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Investigating the Extent to which the Tebessian Accent Interferes in English Pronunciation

The Case of 3rd Year EFL Students at Larbi Tebessi University

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Success never resides in the world of weak wishes,

but in the palace of purposeful plans and prayerful persistence.

-William Arthur Ward-

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In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

I am thankful to ALLAH the Almighty for giving my soul strength, persistence and devotion to finish this work; I would have never been able to do it without Him

I dedicate this work to

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When I decided to write the dedication section, I thought a lot about who to dedicate these words for, who to mention, and who inspired me during this journey...

***My Father**, My Sister **'Nawal'** and My Seven handsome **Brothers**.*

*My soulmate **'Sihem'** and My Best Friend **'Hadjer'**.*

*My partner in all ups and downs in the journey of university **'Hassina'**.*

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*My sweet cat **'Bianca'***

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أمي لقد حققت حُلمكِ و ها أنا خريجة اليوم أمامك كما تمنيتِ...

لَوْلاكِ أُمي ما اكملتُ الطريق...

هي امي ، ومأمني ، وأماني ، وأمتي ، ومسكني ، وسكني ، وروحي ، وراحتي ، وكل كلي...

أنت يا امي والباقي تعوضه الأيام...

فأنت لي الدنيا وماملكت...

اللهم أمي ثم أمي ثم أمي فلا تريني فيها ابدا بأسا يبكيني يا ربي لأخر يوم في عمري واعني على برها ورعايتها وطاعتها كما تحب وترضى يا ربي وإغفر لي نْبي وتقصيري في حقها وأرزقني عفوها عني يا ربي

اللهمَ بيتا و نجاحات و حياة كاملةً لا تخلو من صوتها...

MEBROUK Achouak

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List of Acronyms and Symbols

AA: Algerian Arabic

APA: American Psychological Association

BBC: British Broadcasting Company

CA: Contrastive Analysis

EA: Error Analysis

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

ESL: English as a Second Language

FL: Foreign Language

L1: First Language

L2: Second Language

L3: Third Language

MSA: Modern Standard Arabic

MT: Mother Tongue

PI: Phonological Interference

TEFL: Teaching English as a Foreign Language

TL: Target Language

Abstract

The present dissertation investigates the extent to which the Tebessian accent crosses its path into English pronunciation, mainly with third-year students of the English Department at Larbi Tebessi University. It attempts to shed some light on the Tebessian accent and its effects on the appropriateness of students' English pronunciation. Two hypotheses underlay this study. First, the extent of the Tebessian accent interference in English pronunciation is high. Second, phonological interference leads EFL students to make phonological errors. A mixed-method approach was used to serve the research aim. A structured questionnaire was also assigned to five oral expression/phonetics teachers in the department of English to seek answers to the first and the second research questions, the responses were analysed quantitatively in order to examine the first hypothesis. Besides, eight participants from the population of the class of third-year incorporating 147 students were randomly selected as the sample of this research. They were audio-recorded, with the aim of inspecting the phonological errors resulting from the interference and to answer the third research question, the students' utterances were analysed qualitatively following the procedure stated in the Error Analysis hypothesis in order to test the second research hypothesis. Even though, few limitations were present during the process of compiling this research, the obtained results indicate that both research hypotheses are approved. Hence, the extent of interference of the Tebessian accent in third-year students' English pronunciation is indeed high, and the latter has an effect on the production of phonological errors. Finally, several practical implications and recommendation were proposed to overcome language interference obstacles.

Keywords: phonological interference, Tebessian accent, English pronunciation, phonological errors

General Introduction

1. Background of the Study

Human beings depended on spoken languages for communication for many centuries until written scripts were invented. Those scripts are no more than a realisation of the spoken languages. Nowadays, all languages around the world have written scripts, but people still communicate more through spoken languages. The focus on communication through English led to the emergence of EFL learning; with it becoming prevalent worldwide, it could not be completely disadvantage-free (Derakhshan & Karimi, 2015). Among the problems that came into view, the phonological interference of the mother tongue in the production of English speech can be noticeable. That is why many researchers investigated the essence of phonological interference (henceforth PI) and its effects.

EFL students who learn in a non-native environment can face many obstacles that deprive them of speaking the language correctly. PI may take form in approximately three categories. Crystal (2003) suggested sound addition, sound omission, and sound replacement. These phenomena might be caused by the lack of exposure to the target language or the lack of understanding of the target language's phonological rules.

Weinreich (1957, as mentioned in Shanmugam, 2018) confirmed that the problem of PI is concerned with how a speaker perceives and reproduces the sounds of one language in terms of another. What we can grasp from his idea is that a learner produces an utterance in the target language using the phonological rules of his mother tongue. He further explains that the factors of this interference can be primarily from differences in the stocks of phonemes of the languages in contact as Arabic and English. Nunan (2001, p. 89) supports Werinreich's idea by saying: "Where the first and second language rules are not the same, errors are likely to occur as a result of interference between the two languages." Furthermore,

in Moulton's contrastive analysis of English and German (1962, p. 5), he shifted the attention to the importance of phonetics in EFL learning, as he stated: ''many of the difficulties which our students have with German pronunciation are of a phonetic rather than a phonemic nature''.

In relation to our research, where a specific Arabic dialect (the dialect of Tebessa) interferes with learners' English pronunciation, researchers like Moosa (1972) reported that /p/ and /b/ sounds are two different phonemes, and they can be distinguished by English native speakers. However, Arab learners cannot make a clear distinction between the two consonants (p. 44). Therefore, the mispronunciation of some English sounds by Arab learners results from the overuse and communication of the Arabic language. Moosa (1972), in another study, says that the impact of the Arabic mother tongue has many different effects on different levels, especially the phonological one.

Languages have their intonation, and any change in it may lead to a change in meaning. Intonation might carry an additional meaning to the one conveyed by the phonemic segments. Arabic native speakers have no problem with intonation because it is clear and simple. (Tharpe, 2010, as cited in Al-Zayed, 2017) offered an overview of features that may cause PI; she carried out a discussion of best practices for teaching adult language learners and gave specific suggestions for addressing pronunciation and intonation interference. Going with the same path, AL-Dilaimy (2012) discussed some phonetic and phonological problems as reflected in the production of various English speech sounds. These problems are mostly related to the relatively complicated orthographic system of English taught to Arab students at earlier stages of English language learning and the differences between Arabic and English sound systems.

To conclude, several studies show that the differences and similarities are there whether to increase or decrease the Arabic language interference in English pronunciation. Due to the evident differences between the two language systems, non-native English learners face many difficulties producing correct pronunciation of words or native-like utterances.

2. Statement of the Problem

Owing to the fact that English is taught as a foreign language in Algeria, EFL learners cannot easily get rid of their distinctive native language features; mainly the phonological features. Consequently, those students are, in one way or another, affected by their L1 interference into L3. First language interference happens when the native language intrudes into the process of learning a foreign one. Phonologically speaking, the interference of the native accent can lead learners to make errors. Although this phenomenon has been investigated previously in literature, it needs further exploration. Hence, we want to be among the first to inspect the Tebessian accent interference in English pronunciation because we noticed its existence during our academic journey in the English Department at the University of Tebessa.

3. Aims of the Study

The aim behind conducting this research is to explore the extent of the interference of the Tebessian accent in the English pronunciation in EFL classes and to detect the phonological errors produced by Tebessian students of English. Additionally, our purpose is eventually to provide a better understanding of the concept of PI, motivating the learners to be aware of their speech and opening the door for further inspection of this phenomenon in Algeria.

4. Research Questions and Hypotheses

This research seeks to answer the following questions:

1. To what extent does the Tebessian accent interfere with the English pronunciation?

2. What are the causes that trigger the occurrence of the Tebessian accent Interference in English?

3. What types of phonological errors are most likely to happen?

To answer the above questions, these hypotheses are formulated:

1. The extent of the Tebessian accent interference in English pronunciation is high.

2. Phonological interference leads the EFL students to make phonological errors.

5. Research Methodology

a. Research Design and Instruments

The area of investigation in this exploratory research is approached via a mixed method (qualitative and quantitative) approach by using two data collection tools: questionnaire and audio recordings. First, a structured questionnaire is assigned to oral expression and phonetic teachers in the department of English in order to answer the first research hypothesis. The questionnaire is divided into four sections. The first section is devoted to the personal background of teachers. Next, the second section tackles pronunciation issues in the class. The third section discusses pronunciation errors and the last section is about first language interference. Moreover, the questionnaire consists of open-ended, closed-ended, and multiple-choice questions. Second, an audio recording process is processed in order to collect better and enough data to answer the second research hypothesis.

b. Population and Sampling

To accomplish this research, EFL teachers (specifically instructors of Oral Expression and Phonetics) at Larbi Tebessi University and third-year class including 147 students are

selected as the present research population; 5 out of 9 teachers participated in filling in the questionnaire. In addition, the audio-recorded sample ended up being eight (8) students in total, which is achieved through the random systematic sampling technique. Their speech is recorded during several oral expression sessions. After collecting all the data needed, they are examined, and the results are analysed and quantified.

6. Structure of the Study

The intended structure according to which this dissertation is organised is as follows:

Chapter one consists of a literature review that displays a theoretical ground introducing the essential concepts upon which our research is based. This chapter is divided into two sections. The first section, entitled 'Arabic and English Phonological Systems', sheds some light on the differences between the two systems of communication, providing a detailed comparison of the phonological features of each language. The second section, labelled 'English as a Foreign Language and First Language Interference, describes English as a foreign language and its status in Algeria. Subsequently, the section reviews the role of L1 interference in FL learning and how the resulted errors should be identified using the error analysis process (EA). Chapter two is devoted to the methodology framework ranging from data collection to data analysis and discussion of results. It comprises three sections; the first section reviews the research approach, the research design/ method and data collection tools. The second section is devoted to data analysis and interpretation. The final section involves the discussion of the results enclosing with limitations of the study and recommendations.

Chapter One: Language Interference in EFL Learning: Theoretical Review

Introduction

Due to the fact that the world has gone through many innovations, new technologies and globalisation, the English language is dominating it in different domains. Northrup (2013, p. 110) has mentioned the statement of the Economist that claimed that English, as a lingua franca, is the leader in different fields in the world, including business, science and particularly, culture. On top of that, the education area was also influenced by the spread of English, leading to the emergence of many related fields like English as a Foreign Language.

Section One: The Arabic and English Phonological Systems

1.1.1. The Arabic Language

Arabic is the system of communication of various nations around the world, which belongs to the" Semitic Family" of languages. It is the standard variety used in Islamic countries as it holds a great value being the language of the Holy Quran. Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) is today's version of Classical Arabic (CA), the highly archaic variety and the most dominant written register of Arabic (Putten, 2020). While Arabic is a vivid language, no one from the Arab world was born speaking it. Instead, an Arab's mother tongue would be the regional variety he/she was born in. In the case of Algeria, the vernacular "Daridja" is used as a daily life communication tool (Saadane & Habash, 2015).

1.1.1.1. Algerian Arabic. The Algerian variety of Arabic (AA in short) is composed of complex linguistic features due to Arabization processes and the deep colonization that lasted over 130 years. Phonologically speaking, most Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) vowels are reduced or deleted to a schwa in Algerian Arabic; for example, the word /fæhima/, which is translated to 'He understood', becomes /fhəm/ in AA, and /ʒæmæl/ 'camel' turns into /ʒmæl/. (Saadane & Habash, 2015). The most noticeable element in Algerian Arabic is that it uses many borrowed words from languages that existed within the Algerian

community throughout history, such as Berber, Spanish, and French (Afkir, 2020). It has many variations and regional dialects all across the country, each unique to its region, such as Tebessa, Jijel, and Constantine. Mazouni (1969, p. 13) writes: "Dialectal Arabic in Algeria is one of the defining features of the Algerian people and the native language of the majority of the population".

1.1.1.2. The Dialect of Tebessa. The Tebessian dialect is spoken in the province of Tebessa, which is about 20 kilometres away from the Tunisian borders. Due to this, the Tebessian dialect shows much resemblance in the speech patterns with the Tunisian variety. They are very close in terms of intonation, patterns, stress, and rhythm. What is remarkable about the dialect of Tebessa is that, unlike other dialects, there is a break between words in speech that makes the speaker has a slow flow leaving the listener the ability to understand the speech well. One apparent feature of this variety is the collapse of short vowels; for example, the word /hal:b/ in MSA, which means milk, is pronounced /hlib/ in the Tebessian dialect. (Mesrouk, 2021)

Another aspect of this variety is the accentuated rhoticity of the /ر/ sound, such as /tɻuːh/, which means 'You go'. Replacing the sound /ج/ with the sound /ز/ is also very common among Tebessa people saying words like جوز (walnut) as /زوز/ and عجوز (old lady) as /عزوز/. In addition, a habitual rising intonation exists in the way Tebessians call someone by his/her name; for instance, instead of 'أ كريم', it goes 'أ كريما'. One final worth mentioning feature is the addition of the sound /اي/ /i/ in all past tensed verbs for both feminine and masculine forms, e.g. 'جيتي' (You came) 'شريتي' (You bought) 'قريتي' (you studied).

Listing the phonological features that belong to the Tebessian accent can elicit their effect on the production of English speech. Avery and Ehrlich (1992, cited in Gilakjani and Ahmadi, 2011) declare that the sound pattern of the learner's first language is transferred into

the target language and is likely to cause foreign accents. The mispronunciations of words by non-native speakers reflect the influence of the sounds, rules, stress, and intonation of their native language. Accordingly, the aim of this research is to discover the extent of the interference of the Tebessian accent features within the English speech production of third-year EFL students.

1.1.1.3. The Arabic Phonological System. The Arabic language is written and read from right to left; it has 28 consonants and 8 vowel phonemes. The most distinct feature of the Arabic Phonological System is that it covers the maximum number of sounds available in other languages, which makes it very comprehensible. Arabic sounds are divided according to specific criteria; among them, we can mention:

   a. The way of pronunciation and how the breath is pushed from the lungs: consonants are articulated when the breath is blocked, while vowels are articulated with no obstruction to the breath.
   b. The organs of speech.
   c. The manner of articulation.

Table 1

The Arabic Alphabets

ي	و	ه	ن	م	ل	ك	ق	ف	غ	ع	ظ	ط	ض	ص	ش	س	ز	ر	ذ	د	خ	ح	ج	ت	ب	أ
y	w	h	n	m	l	k	q	f	gh	ʿ	ẓ	ṭ	ḍ	ṣ	sh	s	z	r	dh	d	kh	ḥ	j	t	b	ʾ

Note. Extracted from Arabic and English Phonetics: A Comparative Study by F. Javed, 2013, the Criterion an International Journal in English. Copyright 2013.

Consonants. Alsa'raan (1962, p. 153) provides the classification of the Arabic consonants according to the place and the manner of articulation as follows:

- **Bilabial-Plosive:** the lower lip comes in contact with the upper lip and produces an obstruction in the articulation of the sound[ب] [b] as in برد'cold'.

- **Bilabial-Nasal:** the air escapes through the nose, but it does not go through the mouth; it is stopped by the complete closure of the lips to produce [م] [m] as in ملاك 'Angel'.

