Percentage
Anxiety	1	12.5%
Fear	0	0%
Lack of confidence	3	37.5%
Lack of motivation	0	0%
C+D	2	25%
B+C+D	2	25%
Total	8	100%

The current question Seeks to discover emotional and motivational barriers to student engagement in speaking activities. According to the analysis, 37.5% of students avoid oral engagement due to a lack of confidence. Other prominent reasons include a combination of lack of confidence and lack of motivation, as well as a trio of fear, lack of confidence, and lack of motivation, all of which affect 25% of students, demonstrating that these concerns commonly overlap. Additionally, anxiety affects 12.5% of students. These findings indicate

that boosting student engagement necessitates treatments that boost confidence, reduce fear, and increase motivation, underlining the importance of supportive and positively reinforcing educational environments.

Section Three: Pronunciation

Question Eight: Based on your experiences, what are the most common pronunciation challenges that students usually face?

Table 26

Teachers' opinions about challenges that students faced in pronunciation

Options	Number	Percentage
Consonant sounds	0	0%
Vowel sounds	1	12.5
Stress and intonation	3	37.5%
Word and sentence rhythm	1	12.5%
C+D	2	25%
A+B+C	1	12.5%
Total	8	100%

Question 8 aims at identifying important pronunciation issues among English learners. According to the table 26 the greatest issue, identified by 37.5% of respondents, is related to stress and intonation', indicating that students struggle with English rhythm and melody the most. Furthermore, 25% of instructors report coupled issues with stress and intonation' and 'word and sentence rhythm', highlighting the complexities of speech flow and patterns. Vowel sounds and word rhythm pose substantial challenges for 12.5% of students. These findings indicate the need of focusing pronunciation teaching on rhythmic and intonation aspects in order to improve students' spoken English fluency and comprehension.

Question Nine: In what way do pronunciation challenges affects students' speaking skills?

Investigates how pronunciation difficulties affect English learners' conversational ability. Response analysis demonstrates important impacts: mispronounced words can lead to misunderstandings, diminishing students' self-assurance and participation in speaking tasks. Pronunciation challenges also directly influence fluency, overall speaking proficiency, and the clarity of speech. These issues highlight the essential requirement for targeted pronunciation training in language education to enhance learners' skills and self-assurance, leading to more effective and successful communication.

Question Ten: Do pronunciation challenges increase or decrease students' confidence in speaking?

Table 27

Teachers' views about the influence of pronunciation challenges students' confidence in speaking

Options	Number	Percentage
Increase	6	75%
Decrease	2	25%
Total	8	100%

Investigates how pronunciation proficiency influences their self-confidence when speaking English. According to the analysis, 75% of respondents felt that accurate pronunciation enhances confidence, allowing for easier communication and an increased desire to participate in speaking activities. In contrast, 25% say that bad pronunciation lowers confidence because students are afraid of making mistakes and being embarrassed, which makes them more self-conscious and less likely to speak. These results underline the crucial relationship between pronunciation and confidence; proficient pronunciation abilities can

empower students, boosting their engagement and overall language development, while challenges can impede active participation and slow progress.

Question Eleven: What are the factors that influence your learners' pronunciation?

Table 28

The main factors that influence learners' pronunciation

Options	Number	Percentage
Mother tongue interference	2	25%
The amount of exposure	1	12.5%
Learners' motivation	0	0%
Pronunciation activities	0	0%
B+C	4	50%
A+B+C+D	1	12.5%
Total	8	100%

This question Seeks to identify the most important aspects influencing language learners' pronunciation skills. 50% of respondents declared that the amount of exposure and learners' motivation are the factors that influence on the students pronunciation. While, Mother tongue interference is significant component; affecting of learners, (25%) demonstrating that native language phonetics has a strong influence on English pronunciation. Another important element influencing (12.5%) of learners is their exposure to the target language, which includes listening and speaking opportunities. Interestingly, the sum of all identified elements, including mother tongue interference, exposure, learners' motivation, and pronunciation exercises, influences (12.5%) of learners, showing the complex, multiple nature of pronunciation acquisition.

Question Twelve: In the course of teaching pronunciation, what consonants you noticed are mostly mispronounced by students?