- **Bilabial-Glide:** the back part of the tongue is raised towards the velum while rounding the lips resulting in the production of [و] [w] such as ورد 'flowers'.

- **Labiodental-Fricative:** the lower lip meets the upper teeth and produces [ف] [f]as in فوز 'win'.

- **Interdental-Fricative:** the tip of the tongue touches the lower and upper teeth to articulate [ث] [ذ][ظ] [Ө] [ð] [ðˤ] like ثعلب 'fox, ظل 'shadow', ذكر 'male'.

- **Alveolar-Nasal:** the active articulator is the tip of the tongue, and the passive articulator is the alveolar ridge; this results in the production of [ن] [n] as in نظيف 'clean'.

- **Alveolar-Lateral:** with the tongue touching the alveolar ridge, [ل] [l] sound is produced: ليل 'night'.

- **Alveolar-Tap:** the tongue moves towards the alveolar ridge, makes a momentary contact, and then immediately withdraws to its position of rest to produce [ر] [r] ربيع 'spring'.

- **Dental-Plosive:** the tip of the tongue and the upper teeth come together, and the closure in the mouth is abruptly released as air escapes producing the sounds [ت] [ط] [د] [ض] [t] [th] [d] تاج 'crown', دب 'bear', ضعيف 'weak', طفل 'child'.

- **Dental-Fricative:** the lower teeth meet the upper teeth to produce [س] [ص] [ز] [s] [z] ساعة 'hour', صديق 'friend', زرافه 'giraffe'.

- **Palatal-Affricate:** the front of the tongue meets the hard palateto articulate [ج] [dʒ] جنوب 'south'.

- **Palatal-Fricative:** [ش] [ʃ] sound is pronounced by the front of the tongue getting close to the hard palate: شمس 'sun'.

- **Palatal-Glide**: the front of the tongue comes just a little close to the hard palate to produce [ي] [j] يد 'hand'.

- **Velar-Plosive:** to articulate the sound [ك] [k], the back of the tongue comes in contact with the soft palate and produces an obstruction كبير 'big'.

- **Velar-Fricative:** in the production of the sounds [غ] [خ] [x] [ɣ], the back of the tongue touches the uvula, but the air escapes with friction. خيمة'tent', غيمة 'cloud'.

- **Glottal-Fricative:** the vocal cords are responsible for the articulation of the sounds[ء] [ه] [ʔ] [h]; they are produced by an obstruction as the air escapes from the lungs with audible friction through a narrow glottis هواء 'air'.

- **Pharyngeal-Plosive:** [ع] is articulated with the tongue root against the back of the throat (the pharynx) علم 'knowledge'.

- **Pharyngeal-Fricative:** placing the root of the tongue against the back of the throat with less pressure results in articulating [ح] [h] حلم 'dream'.

- **Uvular-Plosive:** the back of the tongue touches the uvula and produces obstruction in the production of the sound [ق] [q] قلم 'pen'.

The following table illustrates the classification of the Arabic consonants:

Table 2

List of the Place and the Manner of Articulation of Arabic Sounds.

	B	L	I	A	D	P	V	G	Ph	U
Plosive	ب				ت,ط,د,ض		ك		ع	ق
Affricate						ج				
Fricative		ف	ث,ذ,ظ		س,ص,ز	ش	غ,خ	ء, ه	ح	
Nasal	م			ن						
Lateral				ل						
Tap				ر						
Glide	و					ي				

Note. Reproduced from "An investigation into the Differences between English and Arabic Consonant and Vowel Sounds: A Contrastive Study with Pedagogical Implications", by Amer, W, M., 2001, The Islamic University of Gaza: Palestine.

Vowels. The Arabic language has mainly eight vowel phonemes, as it is shown in the following table:

Table 3

The List of the Arabic Vowel Phonemes.

Short Vowel	Example	Transliteration
Dammah ضمةٌ	فُ فٌ	fu- fun
Fathah ـَ فتحةً	رَ رً	ra – ran
Kasrah ـِ كسرةٍ	بِ بٍ	bi – bin
Sukūn سكونْ	قَلْ	Qul
Shaddah ّ شدة	عَلَّمَ	ʕallama
Long Vowel	**Example**	**Transliteration**
ـُوْ	شُو	Shū
ـَاْ	حَا	Hā
ـِيْ	فِي	Fī

Note. Adapted from *The Arabic Alphabet: Reading and Writing the Arabic Script* by Hussain, S., 2009, Arabic-Studio.

Hussain (2009) explains each vowel as follows:

- **Dammah:** it comes above the consonant representing a short vowel /u/.

- **Fathah:** it represents a short vowel /a/.

- **Kasrah:** it comes written below the consonant; it represents the short vowel /i/.

- **Sukūn:** whenever a consonant does not have a vowel, it receives the sukūn mark; it represents the end of a closed syllable.

- **Shaddah:** it indicates doubling a consonant or putting emphasis on it.

1.1.2. The English Language

The English language has a very ancient history; it is a West Germanic language belonging to the Indo-European family. As Britain passed through many invasions that brought their varieties of languages and left different English dialects, the language kept going through changes until it became today's modern English (Crystal, 1994). It is used as

the official language in The United Kingdom, The United States, Australia, New Zealand and many others. This is because it became a lingua franca and almost everyone around the world uses English for communication with people of other nationalities. Burchfield (1985) explains: "English has become a lingua franca to the point that any literate educated person is in a very sense deprived if he does not know English" (as cited in Reagan, 2002). The Arabic and English systems tend to be very different in terms of grammar, vocabulary, phonology, and discourse. Phonologically speaking, the two languages are not only dissimilar in the sounds but also in the placement of vowels and consonants.

The English Phonological System. Unlike the Arabic language, the English language is written and read from left to right. It consists of 24 consonant sounds and 20 vowel sounds (as they have multiple spellings).

Table 4

The English Alphabet

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z
a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	i	j	k	l	m	n	o	p	q	r	s	t	u	v	w	x	y	z

Note. Retrieved from Arabic and English Phonetics: A Comparative Study, by Javed, F. 2013, the Criterion an International Journal in English. Copyright 2013.

Consonants. The English language consonants are classified according to three dimensions the voicing, the place of articulation, and the manner of articulation, as shown in the table below:

Table 5

Summary of English Consonants (IPA)

	Bilabial	**Labiodental**	**Dental**	**Alveolar**	**Palatal**	**Velar**	**Glottal**
Stop							
Voiceless	p			t		k	ʔ
Voiced	b			d		g	
Fricative							
Voiceless		f	θ	s	ʃ		h
Voiced		v	ð	z	ʒ		
Affricate							
voiceless					t͡ʃ		
voiced					d͡ʒ		
Nasal voiced	M			n		ŋ	
Liquid voiced				l	r		
Glide voiced	W				j (y)		

Note. Retrieved from: *"A Handbook of English Phonetics and Phonology: for Advanced Learners of English and Linguistics"* (p. 25), by B. I. Ammar, 2006, Centre de Publication Universitaire. Copyright 2006.

a. **Voicing:** refers to the job that the vocal cords do while articulating consonants. When the vocal cords are nearly together and vibrating, consonants are meant to be voiced, such as /b/ bat, /d/ in 'dig', and /g/ in 'get'. However, when the vocal cords are apart, consonants are considered voiceless, like /p/ in 'spat', /t/ in 'stack', and /k/ in 'scat'.(Ben Ammar, 2006)

In his book "a Handbook of English Phonetics and Phonology: for Advanced Learners of English and Linguistic*s*" (2006), Ben Ammar classified the English consonants in terms of the place and the manner of articulation as follows:

b. The Place of Articulation

- **Bilabial:** the only articulators of the sounds [p], [b], and [m] [w] are the lips being put together or close to each other**.**

- **Labio-Dental:** the lower lip is connected with the upper teeth, producing the sounds [f] and [v].

- **Dental:** these sounds include the upper teeth as the passive articulator, [θ] [ð]

- **Alveolar:** the alveolar ridge is the passive articulator in producing alveolar sounds, and the tip of the tongue is the active one; the sounds include: [t], [d], [n], [s], [z], and [l].

- **Palatal:** these sounds are articulated by raising the tongue against the hard palate, [ʃ], [ʒ], [tʃ], [dʒ], [r], and [y].

- **Velar:** unlike the palatal consonants, these sounds are produced with the back of the tongue against the soft palate, [k], [g], and [ŋ].

- **Glottal:** the leading articulator of these sounds is the glottis, [h] and [ʔ].

c. The Manner of Articulation

- **Stop:** the active articulator touches the passive articulator and completely cuts the airflow through the mouth. It includes [p], [b], [t], [d], [k], [g] and [ʔ].

- **Nasal: [**m], [n], [ŋ] sounds are articulated by the full blockage of the airflow through the mouth, leaving the air pass through the nose.

- **Fricative:** in [θ], [ð] sounds; the tongue gets between the upper and lower teeth and are produced with an airflow coming from the lungs. In [f], [v], the lower lip touches the upper teeth and are articulated with the force of the

airflow. In the case of [s], [z], [ʃ], and [ʒ] sounds the upper and the lower teeth get closer to each other and the sounds uttered with an amount of airflow. Lastly, the fricative sound [h] is glottal which means it is produced from the glottis with the mouth slightly open.

- **Glides:** to articulate [j], [w], and [j], the active articulator approaches the passive articulator, but it is not close enough for the airflow to become turbulent.

- **Affricate:** the sounds [tʃ] and [dʒ] are seen as a sequence of a stop and a fricative together that have similar or sometimes the same places of articulation.

- **Lateral Liquid:** the [l] sound is produced when the tongue is connected to the palate and air passes around the sides.

- **Retroflex Liquid:** [r] is produced with some obstruction; the tongue is curved towards the palate and rolled.

Vowels. The English vowels are a, e, i, o, and u, they "are classified by how high or low the tongue is, if the tongue is in the front or back of the mouth, and whether or not the lips are rounded"(Szczegielniak, p.24). Sometimes the same vowel can be pronounced in different ways, such as 'y' which can be pronounced as 'i' in some cases, and 'w' which can be pronounced as 'u'.

Figure 1
The RP English Vowel Chart.
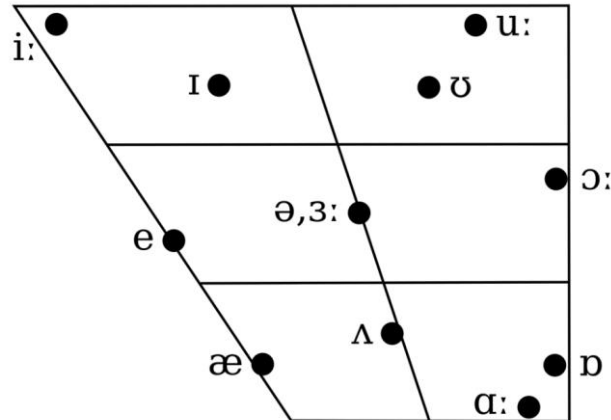
Note. Adapted from: "Teaching of Pronunciation in the ESL Classroom: Universals & Language Specific Properties", by G, Turcsan, 2021. Vol. 40(1) Open-Edition Journals. Copyright 2021

Amer (2001) arranged the English vowel phonemes into two major categories: short vowels and long vowels.

a. Short Vowels

If a word or a syllable contains only one vowel and it initiates a word, or if a word or a syllable has only one vowel that comes between two consonants, vowels are usually short:

- Short a (ă) pronounced /æ/ as in mad, bat, dab, tag, hand.

- Short e (ě) pronounced /ɛ/ as in jet, web, and tent.

- Short i (ĭ) pronounced /ɪ/ as in sit, milk, lips.

- Short o (ŏ) pronounced /ɒ/ as in box, lock, rock.

- Short u (ŭ), pronounced /ʌ/ as in sun, punch, bus, and duck.

b. Long Vowels

Long vowels are called so because when articulated, they are held for a longer time than short sounds, but they are completely different sounds – not a more extended version of the same short sound:

- Long a (ā) pronounced /eɪ/ as in ate, mate, snake

- Long e (ē) pronounced /iː/ as in eat, eve, theme

- Long i (ī) pronounced /aɪ/ as in might, file, nine, rid

- Long o (ō) pronounced /oʊ/ as in oats, joke,

- Long u (ū) pronounced /juː/ in cute, rude

1.1.3. *The Difference between the Arabic and the English Phonological Systems*

Arabic and English oppose each other in multiple characteristics. We can mention the following:

1. The English language consists of more vowels than the Arabic language in terms of numbers. There are 20 English vowels divided into 6 long, 6 short, and 8 diphthongs. However, the Arabic language consists of 3 short, 3 long vowels, and 2 diphthongs which means only 8 vowels.

2. One of the facts that make the difference between English and Arabic sound systems apparent is the presence of some consonants in English that do not exist in Arabic, such as /v/, /p/, and vice versa, for instance, Arabic has the consonant /ظ/ that English do not possess. Learners of English try to find equivalents in their native language (varieties of Arabic) to pronounce them (Javed, 2013, p. 10).

3. In Arabic, pronouncing a word with a long vowel or with a short vowel may lead to a change in the meaning of that word, i.e. the Arabic vowels are phonemic in pronunciation (Ashour, 2017).

4.　An Arabic vowel cannot stand for a syllable by itself.　However, English vowels can stand for a syllable, such as the article "a".

5. In English, we can find consonant clusters, as Ashour (2017) explained: "The maximum number of consonants allowed initially is three while the maximum number of consonants allowed finally in the syllable is four" (p. 140). Nevertheless, consonant clusters do not exist in the Arabic phonological system.

6. Ashour (2017) also mentions another difference: "Arabic is a syllable-timed language while English is stress-timed language". We can understand from her quote that Arab speakers pronounce all the syllables with the same duration of time, whether the syllable is stressed or not. While English native speakers give or need longer time to produce a stressed syllable rather than an unstressed one.

7. In English, changing the place of stress in a word may lead to a total change in meaning and the grammar of the sentence, such as, /'hɪ: 'wen tə 'sku:l/ "He went to school" becomes /'hɪ: 'went 'tu: 'sku:l/. (Hajjaj & Kharma, 1997, p. 29).

1.1.4. *Pronunciation*

Over the past years, pronunciation has been a centre of focus in theories of oral proficiency in language teaching and learning. Dalton & Seidlhofer (1994, p. 3) defined pronunciation as: "The production of significant sound in two senses". They further explained that sound is significant because it is part of a code of a particular language; it is used to achieve meaning in contexts of use. The notion of pronunciation has segmental and supra-segmental features, among them Yates (2002) mentioned:

a. **Sounds:** it includes consonants and vowels.

b. **Stress:** it is the importance given to certain syllables within words, and to certain words within utterances. It is demonstrated by force, volume, pitch change, and

syllable length. Stress has three levels: word stress, sentence stress, and contrastive stress.

c. **Rhythm:** it is the sense of movement similar to that of music; its essential aspect is timing and the number of syllables.

d. **Intonation:** denotes the rise and fall of the voice in speaking. It plays a significant role in signalling the meaning the speaker wants to convey.

e. **Voice Quality:** is pertinent to the speaker; it refers to the characteristic sound of the speaker's voice caused by the mode of vibration of the vocal cords. (Pennington, 1996 as cited in Yates, 2002) demonstrates that voice quality is the aspect of prosody that spans the longest stretches of speech and underlies all other aspects. Voice quality can come out as warm, abrupt, shaky or hesitant.