Question 12 aims to identify specific consonant problems in order to personalize pronunciation instruction efficiently. Teachers described a range of often mispronounced consonants, including complex clusters in words ending with 'ing', 't', 'th, as well as individual sounds like /r/, /l/, /θ/ (as in "think"), /ð/ (as in "this"), and /ʃ/ (as in "ship"). There are also concerns with voicing in 'p' and 'b', as well as the pronunciation of grammatical endings such as 'ed' and's'. While one teacher respondent focuses on vowels and stress, the entire input emphasizes a variety of consonantal pronunciation challenges caused by students' language origins and the complexities of English phonetics.

Section Four: Teachers' suggestions

Question Thirteen: If you have any suggestion regarding teaching speaking and pronunciation, we would be glad to share it with us?

The last section of the questionnaire aims to ask teachers for any other suggestions that they may have that could provide us with more accurate information about the topic of this study. Only Three teachers of eight presented extra suggestions which are summarized as following:

- ✓ Students should be constantly encouraged to work as hard, they can on their pronunciation. They should be provided, whenever possible with the right amount of feedback.

- ✓ Teachers are advised to give learners more space to practice on their speaking skills. Also, focusing on reading modules.

- ✓ Students assimilate natural speech patterns and pronunciation, it was also suggested that they increase their exposure to native speakers and engage with native language content through podcasts and television programs. Teachers were encouraged to model

clear pronunciation on a regular basis, as well as practice consistently. These different approaches highlight the importance of exposure, practice, feedback, and modeling language learning approach for improving comprehensive approach to enhancing speaking ability and pronunciation.

1.2.4. *Discussion of the Results*

The teachers' questionnaire is planned for Oral expression and phonetics teachers. To investigating their perceptions in concerning pronunciation challenges on students' speaking skills, where the majority of the teachers who were questioned are qualified and have experience in teaching speaking skills which suggests their ability to provide more reliable answers.

Both pronunciation and speaking are considered difficult and complex skills for EFL students. From teachers' perspectives, they feel comfortable and neutral when teaching speaking skills. They also reported that students have an average level in speaking, indicating that students face difficulties with grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation. Additionally, students often avoid participating in Oral Expression sessions due to a lack of motivation, confidence, and anxiety about speaking and expressing themselves.

Teachers also noted that students face various challenges in pronunciation, including stress and intonation, word and sentence rhythm, and consonant and vowel sounds. Pronunciation issues are linked to decreased student confidence and participation in speaking activities. These difficulties are significantly influenced by mother tongue interference, motivation, and exposure to English.

Participants highlighted the importance of increased speaking practice, exposure to native speech, and regular feedback to improve student performance. They emphasized the benefit of targeted pronunciation practice, especially for difficult consonants, complex sounds, and stress patterns.

Overall, the findings indicate the need to combine practical language use with theoretical learning to boost students' confidence and fluency in speaking skills and pronunciation. This underscores the importance of flexible and adaptable teaching methods in language learning.

Conclusion

The current chapter focuses on the perceptions of students and teachers regarding pronunciation challenges and their impact on students' speaking skills. Two questionnaires were used, the first questionnaire for students and the second one for teachers, to gather data on their perceptions and experiences. The results show that the majority of students who faced difficulties in pronunciation cannot speak fluently. Students chose motivation in speaking classes but also reported anxiety and fear of making mistakes. They also struggled with pronouncing certain sounds. Teachers noted that students had difficulties with stress and consonants. The study concludes that tracking down ways to improve pronunciation is helpful for students to overcome these challenges and improve their speaking skills.

<center>**Limitations of the study**</center>

The present study has been reached significant results; however, there were some of difficulties and problems that faced us in our research that may affect the reliability of the findings.

- ✓ The first limitation is that the most significant of these is the problem encountered in the process of collecting the data needed for the practical part of the research.
- ✓ The second limitation is the challenge the lack of phonetics and oral expression teachers in the department of foreign languages, necessitating getting in touch with teachers of other modules to reinforce the collected information.
- ✓ Finally, finding relevant references proved to be a major limitation.

Recommendations and Suggestions

The research provides recommendations and suggestions are proposals for learners, teachers, and future researchers.