1.1.5. Accent

It is evident that individuals from all human societies are different from one another in the way they speak; some differences lay solely on the individual himself, while others are associated with certain groups of people. An accent can be identified through region, ethnicity, social class, and even the influence of the native language on foreign accents. Montgomery (1995, p. 69) defined the term 'accent' as an exclusively reserved notion for whole pronunciation patterns typical of a particular region or social group. Different accents are recognised by pronunciation, the distinction of vowels and consonants, stress, prosody, and the quality of voice. Thus, accent is solely restricted to pronunciation features whereas the rest of the linguistic aspects, such as grammar and vocabulary are mostly limited to the notion of dialect; accent is often even included as a subset of dialect. (Romkin et al., 2011)

As mentioned above, accent is affiliated to different individuals, which means as natural as it can be, there are factors and reasons that roam around the use and the existence of accent

a. Identification: it is inevitable to say that by simply hearing someone speaks, we will be able to identify his or her origins.

b. Prestige: certain accents are regarded to have a higher value than others do; this is because they are used by the elite part of the society, for instance, Received Pronunciation in the United Kingdom. This accent is most of the time associated with higher social status and educational background, with the BBC (British Broadcasting Company) and for the teaching of ESL and EFL. (Wakelin, 1977)

c. The Sense of Belonging: many people try to imitate and learn certain accents in order to feel welcomed by a certain society; this is especially the case for immigrants.

Section Two: English as a Foreign Language and First Language Interference

1.2.1. English as a Foreign Language

According to Cambridge Dictionary (1995), English as Foreign Language is defined as teaching English to students whose first language is not English. In other words, it is for learners seeking competence in communication, sociocultural aspects and knowledge of the grammatical rules and vocabulary to a certain extent in English.

1.2.2. The Status of English Language in Algeria

Over the years after the Algerian independence from France, many French traits are still embedded within the Algerian community, one of which is the French language, as Algerians still use it as a symbol of modernisation and development. However, with English currently being the leading language in the world, its use in Algeria has been rapidly increasing due to the effect of the major exposure of the younger generation to American and British media and their interest in their cultures. Furthermore, the need for English in Algeria is growing in order to support the economy of the country by strengthening foreign investments and trade. Mami (2013) believes that these main factors have brought about the

decline of the use of French and declares: "Disparities in the use of French started to fade away at the cross-roads leaving more space to the teaching of English as a second foreign language." (p. 910)

In 1999, Algerian authorities worked on re-designing the education system textbooks and documents and adopted English as a second foreign language (Benrabah, 2004). English is taught starting from the first year of middle school until the 3rd year of secondary school while French is the first foreign language taught from the 3rd year of primary school. Mami (2013, p. 911) also states: "Since the introduction of the English language into schools, it has become an important part of the curriculum and has recorded a great demand in all levels of education. Various TEFL (Teaching English as a Foreign Language) schools have been established throughout the country." Additionally, the Algerian higher education system assigned English to be taught as a separate major in English departments or as a subject within other majors in other faculties, such as economic sciences, technology, maths and computer sciences.

With the changes that happened to the Algerian education system and the inclusion of teaching English as a second foreign language, Benrabah (2014) claims that it was recommended by many pedagogues that English -like French- should also be taught starting from primary school to help learners acquire a structural principle to language learning and be more exposed to different cultures. Benrabah (2014) confirms: "Under the influence of the pro-Arabization lobby which comprised Islamists, conservatives and nationalists, the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education introduced English in primary school as a competitor to French in September 1993." (p. 50)

1.2.3. Language Transfer and Language Interference

It is a natural trait that, when exposed to a language, we human beings tend to look for similarities with things that we are already familiar with and try to consciously or unconsciously link new things to what we already know. According to Lado (1957), people learn new languages with the possibility of relating their knowledge to their mother tongue and even mixing it. Lado (1957) says: "We assume that the student who comes in contact with a foreign language will find some features of it quite easy and others extremely difficult. Those elements that are similar to his native language will be simple for him, and those elements that are different will be difficult". (p. 1)

1.2.3.1. Definition of Language Transfer. Language Transfer has been a prominent element in Applied Linguistics and Language Teaching for many years. It occurs when speakers who do not share the same language need to communicate. LT manifests naturally in language learning programs when learners transfer elements from their mother tongue to the L2 or FL; the learner will mix the structures of the TL with the MT, which might lead to irregularities between the two systems (Lado, 1957). Odlin (1989) introduced a definition of Language Transfer, saying: "Transfer is the influence resulting from the similarities and difference between the target language and any other knowledge that has been previously (and perhaps imperfectly) acquired" (p.27). Richard & Sampson (1974, p. 5) believe that language transfer is the first factor that influences second language learners' system, and it is considered as a major reason for learners' errors in second language learning.

1.2.3.2. Types of Language Transfer. Transfer can be either positive or negative. According to Chen (2020), Positive Transfer happens if MT has various similarities with TL making it easier to have a good command of the TL for learners. On the other hand, Negative Transfer (also called Language Interference) occurs when the knowledge and thinking habits of MT seriously affect and hinder the learners' process of second or foreign language learning.

This implies that the MT has a negative influence on the performance of TL (Lado, 1964 cited in Alam Khan, 2011, p.106)

Weinreich (1953) defines LI as: "Those instances of deviation from the norms of either language which occur in the speech of bilinguals as a result of their familiarity with more than one language." That is why, learning a foreign language is a process that has complexities that grew out from different factors; for instance, the familiarity and unfamiliarity between L1 and FL leads to the interference obstacle. Suleiman (1985) also comments: "the greater the difference between the systems, the greater is the learning problem and the potential areas of interference" (p. 56). Furthermore, according to Ellis (1997), interference is also called 'Negative Transfer', and he informs: "It is the influence that the learner's first language exerts over the acquisition of a second language." (p.51). For this reason, the current research has been conducted to investigate the extent of the interference of the Tebessian dialect in the learner's English pronunciation.

In his book '*Languages in Contact'* (1953, p. 41-47), Weinreich classifies three types of interference: grammatical interference, lexical interference, and Phonological interference. The grammatical one covers morphological and syntactical errors; it occurs when the learner takes grammatical patterns from the MT and applies them in the TL. Lexical interference happens when a language's vocabulary interferes with the one of another language. Lastly, Phonological interference, which is the focus of this research, is concerned with the phonemic and phonetic intrusions of the NL into the TL.

When learning a target language, learners often transfer the phonological system of their native language. This transfer includes the phonemes and their variants, stress and rhythm patterns, as well as intonation patterns of NL and their interaction with other phonemes. Therefore, a sound that is disrupted by the learner creates a deviation leading to a

distortion in TL pronunciation (Lado 1957. p, 12). Weinreich (1966. p, 20) shows that the majority of French speakers learning English substitute [t] for [d]. Taking a similar case, Many Algerian learners of English find it hard to articulate some English sounds, particularly those that do not exist in Arabic, which is why they substitute them with the closest ones from the Algerian variety of the Arabic stock.

    1.2.3.3. Language Interference Theories and Views. Throughout the 20th century, the developments of language interference research were apparent in three main categories, the behaviourist, the mentalist and the cognitivist views. Each category inspected the notion from a different perspective (Lanfeng, 2010)

    a. The Behaviourist View. Behaviourists restricted language interference to habit formation, which was connected to the idea of stimuli-responses process. The field of Language Learning and Teaching was controlled by the behaviourist theory, where researchers defended that the difficulties in language learning depended on how similar or different the target language was from the native language. To elaborate, if the two languages were similar positive transfer from the native language would occur, and if they were different, negative transfer from the native language would hinder the acquisition of the target language. This view was criticised for only focusing on the correspondence between L1 and FL, as well as the exaggeration in describing the effects of L1 and ignoring other factors that disturbed foreign language learning. (Lanfeng, 2010)

    b. The Mentalist View. Chomsky introduced this theory in the 1950s; it argues that human beings were born with natural language abilities and the mastery of any language is purely determined by universal grammar (UG) rules. (Mitchell & Miles, 2004). At first, Burt and Krashen (1982) denied native language transfer completely; besides, Dulay and Burt doubted L1 interference and argued that while learning a second or a foreign language,

learners do not rely on language transfer to construct L2 or FL syntactic constructions. Instead, they, naturally, rely on their mental abilities to formulate L2/FL grammatical structures. However, they were criticised for the lack of experimental evidence (Lanfeng, 2010).

c. The Cognitivist View. In the late 1970s, the limitations of the mentalist view encouraged the development of the cognitive theory, which believed that language learning involved cognitive systems like perception, memory, problem solving and information processing (Kellerman, 1977). In the cognitive view, language transfer is not triggered solely by the number of similarities and differences between two languages (L1 and TL). For cognitivists L1, interference might be caused by some linguistic elements, such as language distance, and developmental factors that affect interlanguage development negatively (Lanfeng, 2010).

1.2.4. Contrastive Analysis

Charles Fries (1945) was the first to develop Contrastive Analysis (henceforth CA); he noted that since learners bring the knowledge of their MT into FL learning, CA is needed in order to compare the two systems and find if the MT forms an obstruction to FL learning or not. Lado (1957) explains CA as the comparison of two or more languages to determine the differences or similarities between them, he adds: "Those elements which are similar to the learner's native language will be simple for him, and those elements that are different will be difficult." Rustipa (2011) also specified that CA is structured to make foreign language teaching more effective, and to find out the differences between the first language and the target language based on the following assumptions:

a. Foreign language learning is built based on the MT; which is about habit formation, learners tend to bring their habitual processes that they used in their MT acquisition and use them in the process of learning the FL.

b. Similarities in MT and TL facilitate learning while differences cause problems.

c. Through CA, problems can be predicted and considered in the curriculum. (p.17). This arrives from the comparison of the two systems.

Contrastive Analysis Claims. It has been stated that there are three major versions relying on CA prediction of SL and FL difficulty, which are:

a. **The Strong Version**: Lado (1957) said that it is the prediction of errors that happens on the basis of structural differences between both languages due to L1 interference.

b. **The Weak Version:** this version claims that errors can merely be explained after they are produced or observed. In addition, it reasons that not all errors are caused by MT; there are other sources like fatigue and slips of the tongue.

c. **The Moderate Version:** Brown (2000) stated that the difficulty might happen due to parallelisms rather than differences or non-existing items.

1.2.5. *Error Analysis*

Because of the lack of error prediction by CA, researchers started to seek another hypothesis, which is Error Analysis (EA). Fisiak (1981) declares:

> The value and importance of Contrastive Analysis lies in its ability to indicate potential areas of interference and errors; not all errors are the result of interference, psychological and pedagogical, as well as other extra linguistic factors contribute to the formation of errors. (p. 7)

Thus, Error Analysis was introduced as another scope in applied linguistics that deals with language problems and issues and finds solutions to them; especially in the foreign language teaching and learning field. EA is defined as an activity to reveal errors found in writing and speaking; it studies the errors made by second and foreign language learners. EA may be carried out in order to find out how well someone knows a language, find out how a person learns a language, obtain information on common difficulties in language learning, and be an aid in teaching or in the preparation of teaching materials. (Richards, 1974, as cited in Jabeen et al., 2015).

1.2.5.1. Error Analysis Procedure. To analyse learners' errors, Ellis (1997) stated that one must include identification, description, explanation, and evaluation of errors.

1. **Identification of Errors**

According to Ellis (1997, p. 15), to identify errors, it is necessary to compare learners' sentences with the correct forms in the target language.

2. **Description of Errors**

Ellis (1997, p. 18) mentioned that after identifying all the errors made by learners, the next step is to describe and classify them into types. Errors can be described as related to language levels (phonology, morphology, and syntax), to general linguistic categories (passive sentences, negative constructions, and word order, or to specific linguistic elements (articles, verbs, propositions…).

3. **Explanation of Errors**

Explaining the reasons behind the occurrence of the errors is an essential step in EA; there exist two main causes for learners' errors, which are inter-lingual and intra-lingual causes. Inter-lingual refers to the negative transfer of the rules of learners' mother tongue to

the target language rules. At the same time, intra-lingual reasons include overgeneralization, ignorance of rule restrictions, and incomplete application of rules. According to Ellis: "This stage is the most important for Second or Foreign Language Analysis research as it involves an attempt to establish the process responsible for L2 acquisition". (1994, p. 57).

4. Evaluation of Errors

Since the purpose of EA is to help learners learn a foreign language, it is necessary to evaluate errors. Ellis (1997, p.19) confirms that some errors can be considered more serious than others because they may entirely affect what someone says.

1.2.5.2. The Difference between Error and Mistake. It is very important for teachers and learners to make a clear distinction between error and mistake. Corder (1974) differentiates between the two by saying that a mistake is usually accidental, so the receiver will know that it was wrong when it happens. Edge (1989) also suggests that mistakes can be divided into two categories "slips" that students can correct by themselves, and "attempts" which happen when a learner tries to say something but does not know the correct way to saying it yet. (p. 4). For the case of errors, He explains that they occur due to the lack of knowledge and that: "They are the result of incomplete learning and linguistic incompetency of the learners and errors cannot be self-corrected" (p, 259).

1.2.5.3. Types of Phonological Inter-lingual Errors. The errors that are caused by interference are called inter-lingual errors. Erdogan (2005) defines them as the result of language transfer caused by the learner's mother tongue. Richard (1974, p. 173) adds that if foreign language learners make errors in the target language by the effect of their mother tongue, they are called inter-lingual errors. Crystal (2003, as cited in Mahendra & Marantika, 2020) suggested three main types of phonological interference:

a. Sound Addition

This category happens when L2 or FL learners add another sound or phoneme to the supposed phonetic utterance. For instance, one may pronounce the word 'know' as /knəʊ/ instead of /nəʊ/. This phenomenon can be caused by the lack of exposure to the target language and a lack of understanding of the target language's phonological rules. (Wardani & Suwartono, 2019)

b. Sound Omission

In this category, errors are identified by the absence of an item that must appear in well-formed utterances; it includes the omission of voiced consonants, unvoiced consonants, single vowels, and diphthongs. For example, some learners might pronounce 'home' as /hɒm/ instead of /həʊm/. (Mahendra & Marantika, 2020)

c. Sound Replacement

Sound replacement is identified by replacing the standard phoneme with another phoneme; this is like the phoneme /æ/ in 'dad' /dæd/ being replaced by /e/ resulting with /ded/ (Mahendra & Marantika, 2020). In other words, one element is deleted from its initially planned location and is either added or substituted elsewhere. Another example can be in pronouncing /tʃ/; learners tend to replace it with the sound /ʃ/ as in the word 'chilli' produced as /ʃɪl.i/.

Conclusion

To sum up, as English, with its enormous value and domination in the world, starts to take root in Algeria, it is apparent that the domain of EFL has gained importance in the education field in the country. In addition to Arabic being the official language of Algeria, one cannot neglect how different it is from English. Besides, because Algerians are not natively born speaking Arabic but its Algerian varieties it has led to many obstacles in EFL

teaching and learning. One of those obstacles is the development of language interference of

L1 in L2 and L3 as the result of teaching English in a non-native environment.

Chapter Two: Research Methodology, Data Analysis and Discussion

Introduction

So far, the foregoing chapter presented only a theoretical ground with regard to the two main variables relevant to our research study, which are the differences between English and Arabic (mainly at the accent level) and First Language Interference. Hence, this chapter is considered as the central bone of the dissertation for it presents the research methodology opted for in relevance to this research study. In other words, throughout chapter two, the methodological framework that provides a description of the research approaches, strategies, data collection methods, and data analysis procedures along with the sampling techniques will be discussed. It will also describe and specify the overall map that was followed with the intention of investigating our research problem and testing the corresponding research hypotheses.

Section One: Research Design and Methodology

2.1.1. Research Paradigm

With regard to the nature of the analysis and since pragmatism permits the application of many methods that allow the investigator to understand better the linguistic phenomenon, "pragmatism is the philosophy that permits mixing paradigms, assumptions, approaches and methods of data collection and analysis."(Creswell, 2014, as cited in Maarouf, 2019, p. 5) Pragmatism as a research paradigm is based on the proposition that researchers should use the philosophical or methodological approach that works best for the particular research problem being investigated. (Tashakkori and Teddlie, 1998, as cited in Kaushik et al., 2019, p. 2). This research is conducted for the purpose of finding the best way that serves to answer the research questions and hypotheses; the pragmatic paradigm was chosen in this respect.

2.1.2. Research Approach

Since the objective of this research is to explore the interference of the Tebessian accent within English pronunciation, this study adopted the mixed method approach, which is: "An approach to inquiry involving collecting both quantitative and qualitative data, integrating the two forms of data, and using distinct designs that may involve philosophical assumptions and theoretical frameworks." (Creswell, 2014, p. 4)

Creswell (2014) further explains that quantitative research is a method for testing objective theories by examining the relationship among variables. These variables can be measured using tools, so that numbered data can be analysed using statistical procedures. with this, using the questionnaire as a suitable tool under the quantitative framework is efficient because it enables data to be collected in a standardised way so that they are internally consistent and coherent for analysis. (Roopa & Rani, 2012). Creswell (2014) also describes the qualitative approach as: "A set to explore and understand the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem, the process of research involves emerging questions and procedures, data typically collected in the participant's setting." (p. 4). For this reason, the audio recording which has been a significant development within qualitative research permits capturing the necessary data to be analysed replacing hand written notes, and provides easy and quick access to it. Audio recordings also have the advantage of lasting long, so whenever they need to be rechecked again they are always there unless they are deleted. Since the sample is recorded in its natural environment, there is no researcher influence on its behaviour or production.

This makes the mixed method approach suitable for the nature of this research, considering that it combines the best of both quantitative and qualitative designs. The latter supports the research to get more detailed and credible results.

2.1.3. Research Design and Research Instruments

With regard to the exploration of the phenomenon studied, two data collection tools have been selected. They include a questionnaire devoted to the English department teachers of oral expression and phonetics, and audio recordings of the students' speech pronunciation.

2.1.3.1. The Questionnaire. As defined by the Online Oxford Dictionary (1984), questionnaires are lists of written questions assigned to a number of people so that data can be collected from their responses. Williamson (2018) remarks that the low cost involved in collecting large amounts of data and the anonymity offered to respondents that encourages frank answers are the most remarkable strengths that the questionnaire as a research tool possesses. As far as the current research is concerned, the questionnaire was handed to nine teachers of oral expression and phonetics; it is a structured questionnaire mixing closed-ended as well as open-ended items. The aforementioned tool involved 26 questions classified into four sections.

2.1.3.2. The Audio Recordings. According to the Merriam-Webster dictionary, audio recording is the act or process of making a record of sound. As a research instrument, audio recordings are used to record sounds (typically speech) for data collection purposes. Recording audio data through devices such as tape recorders has been a significant development within qualitative research. Richard and Lockhart (1996) stated that the advantages of audio or video recording are that the data recorded can be repeated, analysed several times, and portray many lesson details that another instrument cannot capture. (p. 11) they also have the benefit of lasting long, so whenever they need to be rechecked again they are always there unless they are deleted. In addition, since the sample is recorded in its natural environment, there is no researcher influence on its behaviour or production. audio recordings in this study served in documenting the speech of the sample, the goal behind

choosing it is to capture all the items needed for the analysis. Listening to the recordings repetitively helped us in making sure of the items to be analysed.

2.1.4. Population and Sample

This research targeted third-year English students and teachers of Oral Expression and Phonetics in the department of English at Larbi Tebessi University. Following the research's objectives, all nine teachers of the two modules available at the level of the department of English were chosen to complete the questionnaire, and this is to gain an in-depth understanding of the studied phenomenon.

To pick out the intended sample to be recorded, we used the systematic probability sampling technique, which denotes that every item of the universe has an equal chance of inclusion in the sample (Kothari, 2004, p. 60). Our target population was the third-year class consisting of 147 students; taking eight students as a sample using the framework of the systematic sampling technique in which: "An element of randomness is introduced into this kind of sampling by using random numbers to pick up the unit with which to start." (Kothari, 2004, p. 62). For our study, we divided the number of the population (147) by the size of the sample we wanted to use (8). We ended up with the interval (18). This led us to select every eighteenth (18th) subject in our population until we reached eight (8) students as our final sample.

2.1.5. Data Collection Procedure

For the sake of gathering the necessary data from the research's population, the questionnaire was conducted online (via Google Form) and shared with nine oral expression/phonetic teachers. The first response was received back in the same day of the submission. However. We struggled with the rest of the responses as it took us almost a month to collect five responses and four emails remained unanswered.

The audio recording procedure was conducted during four oral expression sessions of two hours, the task presented was for each student to create a short story from a number of words written on the board by the teacher and present it orally. We audio recorded each student from our sample with a smartphone recorder, each audio recording is around 2 minutes long.

Section Two: Data Analysis and Results Discussion

Under this section, the data drawn from the questionnaire and the audio recordings are analysed. This is in order to answer the questions of this research and confirm or reject its hypotheses regarding the interference of the Tebessian accent in students' English pronunciation.

2.2.1. Analysis of the Questionnaire

The survey was handed to teachers of oral expression and phonetics to survey their ideas and experiences with the interference of The Tebessian accent within the students' English pronunciation during their classes. The questionnaire was designed with the goal of collecting precise and reliable data. Four copies out of nine were eliminated because they were not sent back by teachers; consequently, we were left with five respondents. The questionnaire consisted of 26 questions divided into four sections. The questions varied from open-ended and close-ended ones; hence, teachers were invited to tick the answer that applied to them and in some cases, they were asked to provide explanations and alternatives.

The participants answered as follows:

Section one. Personal Background

Item 1: What is your teaching speciality?

For the first question, we can notice that almost all our participant teachers have different teaching specialities, two teachers are specialised in Language Science, one in Civilisation, another teacher's specialty is Comparative Literature and the last one is Oral Expression and Comprehension. Since the questionnaire was given to instructors who teach oral expression and phonetics modules, we can generate that the teachers can all teach the same module despite the different specialities that they have.

Item 2: For how long have you been teaching English?

Three of the teachers have been instructing for 4 years, one teacher has the experience of more than 16 years and another teacher with the experience of almost a year. These results show a kind of diversity in the participants who contributed to this questionnaire as one of the teachers has a vast experience in teaching English in general, another one who can be considered new to the domain and three teachers who are going through a progressive teaching career. On this account, the next responses to the questions will be gathered from teachers with different experiences in teaching the English language.

Item 3: For how long have you been teaching oral expression/phonetics?

All participants have been teaching oral expression/phonetics for a considered period of time. Two teachers (40%) have the experience of three years; one (20%) of 8 years, another tutor (20%) for four years and the last one (20%) hasbeen teaching the module(s) since the beginning of this academic year. This proves that their answers to these questions can be considered reliable and well grounded.

Item 4: To what levels have you taught the module of oral expression/phonetics so far?

Figure 2
The Levels each Teacher Taught the Modules to
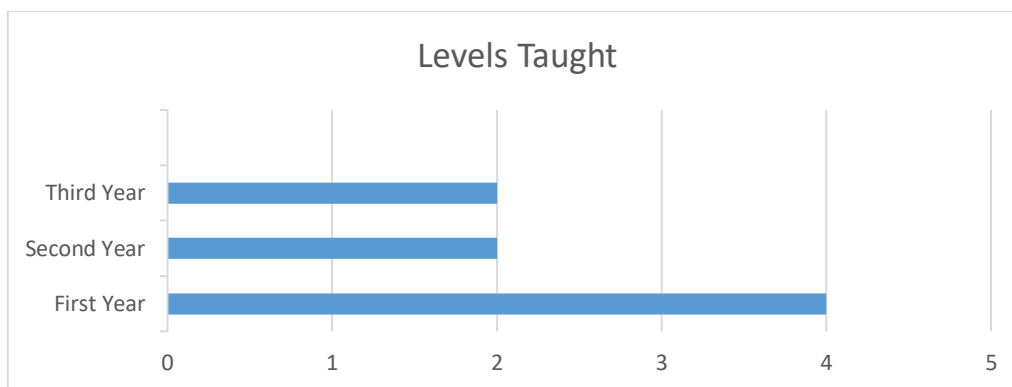
The chart displays the levels that each teacher instructs; first-year receives the most votes (50%), second and third-year are tied with two votes (25% each).

Section Two. Pronunciation Issues in Class

Item 5: My pronunciation model when I speak is usually:

Figure 3
Teachers' Pronunciation Model
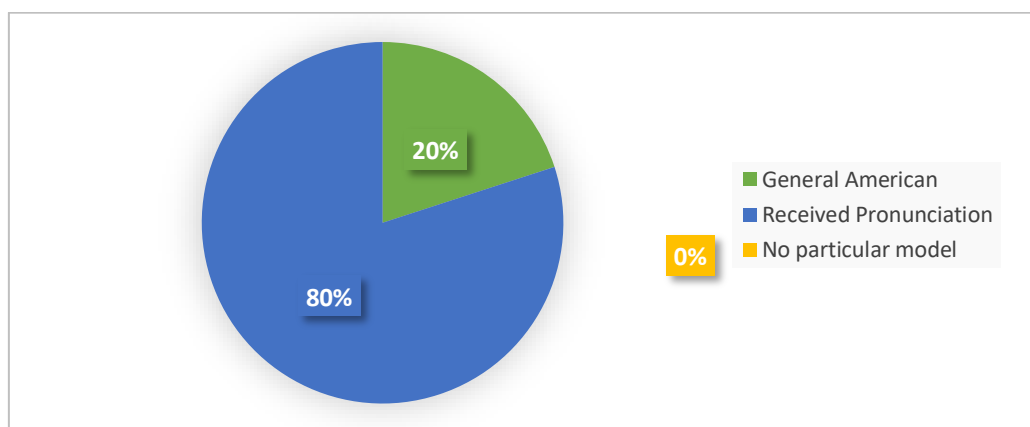
The bar chart above indicates the model that the teachers opt for when they speak, (80%) results in the Received Pronunciation model, which means 4 out of 5 teachers, while only one teacher (20%) goes for General American, and the 'no particular model' option is not chosen by any of the teachers.

Item 6: According to you, which area has the most trouble spots in your learners' speech?

Figure 4

Areas with Most Trouble Spots in Learners' Speech
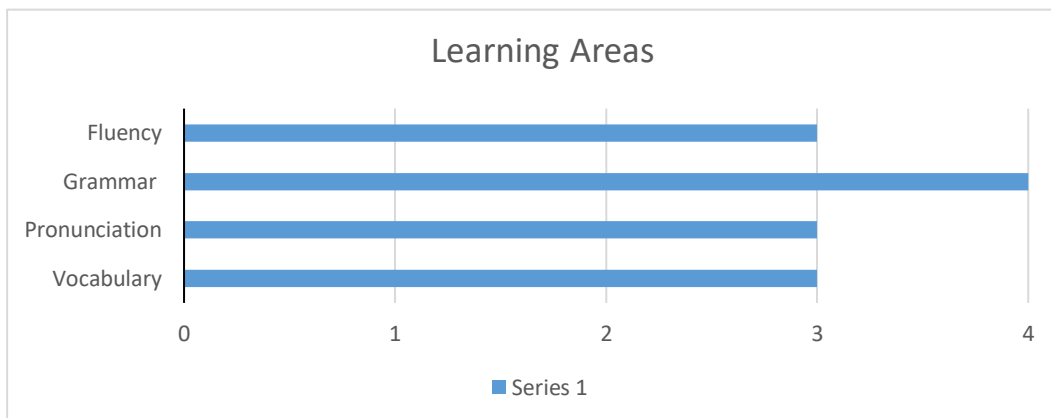
The teachers are asked about the areas they find most troublesome in their learners' speech; grammar is given the most votes (four votes) (30.7%), fluency, pronunciation, and vocabulary have three votes each (23.1%).

Item 7: Do you plan lessons where the main factor is pronunciation?

Figure 5
Lessons Plan
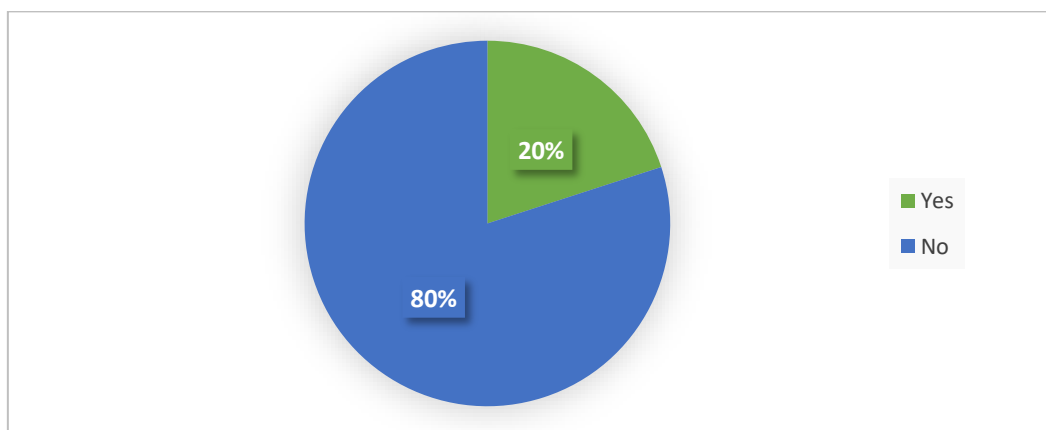
This Yes/No question is asked to see if the teachers prioritise pronunciation in the planning of their lessons, only one (20%) teacher answers with 'Yes', while the rest (80%) disagree and tick 'No'.

Item 8: What objectives among the following have you often stated for your oral expression/
phonetics syllabus?