- **For EFL Learners.**

  ✓ Students should realize the important of accuracy in pronunciation to comprehend the listener.

  ✓ Learners shouldn't be afraid of making mistakes, because it is part of language learning process. However, should be careful for making the same mistakes once again.

  ✓ Spend much time and effort to work on their weaknesses, and improving their speaking skills.

  ✓ Learners should utilize pronunciation apps or websites to receive feedback and enhance their pronunciation skills in speaking.

  ✓ Chatting with native speakers in English language to gain much vocabulary, and to enhance pronunciation.

- **For EFL Teachers.**

  ✓ They should create a positive environment to minimize the barriers in classroom.

  ✓ Teachers should inform their students about the importance of speaking skill and how they can improve it.

  ✓ They help students overcome their lack of confidence and provide them with many opportunities to practice pronouncing words correctly and have proper conversations in English. They will be more confident to speak up if they are proficient speakers.

- **For future Researchers.**

✓ This study focuses on the effects of pronunciation challenges and the important of speaking skills for EFL learners.

✓ The current research, recommended to conduct and using different research methods (interview, observation, experiment).

✓ As researchers for future research on this topic, we recommend selecting more representative sample with more time and better settings.

General conclusion

It is widely acknowledged that EFL learners need to improve their foreign language speaking skills to achieve language mastery. Students face numerous pronunciation challenges. In this regard, the effectiveness of pronunciation challenges students' speaking skills. Additionally, this study aims at investigating, analyzing, and identifying pronunciation challenges faced by students and suggests solutions to these challenges in light of the potential effect of learners' speaking skills.

To achieve the aims of this research, two main questionnaires were used. The first questionnaire was administered to third-year students, and the second was given to eight Oral Expression and Phonetics teachers in the Department of Foreign Languages at the University Centre of Mila. The goal was to investigate the effects of pronunciation challenges on students' speaking skills in the context of learning English as a foreign language. Understanding these issues is crucial for both students and teachers.

This research consists of two chapters. The theoretical part contains two sections: one on speaking skills and the other on pronunciation. The practical part employs a descriptive research methodology. To meet the study's objectives, two questionnaires were conducted: one for third-year students and the other for teachers of Oral Expression and Phonetics at Mila University Centre.

The main outcomes obtained from the questionnaires and data analysis revealed the impact of pronunciation challenges on students' speaking skills. Students face numerous challenges in speaking, including a lack of vocabulary and pronunciation skills, a lack of confidence, and a fear of making grammatical mistakes. Additionally, students struggle with English pronunciation, particularly with certain consonant sounds that are influenced by their mother tongue and a lack of motivation. These challenges are largely due to mother-tongue interference and limited exposure to English, which significantly affect student confidence and participation.

Teachers emphasized the importance of increased speaking practice, exposure to native speakers, and targeted pronunciation training. The findings recommend combining practical application with theoretical learning to enhance confidence and fluency, highlighting the need for adaptive teaching methods.

All in all, addressing pronunciation challenges is crucial for enhancing EFL learners' speaking skills. The major findings can help EFL teachers, curriculum designers, and educational policymakers develop methods and strategies to improve pronunciation instruction. By emphasizing pronunciation within the EFL framework, we can promote improved communication skills, student confidence, and overall language competency.

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Appendices

Appendix 01: Students' Questionnaire

Dear learners,

This survey is a part of a research project for the achievement of Master Degree in Language Didactics. It aims at investigating the effects of pronunciation challenges on students' speaking skills. Your participation in this survey would help of great assistance in the completion of this research. Kindly answer the following questions by ticking √ the right box (es) or by writing in the space provided. "Thank you in advance for your cooperation."