Figure 6
Oral Expression/Phonetics Syllabus Objectives
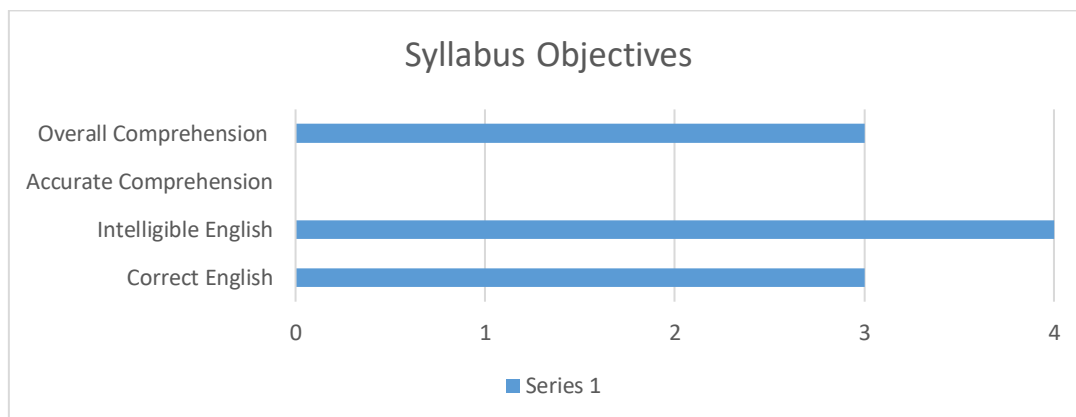
Question 8 is about the objectives that teachers set in the syllabus of Oral Expression
and Phonetics; intelligible English has the most votes (40%), overall comprehension and
correct English gain three votes each (30%), while accurate comprehension did not gain any
(0%).

Item 9: How often do you notice students producing incorrect speech?

Figure 7
*Frequency of Students' Incorrect Speech Production*
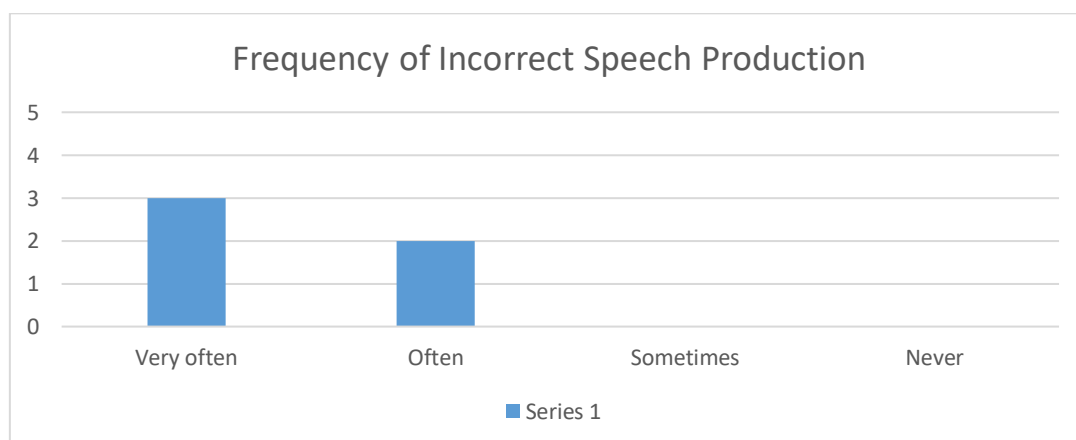
We asked how often the teachers noticed their students producing incorrect speech; three teachers (60%) tick 'very often', and two (40%) answer with 'often'. This proves that the rate of the production of incorrect speech in students is high.

Item 10: Do you think pronunciation errors made by your students are:

Figure 8
Pronunciation Errors
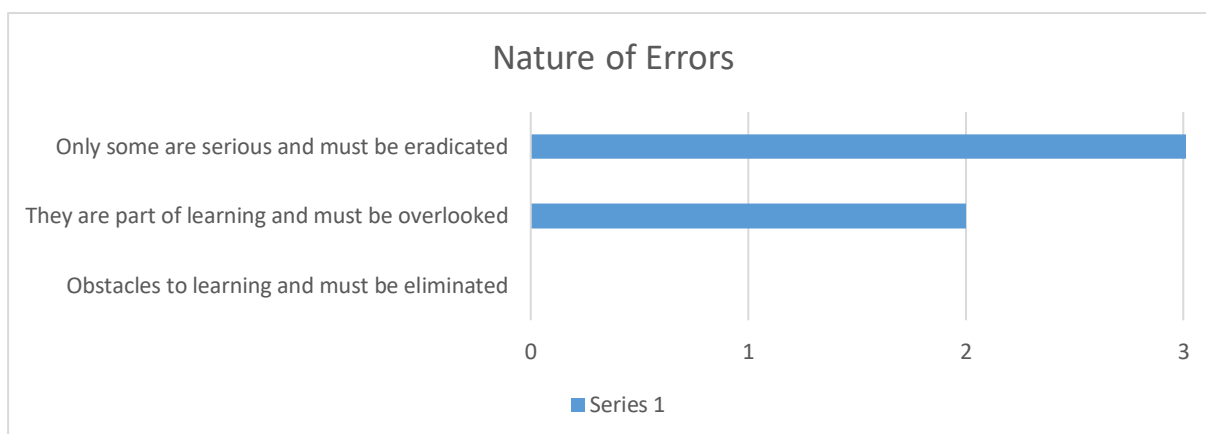
In the bar chart (figure 8) above, we notice an overlap in the teachers' answers, two (40%) of them say that pronunciation errors are part of learning and all errors must be overlooked; however, three (60%) teachers disagree and answer that some of the errors are serious and must be eradicated.

Item 11: How often do you give corrective feedback to students' speech errors?

Figure 9
Frequency of Teacher's Feedback to Students' speech Errors

Feedback Frequency
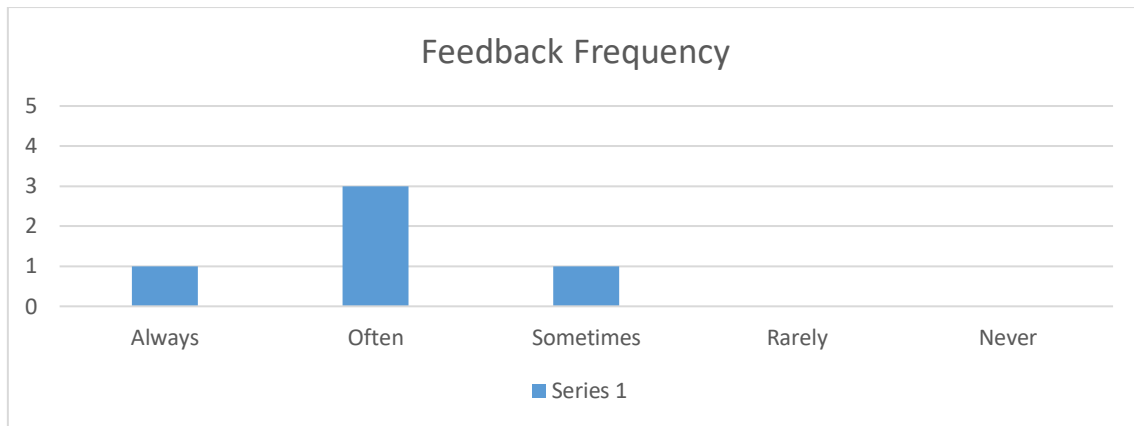
It is apparent from the figure that the majority (60%) of teachers often correct their students' speech errors, one teacher (20%) specifies that he/she always gives corrective feedback to the students, while another one (20%) tick 'sometimes'. This implies that teachers are most of the time paying attention to the speech of their students.

Item 12: How often are your students aware of the errors they make when speaking?

Figure 10
Students' Awareness of their Speech Errors
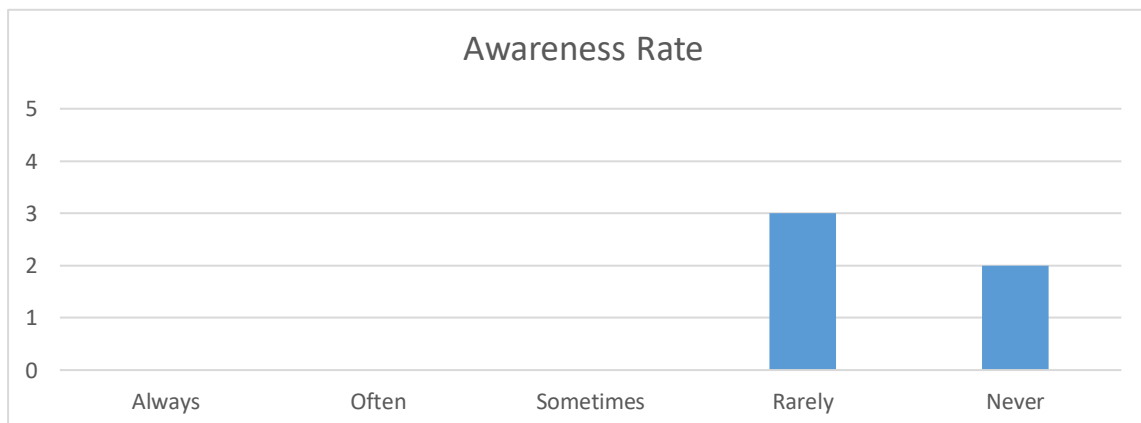
Awareness Rate

All teachers point out that their students rarely (60%) or never (40%) have any awareness when they produce incorrect speech.

Item 13: How frequent do the students realise their errors immediately?

Figure 11

Frequency of Realising the Error Immediately
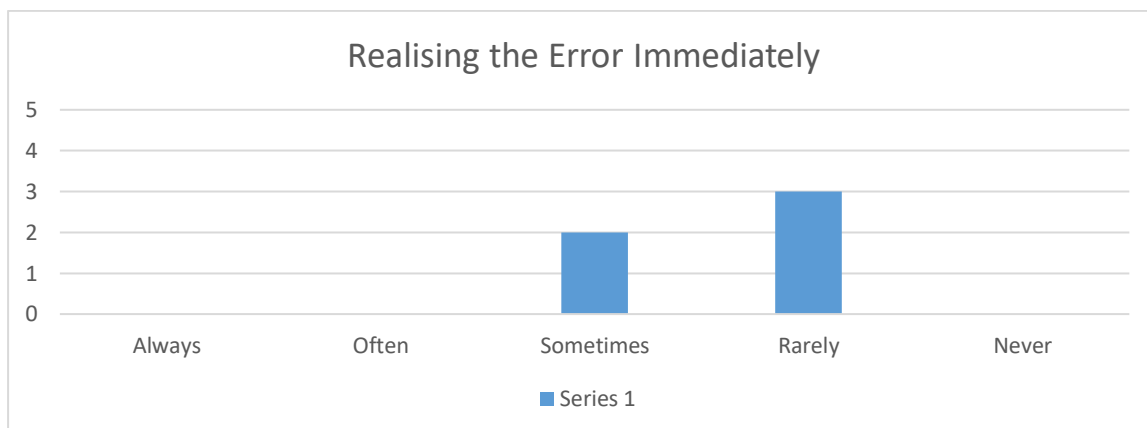
In question 13, two teachers tick 'sometimes' (40%) and three choose 'rarely' (60%). From this, it can be understood that students do not pay attention to the errors that they produce at the same moment, which demonstrates why they rarely realise the errors they make in their speech.

Item 14: Do learners make efforts to improve their English pronunciation?

All teachers agree that their students do indeed make efforts to improve their pronunciation in English.

Item 15: Do students ask questions about how to pronounce words?

Figure 12

Questions about Pronunciation
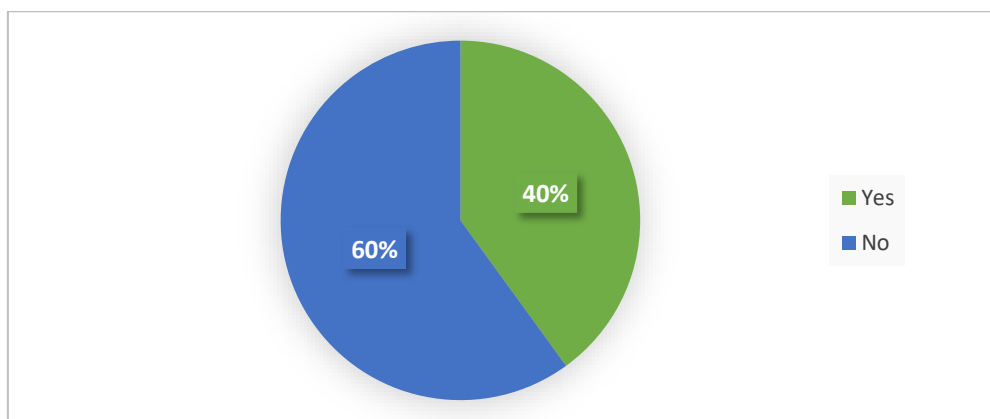
The answers to question 15 are close to each other. They only differ as three teachers (60%) say that their students do no ask any questions about the pronunciation of words. While, the other two (40%) confirm that their students do ask them about how to pronounce some words.

Item 16: Do you think learners make errors in speaking because:

Figure 13
Reason for Speech Errors
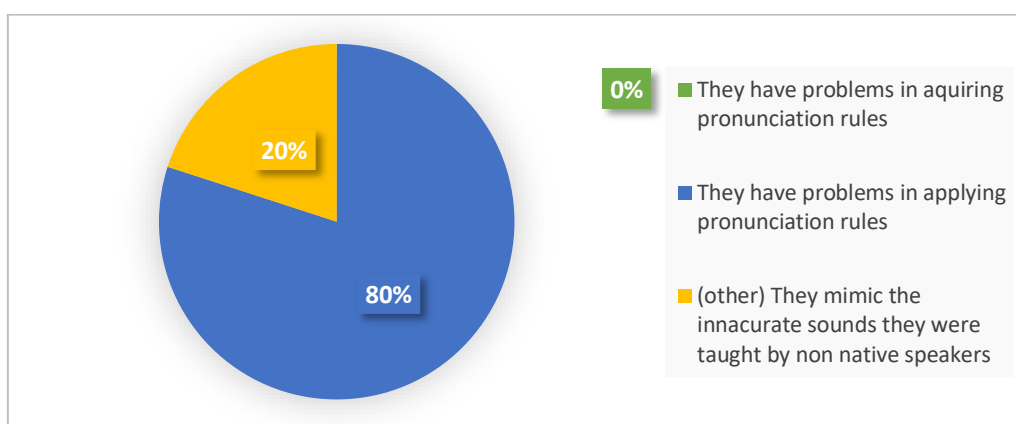
Four out of five (80%) teachers choose the second option, which is having problems in applying pronunciation rules is the reason for the production of errors. One teacher (20%) however, provides another input that suggests that students mimic the sounds that their non-native teachers teach them.

Item 17: Please tick the option that appeals to you:

Figure 13
Pronunciation Errors Views
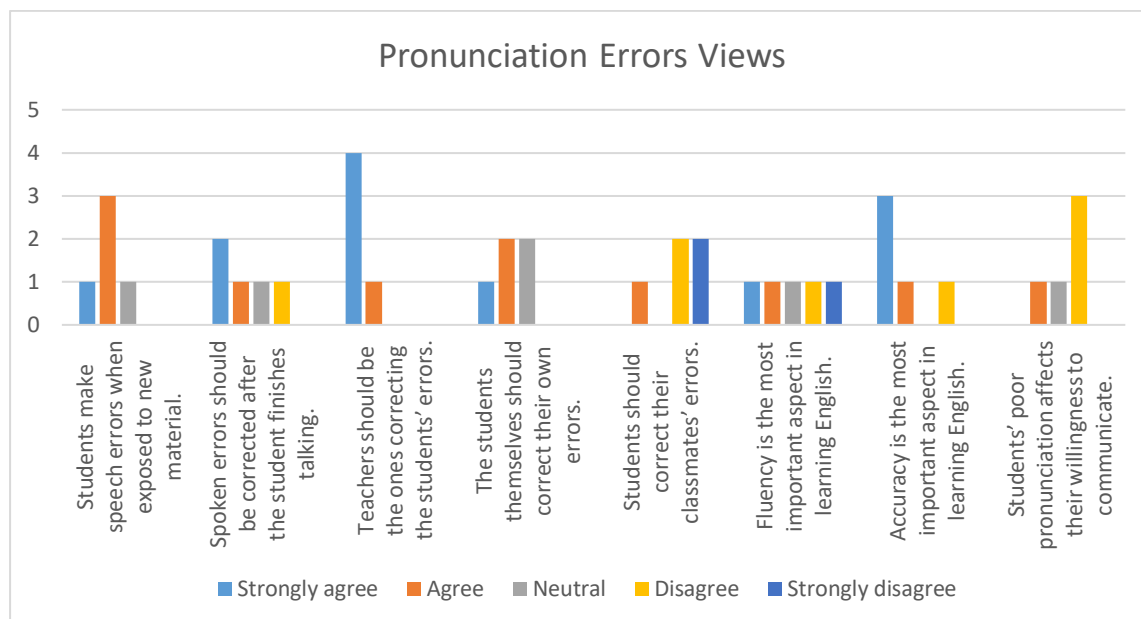
In this question, the teachers answer with how much they agree with the statements provided. Three (60%) teachers agree that students produce errors when exposed to new material, one teacher (20%) ticks 'Strongly Agree' and another teacher (20%) prefers to stay neutral. The next statement indicates that speech errors should be corrected right after the student finishes talking; two teachers (40%) pick 'Strongly Agree', one (20%) 'Agree', another one (20%) disagrees and one last teacher (20%) goes with 'Neutral'. In the third statement, all teachers agree that teachers are the ones who must correct the students' errors; one teacher (20%) picks 'Agree' while the rest (80%) choose 'Strongly Agree'. Next, believing that students are the ones who must correct their own errors, one of the teachers (20%) picks 'Strongly Agree', two teachers (40%) agree and two others (40%) prefer the 'Neutral' choice. In the following statement, all (80%) but one (20%) teacher disagree about the choice of students correcting their classmates' errors. For the statement of fluency being the most important aspect in learning. The teachers are very distinctive in their choices; each one of them picks a different answer. However, in the statement of accuracy being the most

important aspect, three (60%) of the teachers go with 'Strongly Agree', one (20%) simply

agrees and one last teacher (20%) chooses 'Disagree'. The last statement says that the

students' willingness to communicate is affected by their poor pronunciation; nonetheless, the

majority (60%) of the instructors disagree, one of them (20%) agrees and another one (20%)

picks 'neutral'.

Item 18: Students' pronunciation bears traces of:

   a. Their native Tebessian accent

   b. Their accent is wholly distinctive

   c. Other

Figure 14
Traces of Students' Pronunciation
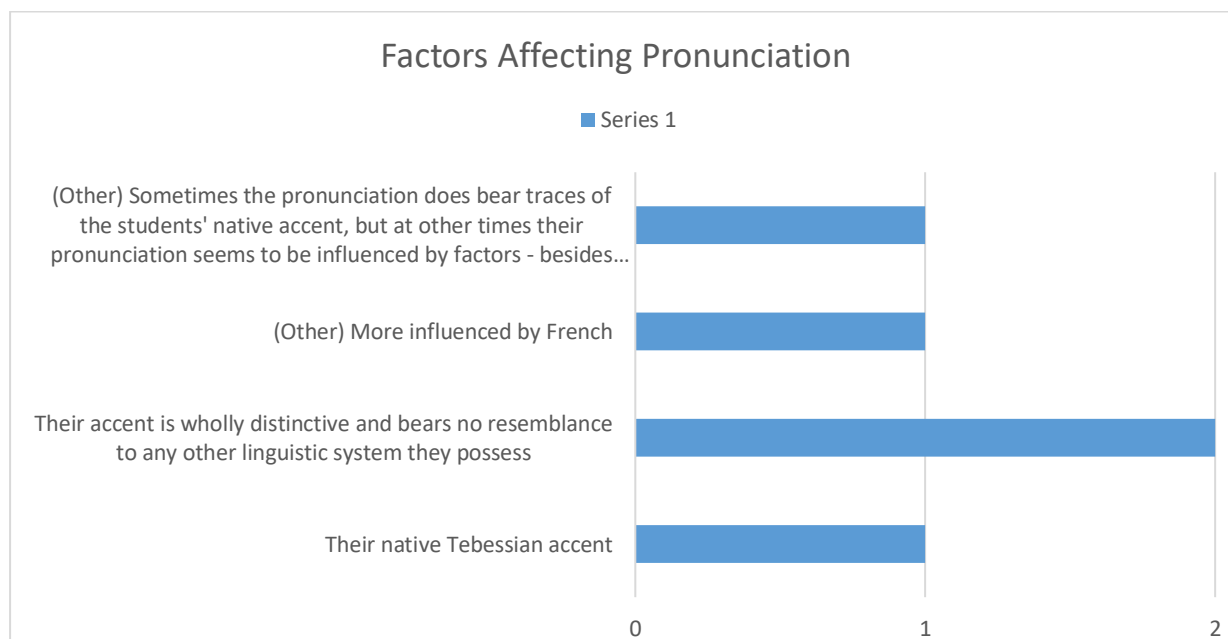
In this question, two teachers (40%) imply that the students' accent is distinctive and

has no resemblance to any other linguistic system they possess, one teacher (20%) chooses

'their native Tebessian accent' and another teacher (20%) picks 'Others' and adds that the

students' pronunciation is influenced by different factors besides their native accent.

Item 19: Do you notice students mistakenly apply Arabic phonological rules when speaking English?

For question 19, all teachers answer 'Yes' to the fact that their students do use Arabic phonological system without realising that. This contradicts with their answers to the previous question where the majority of teachers say that the students' accent is distinctive.

Item 20: Do you think learners of English should eradicate all traces of their native accent?

Figure 15
Opinions about Eradicating Native Accent Traces
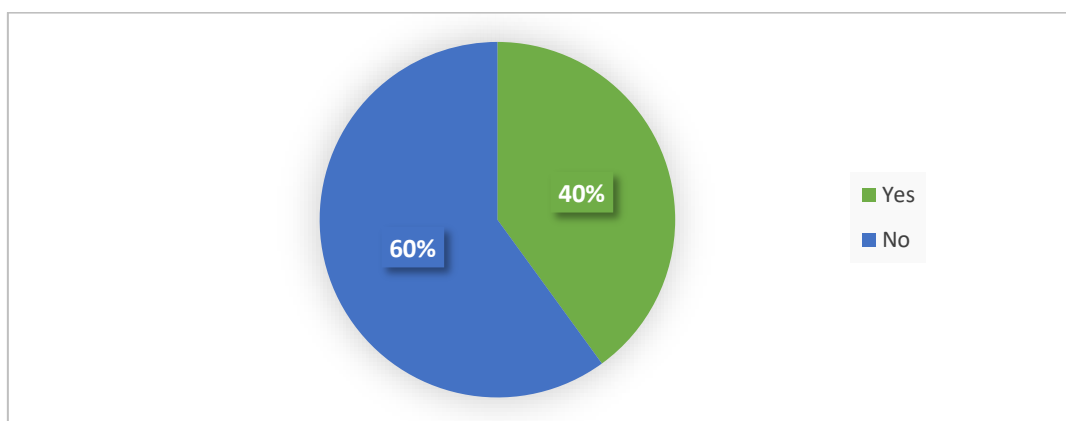
Question 20 is a Yes/No question, asking whether the students' native accent should be omitted while learning English, three (60%) teachers say no while only two (40%) tick 'yes'.

Please provide your reasons for Question 20's choice:

This question is related to the previous one, teachers were asked to justify their choices.

The answers for those who pick 'No' are as follows:

- The accent is part of the heritage of the mother tongue and it should not expand to the sound system of a foreign language.

- Using authentic English is not as important as the accuracy of speech. In India, for instance, the native accent is not eradicated, yet the accuracy of language is maintained.

- There is no need for concealing identity as long as the speaker's accented English does not inhibit comprehension

The answers for those who pick 'Yes' are as follows:

- It is not an absolute yes, though. Eradication is a bit of a strong word in this context. My opinion is that students should make an effort to speak English in a manner that does not carry traces of their native accent. If, for any reason, they are not able to do so, the primary focus should be on language accuracy and fluency - and having an intelligible speech is key. In today's world, we speak about "Englishes," not necessarily American or British English (the predominant versions) - both of which are themselves diverse. This is not to undermine American or Received Pronunciation, however. Having a good accent is a crucial aspect of learning English, especially if the purpose of learning is to teach the language. My point is that learners must try hard to improve their pronunciation and reduce the influence of their native accent on their English, but mastering the rules of grammar and syntax, having a good range of vocabulary, and speaking fluently are, I believe, more crucial.

- To avoid phonological interference and to speak native alike.

Item 21: Do you think the students are aware that their native accent does influence their speech in English?

Figure 17

Students' Awareness of the Influence of their Native Accent
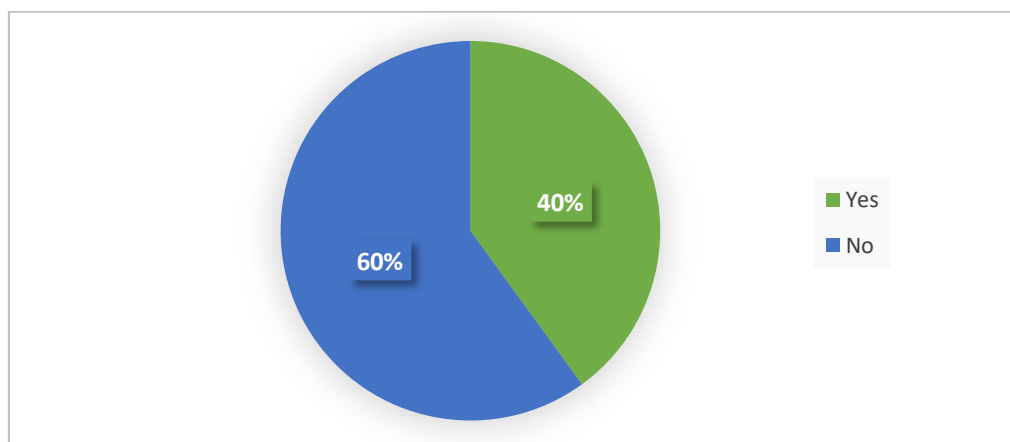
In question 21, three teachers (60%) affirm that their students are not aware of the influence of the Tebessian accent on their speech. At the same time, the other two teachers (40%) contradict and choose 'Yes'.

Item 22: If students were aware of phonological interference, would that encourage them to make efforts to get rid of it in their speech? Please justify.

For this question, the reasons that the teachers provide are:

- Awareness leads to taking the necessary measures to remediate the problem.

- They are not aware.

- Not necessarily. Phonological interference is one element, among others, that bears on their speech in English. It is also a matter of willingness and practice over a long period of time, whatever the causes that may hinder them from having a good pronunciation.

- I do not think that the awareness will have a positive impact all the time. Sometimes being aware of a "problem" leads to accentuating it unconsciously.

- Yes, being aware of phonological interference would encourage them to make efforts to get rid of it in their speech because this would help them to identify, recognize and manipulate the sounds of English and avoid errors.

Item 23: Can you comment on the status of English in the Tebessian society?

In this question, Teachers are requested to give their opinions about the status of English in the society of Tebessa; their answers are along the next lines:

- Started getting a lot of attention by youngsters and parents alike. The internet, social media platforms and online video gaming helped in getting exposed to a natural language and interacting with native speakers of English. The latter reduces the influence of the mother tongue's accent on the target language.

- English is not used in the Tebessian society. It is not given the due credit of being the most important language in the world

- I must say that I am not in a position to give a reliable and/or accurate answer to this question - which requires some research. However, I am of the opinion - one based on limited observation - that over the last ten or fifteen years, English has acquired more importance and gained more currency among young people in Tebessa. I have noticed, generally speaking, that their English is good and, furthermore, that they are much more proficient in it than in French. Both the status of English as international language and globalization - of American popular culture in particular - have played a huge role in this shift.

- English is gaining momentum in the recent years in our societies. Yet it is mostly not acquired in ways that ensure proper communication.

- There is a widely use of English language in our society, although people cannot speak it properly, because it is the language of technology and internet and due to the

university's and some private schools' efforts to improve the teaching and learning of English.

Item 24: Do you think teaching pronunciation should happen in earlier learning experiences or after entering University? Please provide your reasons

The answers to if pronunciation should be taught extensively in earlier learning experiences are:

- A foreign language is supposed to be taught by native speakers or native speaker like teachers regardless of the stage. However, the earlier the better.

- I think teaching pronunciation should happen in earlier learning experiences by getting exposed to authentic English. At university, they are going to use it to acquire knowledge. They will use to study literature, civilization, linguistics, educational engineering...etc.

- It should definitely occur as early as possible, since that would make it easier to acquire. I would go as far as arguing for teaching English - and proper English pronunciation - from year one of primary school. My argument is pragmatic.

- It should take place in the onset of leaning; because, it is part of the speaking skill that forms a great part of the overall language proficiency.

- Yes, it should because pronunciation is an important factor for intelligibility and fluency.

Item 25: In your opinion, does the mother tongue really have a negative influence on the pronunciation of English? If yes, please elaborate your answer.

The majority of the teachers agree that there exists a negative influence of the mother tongue on the English pronunciation, their arguments are:

- Somehow, yes. If a person was used to utter certain sounds in a certain way, the latter would migrate to the target language when similar sounds are used. The obvious example is pronouncing the letter "p" as the letter "b".

- Yes, it does. Using appropriate intonation and producing specific sounds might be distorted because of the differences in phonetical patterns in English and Arabic.

- In our case it does since the phonological rules of Arabic and different from those of English. For example, the differences in syllable structure between the two languages lead to non-English like productions.

- Yes, it has. Learners' mother tongue interference in both forms of the foreign language (spoken and written) is inevitable; it makes the process of learning either easy in case of similarities or difficult when many differences exist between the systems of the two languages.