Section one: Background Information

Q1: Gender: Male ◯   Female ◯

Q2: How do you consider/ describe your English language ability?

a- Below Average ◯

b- Average ◯

c- Good ◯

d- Very Good ◯

Q3: How long have you been learning English language?

a. 10 years ◯

b. 11 years ◯

c. 12 years ◯

d. More ◯

Section Two: speaking skills

Q4: How do you feel when speaking in classroom?

a. Anxious ◯

b. Motivated ◯

c. Confident ◯

Q5: How do you evaluate your general speaking skill?

a. Excellent ◯

b. Good

c. Average ◯

d. Below average ◯

Q6: In speaking, do you focus more on?

a. Fluency ◯

b. Accuracy ◯

c. Both ◯

Q7: How often do you participate in Oral Expression class?

a. Always ◯

b. Often ◯

c. Never ◯

Q8: In your opinion, what are the biggest challenges you faced in speaking? (You may select more than one option)

a. Pronunciation ◯

b. Vocabulary ◯

c. Grammar ◯

d. Speed of speech ◯

e. Confidence ◯

Q9: Do you practice how to say a given word in your mind before speaking it?

a. Yes ◯

b. No ◯

Q10: How do you usually practice your speaking skills? (You may select more than one option)

a. Speaking with native ◯

b. Language learning app ◯

c. Online course ◯

d. Classroom setting ◯

If there are others, please mention them here:

……………………………………………………………………………………………………

Section Three: Pronunciation

Q11: How do you check your accuracy?

a. By recording yourself ◯

b. By teachers ◯

c. By comparing your pronunciation to a native speaker ◯

Q12: Do you recall how your teacher pronounced a given word?

a. Yes ⬭   b. No ⬭

Q13: How many times you recognize that words are pronounced correctly?

a. Very often ⬭

b. Often ⬭

c. Rarely ⬭

Q14: How often you look up the pronunciation of new words?

a. Always ⬭

b. Sometimes ⬭

c. Rarely ⬭

d. Never ⬭

Q15: How often do you find difficulty in pronouncing new words?

a. Very often ⬭

b. Sometimes ⬭

c. Rarely ⬭

Q16: which specific English sounds do you find most challenging to pronounce?

a. The sound / Th / /ð/ ⬭

b. The sound / sh / /ʃ/ ⬭

c. The sound / ch/ /tʃ/ ⬭

d. The sound / v/ ⬭

e. None of them ⬭

- Others, please mention them here:

………………………………………………………………………………………

Section Four: Relationship between Speaking skill and Pronunciation

Q17: How much does pronunciation affects on speaking skill?

a. Major ⬭

b. Intermediate ⬭

c. Minimal effects ⬭

Appendix 02: Teachers' Questionnaire

Dear Teachers,

This questionnaire is a part of research work. The aim of this study is to investigate the effects of pronunciation difficulties on students speaking skills. You are kindly requested to answer the following questions by ticking (√) the appropriate box (es) or by making a full statement when necessary:

Thank you in advance for your collaboration

Section one: General Information:

Q1: What degree do you hold?

     a- Master

     b- Magister degree

     c- PhD degree

Q2: How long have you been teaching English?

     a- 1-5 years

     b- 5-10 years

     c- More than 10 years

Section Two: speaking skill

Q3: How long have you been teaching speaking skills?

     a- 1-3 years

     b- 3-5 years

     c- More than 5 years

Q4: How do you feel about teaching speaking skill?

     a- Comfortable

     b- Uncomfortable

     c- Neutral

Q5: How would you describe third-year students' level in speaking?

     a- High

     b- Average

     c- Low

Q6: What language difficulties do third-year students commonly encounter in speaking English? (You may choose multiple options)

     a- Difficulties in grammar

b- Lack of vocabulary

c- Lack of pronunciation

d- Interference of the mother tongue

Q7: In your view, students avoid participating in oral sessions because of?

a- Anxiety

b- Fear

c- Lack of confidence

d- Lack of motivation

Section Three: Pronunciation

Q8: Based on your experience, what are the most common pronunciation challenges that students usually face?

a- Consonants sounds

b- Vowel sounds

c- Stress and intonation

d- Word and sentence rhythm

Other please specify: ………………………………………………………………………………

Q9: In what way do pronunciation challenges affect students' speaking skills?

………………………………………………………………………………………………………

…

Q10: Do pronunciation challenges increase or decrease students' confidence in speaking?

a- Increase

b- Decrease

Please justify: ………………………………………………………………………………………

Q11: What are the factors that influence your learners' pronunciation?

a- Mother Tongue interference

b- The Amount of exposure

c- Learners' motivation

d- Pronunciation activities

Q12: In the course of teaching pronunciation, what consonants you noticed are mostly mispronounced by students?