One teacher; however, did not specify whether he/she thinks that the influence is entirely negative, he/she elaborates in the following lines:

- I think this is the question of bilingualism in general. Whenever two languages meet on one tongue, so to speak, problems and tensions arise. I take this tension to be productive or creative, as bilingual education broadens the horizons of what can be learnt and, more importantly, of perception itself. In addition, tensions, problems, and conflicts in learning and knowledge acquisition are essential and positive aspects. "Having an accent" is not always a negative thing - it attests to the fact that a mother tongue is a mother tongue for a reason. But, it also demonstrates, if the learner has mastered the acquired language, that one can speak and articulate oneself fluently in a foreign language despite the challenge of proper pronunciation. Having said that, I would answer your question by saying that the "negative influence" a mother tongue can have on the pronunciation of English is inevitable and must not itself be regarded

as something negative. Rather, it should be seen as an obstacle to be overcome. After all, having a proper pronunciation of English is highly desirable. Bilingualism or multilingualism should be a blessing, not a curse

Item 26: We have allocated the following lines for you to feel free to append to this questionnaire with anything you find prone to enrich and solidify the findings of our research.

This question aims to find constructive input from the teachers that could support the findings of this research, the answers are:

- The answer to all the problems of speaking a foreign language is to be taught by competent, ideally native, teachers. The latter would save learners all the troubles of mispronouncing words or sentences, putting words together in an unnatural way (A mother tongue structure using words in English). Hence acquire the language and the culture at one go, and how to pronounce/utter sounds wouldn't be a problem as learners will be imitating the natural sounds they got exposed to.

- Fluency is not as important as correct pronunciation. Yes, it is needed and must be taught but producing correct understandable sounds is enough.

- I believe the question of practice should also be considered here. To have a good pronunciation requires you to practice speaking the language on a regular basis, which is not always an easy thing to do in our society. Of course, the internet offers a space for interacting with people around the world in English, but the social element, as far as speaking English is concerned, must be taken into serious consideration.

- The mistakes committed in pronunciation are not solely caused by the L1.

- You have focused a lot on exposing the problem without suggesting some solutions.

2.2.2. Analysis of the Audio Recordings

The tables below show the different pronunciation errors retrieved from the audio recordings of the speech of this research's sample. Following the Error Analysis hypothesis, which, as mentioned previously, embodies four steps (Error Identification, Error Description, Error Explanation, and Error Evaluation) the errors extracted from the audio recordings are discussed as follows:

Table 6
Errors extracted from the first recording

Produced Words	(a) Error Identification		(b) Type of Error (Error Description)	
	Produced Pronunciation	Correct Pronunciation		
Escaping	/ɪskeɪpɪn/	/ɪsˈkeɪpɪŋ/	Sound replacement	
Transformation	/trɒnsfərmeɪʃən/	/trænsfəˈmeɪʃən/	Sound replacement	Sound addition
Plan	/pleən/	/plæn/	Sound replacement	
Opened	/ˈəʊpənəd/	/ˈəʊpənd/	Sound addition	
Actual	/ˈækʃʊəl/	/ˈæktʃʊəl/	Sound replacement	

Table 7
Errors extracted from the Second Recording

Produced Words	(a) Error Identification		(b) Type of error (Error Description)
	Incorrect Pronunciation	Correct Pronunciation	
Members	/mɛmbəɪz/	/ˈmɛmbəz/	Sound addition

Of	/ɒf/	/ɒv/	Sound replacement	
Survivors	/sərvaɪvəlz/	/səˈvaɪvəz/	Sound addition	Sound replacement
After	/ˈɑːftər/	/ˈɑːftə/	Sound addition	

Table 8

Errors extracted from the Third Recording

Produced Words	(a) Error Identification		(b) Type of error (Error Description)
	Incorrect Pronunciation	**Correct Pronunciation**	
Of	/ɒf/	/ɒv/	Sound replacement
Anything	/ɛniθɪn/	/ˈɛnɪθɪŋ/	Sound replacement
Drinking	/ˈdrɪŋkɪn/	/ˈdrɪŋkɪŋ/	Sound replacement

Table 9

Errors extracted from the Fourth Recording

Produced Words	(a) Error Identification		(b) Type of error (Error Description)
	Incorrect Pronunciation	**Correct Pronunciation**	
Insects	/ənsɛkts/	/ˈɪnsɛkts/	Sound replacement
Got	/gɔːt/	/gɒt/	Sound replacement
Hungry	/hɜːŋgri/	/ˈhʌŋgri/	Sound replacement
Bring	/breŋ/	/brɪŋ/	Sound replacement
Trees	/tʃiːs/	/triːz/	Sound replacement

Plan	/pleən/	/plæn/	Sound replacement	
Succeed	/sʌkˈsd/	/səkˈsiːd/	Sound replacement	Sound omission
Snake	/snɑːk/	/sneɪk/	Sound replacement	

Table 10

Errors extracted from the Fifth Recording

Produced Words	(a) Error Identification		(b) Type of error (Error Description)	
	Incorrect Pronunciation	Correct Pronunciation		
Party	/ˈpɑːrti/	/ˈpɑːti/	Sound addition	
Butterflies	/bətərflaɪz/	/ˈbʌtəflaɪz/	Sound replacement	Sound Addition
Dancing	/ˈdɜːnsɪn/	/ˈdɑːnsɪŋ/	Sound replacement	
Interested	/ˈɪntərestɪd/	/ˈɪntrɪstɪd/	Sound addition	Sound replacement
Buffet	/ˈbuːfe/	/ˈbʌfeɪ/	Sound replacement	

Table 11

Errors extracted from the Sixth Recording

Produced Words	(a) Error Identification		(b) Type of Error (Error Description)	
	Incorrect Pronunciation	Correct Pronunciation		
Under	/əndər/	/ˈʌndə/	Sound replacement	Sound addition

Events	/ˈevɛnts/	/ɪˈvɛnts/	Sound replacement	
Through	/θɹʊ/	/θruː/	Sound replacement (rhoticity)	Sound replacement (vowel shortening)
Trying	/ˈtɹaɪɪn/	/ˈtraɪɪŋ/	Sound replacement	
Her	/heɹ/	/hɜː/	Sound replacement	Sound addition
Disappeared	/dɪspɪrəd/	/dɪsəˈpɪəd/	Sound omission	Sound addition
Managed	/ˈmænɪʒɪd/	/ˈmænɪdʒd/	Sound replacement	Sound addition
Survive	/səɹˈvaɪv/	/səˈvaɪv/	Sound addition (rhoticity)	
Although	/ɔːlˈðʊ/	/ɔːlˈðəʊ/	Sound replacement	
Ambulance	/ˈæmbʊlɔːns/	/ˈæmbjʊləns/	Sound omission	Sound replacement
Alongside	/əˈlɒnsaɪd/	/əˈlɒŋˈsaɪd/	Sound replacement	

Table 12
Errors extracted from the Seventh Recording

Produced Words	(a) Error Identification		(b) Type of error (Error Description)
	Incorrect Pronunciation	**Correct Pronunciation**	
Notorious	/nətərɪʊs/	/nəʊˈtɔːrɪəs/	Sound replacement

Old	/ɜːld/	/əʊld/	Sound replacement	
Jewellery	/ʒuːəleri/	/ˈdʒuːəlri/	sound replacement	Sound addition
Strikes	/stɹʌks/	/straɪks/	Sound replacement	
About	/baʊt/	/əˈbaʊt/	Sound omission	
Their	/ðeɹ/	/ðeə/	Sound replacement	Sound addition
Her	/heɹ/	/hɜː/	Sound replacement	Sound addition

Table 13
Errors extracted from the Eighth Recording

Produced Words	(a) Error Identification		(b) Type of error (Error Description)		
	Incorrect Pronunciation	**Correct Pronunciation**			
Grandmother	/gɹænˌmʌðəɹ/	/ˈgrænˌmʌðə/	Sound replacement	Sound addition	
Actor	/æktər/	/ˈæktə/	Sound addition		
Raising	/raɪzɪŋ/	/ˈreɪzɪŋ/	Sound replacement		
Supporting	/sipɔːɹtɪn/	/səˈpɔːtɪŋ/	Sound replacement	Sound addition	Sound replacement
Childhood	/ʃaɪldhʊd/	/ˈtʃaɪldhʊd/	Sound replacement		
Dream	/dɹiːm/	/driːm/	Sound replacement (rhoticity)		
Actors	/æktɔːɹz/	/ˈæktəz/	Sound replacement	Sound addition	

c. Error Explanation

Based on the error analysis hypothesis in explaining the errors, the leading cause behind the incorrect pronunciation of words is inter-lingual errors made by the learners' linguistic background and the interference of their MT.

The most frequent type of error is sound replacement, appearing most of the time in vowels; for instance, the sound /ŋ/ in the word /ɪsˈkeɪpɪŋ/ is replaced by /n/, which makes the pronunciation of the word quite different from its original form. The case of sound replacement is repeated in many other words, taking as an example the sound /æ/ in /trænsfəˈmeɪʃən/ is replaced by /ɒ/, and the sound /əʊ/ is replaced by /ɒ/ in /ˈtəʊni/. There is no difference when it comes to consonants; for instance, the sound /ʧ/ is most of the time replaced by /ʃ/ like in the word /ˈækʧʊəl/, and the sound /v/ that is substituted by /f/ in the word /ɒv/.

As mentioned previously, the absence of some English sounds in the Tebessian sounds storage is among the causes that make students replace certain sounds with others, also due to the representation of sounds in the Tebessian variety being different from English.

The second type of error retrieved from the tables is sound addition; this case predominantly manifests in short vowels and the phoneme /r/ or /ɻ/. In words like /ˈəʊpənəd/, /ˈɪntərestɪd/, and /ˈmænɪʒɪd/, the vowels /ə/ and /ɪ/ are added resulting in the disequilibrium of the words, these added sounds are considered errors because sometimes, they can change the meaning of the words. Interference here is a reason for the presence of the error since the sound /ر/ in the Tebessian dialect is usually produced with pressure. So words like'أرواح' which means 'come' are pronounced as /æɻwɑːh/; the influence of this sound is shown in students pronouncing words like /heɻ/ and /əndər/, /θɻʊ/, and /ˈtɻaɪɪn/.

d. Error Evaluation

To evaluate the errors in the tables from an error analysis approach view, we should confirm that some errors are considered more serious than others because the change in one sound or more may affect the meaning of words. Taking as an example, the produced word 'survivors', due to the sound replacement of /r/ by /l/ error, the word changed completely from /səˈvaɪvəz/ to become 'survivals' /sərvaɪvəlz/ leading to a change in meaning. Another instance is pronouncing /sneɪk/ as /snɑːk/; the sound replacement here produces an entirely different word. Seeing these and other sound replacement errors, we can say that sound replacement errors can be distort pronunciation. On the contrary, we cannot denote that errors are serious in the sound addition evaluation. Because, in most cases, addition happens at the level of vowels by either shortening them or lengthening them, which do not make that much of a change in the meaning of words; for example, adding the vowel /ə/ in /ˈəʊpənəd/ and /ˈɪntərestɪd/ does not affect their meanings.

In the case of sound omission, some errors can be considered serious while some other can be overlooked as they do not cause any disrupt in the meaning of words. In the sound omission errors observed from the sample, not all errors can be considered major, for instance, omitting the sound /j/ in /ˈæmbjʊləns/ may lead to inaccuracy of speech but the listener will still digest that the speaker meant the word 'ambulance'.

2.2.3. *Discussion of the Results*

The results of the survey answer the first and the second research questions, while the findings of the audio recordings answer the third one.

2.2.3.1.Questionnaire Discussion. Answering the first and the second questions

1. To what extent does the Tebessian accent interfere with the English pronunciation?

2. What are the causes trigger the occurrence of the Tebessian accent Interference in English?

From the findings of the questionnaire, we can generate that the teachers have shown through their responses a contradiction of ideas. In one item, they implied that the students' accent in English is very distinctive and does not share any similarities with any other linguistic systems that they possess. However, in another item, they agreed that pronunciation errors produced by students are, to a great extent, caused by mistakenly applying the Arabic phonological system. This means that the most apparent factor behind the occurrence of speech errors is first language interference. Brown (2000) mentioned that it is common in foreign language teaching and learning to stress the role of interference. He says: " It is of course not surprising that this process has been so singled out, for native language interference is surely the most immediately noticeable source of error among second language learners" (p.95)

This is further clarified in one of the survey's questions about whether the teachers believe that the transfer of the Tebessian accent is indeed negative. The respondents agreed and assured that if someone is using Arabic (Tebessian variety) sounds frequently; the latter would migrate consciously or unconsciously to English. Likewise, the transfer is negative because when it happens, the appropriate intonation and the production of specific sounds might be distorted. The latter results in non-English-like production caused by the differences in the phonological patterns of Arabic and English.

Among other items of the survey, teachers confirmed that the rate of incorrect pronunciation produced by students is large and that the students have no awareness of their speech errors most of the time. Together with other factors leading to the manifestation of these errors, negative transfer is a major cause for errors that, for instance, can be displayed in aspiration, stress, and intonation since the Tebessian variety is characterised by vowel reduction and a somehow flat intonation. Furthermore, teachers certified that by a high range, students produce incorrect speech when exposed to new material, this can be justified by the

basis that learners will use whatever previous experience they have had with their native language to facilitate the target language learning experience and this is when the interference becomes visible (Brown, 2000).

Moving to another item where instructors highlighted the fact that their students make efforts to produce correct speech and strive for better pronunciation. It is suggested that trying to hinder the traces of the Tebessian accent may lead to correct English pronunciation. To avoid negative transfer that can be an obstruction for learning, the native accent should stay within the sphere of the mother tongue and must be prevented from expanding to the foreign language sound system.

Besides, being aware of the interference may reduce the amount of its influence. As proposed by the English teachers, if students are aware that their native accent is the cause of their production of phonological errors, it may encourage them to take the necessary measures with practice to identify, recognise and manipulate the sounds of English, avoiding errors. Therefore, this induces the learners to remediate their speech problems and enhance their pronunciation.

Moreover, in the items about reasons for the occurrence of the phonological interference, the responses gathered from the teachers show that students tend to have troubles applying the phonological rules. This can be justified by the previously stated fact explaining that students utilise their mother tongue's phonological rules by mistake. For further explanation, confusion between the two phonological systems might happen; the students will use first language rules to learn the target language. Consequently, the interference happens. It is stated in the preceding chapter that the more different the two systems are, the more interference will happen. Hence, since the phonological systems of Arabic (precisely the Tebessian variety) and English are very different, this causes a high rate

of the production of errors. Respectively, here we can see the validity of the first research hypothesis that states that the extent of the interference is very high.

Another triggering reason for the existence of the interference might be related to the low attention devoted to pronunciation in foreign language learning. From the teachers' answers in one of the questions asking whether pronunciation is given importance in the planning of lessons of the Oral Expression/Phonetics or not, the majority answered with 'no'. Giving little to no attention to pronunciation in an oral expression or phonetics class might be one of the central causes behind phonological errors induced by the students' native accent interference. This can also be supported by the instructors' responses to another question asking whether pronunciation should be taught in earlier learning experiences or after entering university. All teachers agreed that the earlier pronunciation is learned, the better outcome learners will have. Nonetheless, they assert that being taught by native or native-like speakers and exposed to authentic English is the ideal experience for pronunciation learning.

From this perspective, it can be confirmed that the first and the second research questions are answered according to the collected and analysed data from the teachers' questionnaire. All the answers provide an explanation of the existence of phonological interference in third-year EFL students at Larbi Tebessi University and its prominent causes. On this account, the first research hypothesis is confirmed.