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Section Four: Teachers' Suggestions

Q13: If you have any suggestions regarding teaching speaking and pronunciation, we would be glad to share it with us?

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الملخص

يحاول البحث الحالي دراسة تحديات النطق أثناء التحدث. ويهدف إلى استكشاف التحديات الرئيسية لنطق اللغة الإنجليزية باعتبارها مواجهة لمتعلمي اللغة الأجنبية في التحدث وتقليل الصعوبات التي يواجهها الطلاب وتحسين نطقهم للكلمات بدقة في التحدث باللغة. بالإضافة إلى ذلك، فإنه يسعى إلى جمع رؤى من كل من الطلاب والمعلمين باستخدام الاستبيانات لفهم وجهات نظرهم. وعليه، وفي سياق هذه الدراسة، تثار ثلاثة أسئلة بحثية رئيسية: (1) ما هي تحديات النطق التي يواجهها الطلاب أثناء التحدث؟ وعلى أي مستويات يمكن إيجاد هذه التحديات؟ (2) كيف يمكن معالجة هذه التحديات؟ (3) ما هي تصورات المعلمين فيما يتعلق بتحديات النطق في مهارات التحدث لدى الطلاب؟ ولجمع البيانات اللازمة، وللإجابة على هذه الأسئلة تم اختيار المنهج الوصفي، وتم تصميم استبيانين. تم تقديم الاستبيان الأول إلى خمسين طالبا من طلاب السنة الثالثة في اللغة الإنجليزية في قسم اللغات الأجنبية بمركز جامعة ميلة، والاستبيان الثاني موجه إلى ثمانية من أساتذة التعبير الشفهي والصوتيات. النتائج الرئيسية لهذه الدراسة هي التحقيق في صعوبات النطق الخاصة التي واجهها الطلاب. ويهدف إلى التعرف على مدى فعالية تحديات النطق على مهارات التحدث لديهم في تعلم اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية. ومن ثم، فإن الهدف هو تمكين المتعلمين من تطوير الثقة والكفاءة في مهارات الاتصال لديهم في عملية تعلم اللغة.

الكلمات المفتاحية: النطق، اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية، مهارات التحدث، التحديات، تصورات المتعلمين والمعلمين.

Résumé

La recherche actuelle tente d'étudier les défis de la prononciation lors de la parole. Il vise à explorer les principaux défis de prononciation rencontrés par les apprenants de l'anglais comme langue étrangère à l'oral et à minimiser les difficultés des étudiants et à améliorer leur prononciation précise des mots lorsqu'ils parlent une langue. De plus, il cherche à recueillir les idées des étudiants et des enseignants en utilisant des questionnaires pour comprendre leurs points de vue. Ainsi, dans le contexte de cette étude, trois questions de recherche principales sont soulevées : (1) Quels sont les problèmes de prononciation rencontrés par les étudiants lorsqu'ils parlent ? Et à quels niveaux ces défis peuvent-ils se situer ? (2) Comment ces défis peuvent-ils être relevés ? (3) Quelles sont les perceptions des enseignants concernant les problèmes de prononciation dans les compétences orales des élèves ? Pour recueillir les données nécessaires, et en réponse à ces questions une méthode descriptive est sélectionnée, deux questionnaires sont conçus. Le premier questionnaire est soumis à cinquante étudiants d'anglais de troisième année du Département de langues étrangères du Centre universitaire de Mila, et le deuxième questionnaire est administré à huit professeurs d'expression orale et de phonétique. Les principales conclusions de cette étude visent à étudier les difficultés particulières de prononciation rencontrées par les étudiants. Il vise à identifier l'efficacité des défis de prononciation sur leurs compétences orales dans l'apprentissage de l'anglais comme langue étrangère. L'objectif est donc de permettre aux apprenants de développer leur confiance et leur maîtrise de leurs compétences en communication dans le cadre du processus d'apprentissage des langues.

Mots clés : prononciation, anglais langue étrangère, compétences orales, défis, perceptions des apprenants et des enseignants.