2.2.3.2. Discussion of the Audio Recordings. Answering the third question

3. What types of phonological errors are most likely to happen?

The answer to this question is formulated from the analysis of the audio recordings of the sample's speech. The results show that sound replacement and sound addition are the most recurring phonological errors.

To be precise, all students made at least four sound replacement errors in their pronunciation; this type of errors happens when they face confusion between similar or different sounds. This leads EFL learners to substitute some vowels or consonants with others; for instance, /ʌ/ with /ɜ:/ or /v/ with /f/. The mother tongue plays a role in the occurrence of sound replacement errors because the substitution usually happens between a sound from the native language and a sound from the target phonological system that shares the same manner of articulation e.g. /ف/ in Arabic and /v/ in English. Considering that, Arabic only has the labio-dental fricative /ف/ contrary to English, which possesses both the voiced and voiceless sounds /v/ and /f/. Besides, EFL students utter their native sound /ف/ instead of the English sound /v/ owing to the fact that /v/ does not exist in their native phonological repertoire. Furthermore, the majority of the research participants substituted the sound /ʧ/ with /ʃ/ and the sound /ʤ/ with /ʒ/. This is justified by the fact that /ʧ/ and /ʤ/ sounds in English occur as distinct phonemes, but in the Tebessian variety, they are a sequence of separate sounds / ت + ش// and /ج + د/. The results also highlight that all subjects confused the sound /ŋ/ with /n/, regarding the fact that this sound does not exist in the Tebessian dialect.

As far as the error of sound addition is concerned, it is noticed that the most inserted extra sound is the rhotic Tebessian /ر/. However, in RP the sound /r/ in words like: 'After', 'Her' and 'Butterfly' is pronounced lightly: /ˈɑːftə/, /hɜ:/ and /ˈbʌtəflaɪ/. Nevertheless, all subjects of this research sample strongly trilled the /r/ sound by the influence of their native /ر/, pronouncing the English /r/ where it should be uttered lightly. In the same manner, the participants tended to insert an additional vowel into English consonant combinations. It is detected in words like 'managed', 'opened', and 'interested', where they added the sound /ɪ/ between /ʤ/ and /d/ resulting in /ˈmænɪʒɪd/, /ə/ between /n/ and /d/ producing /ˈəʊpənəd/, as well as, the sound /ə/ along with /e/ amidst /t/ and /r/ and /r/ and /s/ bringing about /ˈɪntərestɪd/. According to Khalifa (2020), "English permits much longer initial, medial and

final consonant clusters than Arabic." (p. 175). That is why most subjects made the sound addition error in pronouncing English consonant sequences.

In this regard, the second research hypothesis stating that Phonological interference leads the EFL students to make pronunciation errors is confirmed as well.

2.2.4. *Limitations of the Study*

Despite the efforts made to achieve a thorough research study, as any researcher, we encountered several difficulties along our study journey. Therefore, a sum of limitations can be stated as follows:

- The unavailability of resources was a major obstacle; many books that hold valuable information that could provide a well-grounded literature review were only proposed for online sale. Thus, we could not have access to them.

- In the data collection phase, only five out of nine teachers have responded on the questionnaires. We waited around 25 days for all answers to start the questionnaire analysis. This has slowed down the process of compiling this study.

- The most evident obstacle that we faced was the fact that there are very little to no previous researches on the Tebessian variety of Arabic. Hence, we mostly based the work on general knowledge and our own assumptions and experiences in the discussion, interpretation and relating the ideas and information together.

- The current application of the new protocol of Covid-19 as far as the levels and schedules are concerned which requires each class to study according to a restricted period of time has limited the number of sessions needed for conducting the data collection process.

2.2.5. *Implications of the Study*

From the findings obtained while exploring the extent of interference of the Tebessian accent in the students' English pronunciation, this research arrives to assemble a set of pedagogical implications that could aid to minimise the interference phenomenon that causes pronunciation errors. They are arranged in this way:

a. For Teachers

- First, it comes to our attention that pronunciation is quite neglected in EFL classes as the focus is usually on grammar and vocabulary. According to Elliot (1995), teachers tend to view pronunciation as the least useful of the basic language skills and therefore they generally sacrifice teaching pronunciation in order to spend more time on other areas of language. Accordingly, all language facets including pronunciation should receive equal attention because they are all considered the basis of an exquisite level at English.

- Second, shedding light on students' pronunciation errors can help oral expression and phonetics teachers identifying the problematic areas in their students' speech production. As a suggestion, teachers should consider error analysis as a way to determine and diagnose these problems in EFL classes.

- Teaching phonetics and phonology should happen at earlier stages of studying English.

- Using authentic native material in class is the very first effective strategy that could enhance the students' pronunciation; by being habitually exposed to the speech of native speaker. Repetition and practice are key elements that help decrease the influence of the mother tongue on speech.

- Just like any other type of errors, phonological errors are always present regardless of the teaching methods used. That being so, instead of neglecting them when they happen, teachers should draw their students' attention to the differences between their mother tongue and the foreign language they are studying. This will raise the awareness of EFL learners and help them reduce the errors resulting from the interference between the two systems.

- Oral expression teachers are invited to encourage their students to speak more in classes by varying the communicative activities. They can also find ways to motivate shy learners to participate and engage in group discussions with their peers.

b. For Learners

- Students should reach out to understand the concept of first language interference and how negatively it can affect their speech production.

- The learners should be familiar with English language through giving more importance to the differences between their native language and the target one (English), especially in phonetics and phonology in which they face most of their difficulties.

- Students should surround themselves with native English media like movies, videos, songs and podcasts in order to be accommodated into a better English pronunciation.

- Students should build their motivation and will to learn pronunciation.

- Learners should try to eliminate the use of their native variety during classes and reduce directly translating their ideas from their native language to the target one.

2.2.6. Recommendations

In the light of the foregoing results and the limitations of the current study, few recommendations can be taken into consideration for possible future research.

- Other researchers can investigate the phenomenon of phonological interference in a different context; for instance, another case of interference of a certain dialect can be explored.

- Future researches can include data collection tools that are different from the ones used in the current research; for example, students' questionnaire and interviews.

- We also suggest exploring the same topic with a larger sample for more possible generalisation.

- Other features of speech production like stress or intonation can be examined in relation to phonological interference.

- Since we used the Error Analysis hypothesis to analyse our data, we highly encourage other researchers to use the Contrastive Analysis hypothesis in their investigation.

- Future studies might work with other population of interest; targetinglower educational levels like high school or middle school.

- Since the time did not give us justice, further research could be conducted by opting for an experimental study; this could determine whether mother tongue phonological interference can be reduced using appropriate materials within a specific timeframe.

Conclusion

This chapter undertakes two essential sections of the study: methodological background and data analysis and interpretation. The first section describes the research methods and the data collection tools used in the research, particularly the mixed method, the teachers' questionnaire, and the audio recordings. The questionnaire was directed to teachers

of oral expression and phonetics, and data collection through audio recordings was effectuated with third-year BA classes at the department of English at Larbi Tebessi University. The second section covers the discussion of the results acquired from the data analysis answering the research questions, and approving the research hypotheses. The chapter is concluded with a set of limitations that we faced during the research process, leaving the space for some pedagogical implications and recommendations suggested for future research elaborations.

General Conclusion

The present research was established to investigate to what extent the Tebessian local accent digs its way into the pronunciation of English of EFL Tebessian students. This dissertation is divided into two main chapters. Chapter one represents the theoretical scope of language interference in EFL learning. Indeed, it is constructed out of two sections. The first section represents English as a foreign language in which various concepts such as the difference between the Arabic and the English phonological systems, pronunciation, and accent are discussed. The second section displays first language interference, giving a close look at EFL, first language interference, phonological interference and some related aspects, as well as, the Contrastive analysis and the Error Analysis hypotheses.

Moreover, Chapter two introduces the field work of the study including the research design, data analysis, interpretation and discussion. It is also divided into two sections. The first section gives an overview of the research methodology and design, including research approach, sampling, the selected instruments, description of the procedures, and data collection process. Besides, the second section involves the data analysis and the discussion of the results, including the results of the questionnaire analysis, the interpretation of the audio recordings, and the synthesis of the findings.

The obtained results accede to the hypotheses of the study highlighting that the extent of the interference of the Tebessian accent with English pronunciation is high and that this interference is a major cause for the production of considerable phonological errors. According to the questionnaire responses, most teachers highly agree that there is an interference of the Tebessian accent within the students' English pronunciation, mentioning the causes of this phenomenon. The latter answers the first and the second research questions: to what extent does the Tebessian accent interfere with English pronunciation? And, what are the causes that trigger the occurrence of the Tebessian accent interference in English?

The analysis of the audio-recordings that were processed with the sample of this research being eight third-year EFL students at Larbi Tebessi University brought out results that answer the third research question: what are the phonological errors that are most likely to happen?.

In essence, the obtained findings can be considered a confirmation for the hypotheses generated in this study. Thereby, it is necessary to take a close look at phonological interference, especially in the Algerian context, as it can be a huge obstacle for students who wants to develop native-like pronunciation level. Limitations in this study can be an onset for more in depth research in the scope of the said phenomenon.

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The Teachers' Questionnaire

This questionnaire is a research tool that aims to investigate the interference of the Tebessian student's accent in their English pronunciation at the department of English - Larbi Tebessi University. Your cooperation will be much appreciated please take time to answer all the questions.

SECTION ONE: PERSONAL BACKGROUND

Question 1. What is your teaching specialty?

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Question 2. For how long have you been teaching English?

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Question 3. For how long have you been teaching oral expression/phonetics?

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Questions 4. To what levels have you taught the module of oral expression/phonetics so far?

a.   First year ☐

b.   Second year ☐

c.   Third year ☐

SECTION TWO: PRONUNCIATION ISSUES IN CLASS

Question 5. My pronunciation model when I speak is usually:

a.   General American ☐

b.   Received Pronunciation ☐

c.   No particular model ☐

Question 6. According to you, which area has the most trouble spots in your learners' speech?

a.   Vocabulary ☐

b. Pronunciation ☐

c. Grammar ☐

d. Fluency ☐

Question 7. Do you plan lessons where the main factor is pronunciation?

- Yes ☐

- No ☐

Question 8. What objectives among the following have you often stated for your oral expression/ phonetics syllabus?

a. Correct English ☐

b. Intelligible English ☐

c. Accurate comprehension ☐

d. Overall comprehension ☐

SECTION THREE: PRONUNCIATION ERRORS

Question 9. How often do you notice students producing incorrect speech?

a. Very often ☐

b. Often ☐

c. Sometimes ☐

d. Never ☐

Question 10. Do you think pronunciation errors made by the students are:

a. Obstacles to learning and must be eliminated. ☐

b. They are part of learning and must be overlooked. ☐

c. Some are serious and must be eradicated. ☐

Question 11. How often do you give corrective feedback to students' speech errors?

a. Always ☐

b. Usually ☐

c. Sometimes ☐

d. Occasionally ☐

e. Never ☐

Question 12. How often are your students aware of the errors they make while speaking?

a. Always ☐

b. Usually ☐

c. Sometimes ☐

d. Occasionally ☐

e. Never ☐

Question 13. How frequent do the students realise their error immediately?

a. Always ☐

b. Usually ☐

c. Sometimes ☐

d. Occasionally ☐

e. Never ☐

Question 14. Do learners make efforts to improve their English pronunciation?

- Yes ☐

- No ☐

Question 15. Do students ask questions about how to pronounce words?

- Yes ☐

- No ☐

Question 16. Do you think learners make errors in speaking because:

- They have problems acquiring pronunciation rules. ☐

☐

- They have problems applying pronunciation rules.

- Others (please provide)

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Question 17. Please tick the option that appeals to you:

Students make speech errors when exposed to new material	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Spoken errors should be corrected after the student finishes talking	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Teachers should be the ones correcting the students' errors	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The students themselves should correct their own errors	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Students should correct their classmates' errors	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Fluency is the most important aspect in learning English	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Accuracy is the most important aspect in learning English	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Students' poor pronunciation affects their willingness to communicate	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

SECTION FOUR: FIRST LANGUAGE INTERFERENCE

Question 18. Students' pronunciation bears traces of:

- Their native Tebessian accent ☐

- Their accent is wholly distinctive and bears no resemblances to any other linguistic

  system they possess ☐

Question 19. Do you notice students mistakenly apply Arabic phonological rules when

speaking English?

- Yes ☐

- No ☐

Question 20. Do you think learners of English should eradicate all traces of their native

accent?

- Yes ☐

- No ☐

Please provide your reasons:

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Question 21. Do you think the students are aware that their native accent does influence their

speech in English?

- Yes ☐

- No ☐

Question 22. If students were aware of phonological interference, would that encourage them to make efforts to get rid of it in their speech? Please justify.

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Question 23. Can you comment on the status of English in the Tebessian society?

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Question 24. Do you think teaching pronunciation should happen in earlier learning experiences or after entering University? Please provide your reasons

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Question 25. In your opinion, does the mother tongue really have a negative influence on the pronunciation of English? If yes, please elaborate your answer.

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Question 26. We have allocated the following lines for you to feel free to append to this

questionnaire with anything you find prone to enrich and solidify the findings of our research.

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Thank you for your help

Résumé

La présente thèse examine dans quelle mesure l'accent tébessien croise son chemin dans la prononciation anglaise, principalement avec des étudiants de troisième année du département d'anglais de l'Université Larbi Tebessi. Il tente de faire la lumière sur l'accent tébessien et ses effets sur la pertinence de la prononciation anglaise des étudiants, pour cela, deux hypothèses sous-tendent cette étude. Tout d'abord, l'étendue de l'interférence de l'accent tébessien dans la prononciation anglaise est élevée. Deuxièmement, les interférences phonologiques amènent les étudiants de l'EFL à commettre des erreurs phonologiques. Une approche mixte a été utilisée pour servir l'objectif de la recherche dont un questionnaire structuré a également été renvoyé par cinq professeurs d'expression orale / phonétique du département d'anglais pour chercher des réponses aux première et deuxième questions de recherche, leurs réponses ont été analysées quantitativement comme moyen d'examiner la première hypothèse. En outre, huit participants de la population de promotion de troisième année contenant 147 étudiants ont été sélectionnés au hasard comme échantillon de cette recherche. Ils ont été observés et enregistrés audio, dans le but d'inspecter les erreurs phonologiques résultant de l'interférence et de répondre à la troisième question de recherche, leurs énoncés ont été analysés qualitativement selon la procédure énoncée dans l'hypothèse de l'analyse des erreurs afin de tester la deuxième hypothèse de recherche. Même si des limitations étaient présentes pendent la compilation de cette recherche, les résultats obtenus indiquent que les deux hypothèses de recherche sont approuvées. Par conséquent, l'ampleur de l'interférence de l'accent tébessien dans la prononciation Anglaise des étudiants de troisième année est en effet élevée, et cette dernière a un effet sur la production d'erreurs de prononciation. Finalement, plusieurs implications et recommandations pratiques ont été proposées pour surmonter les obstacles au l'interférence de la langue maternelle.

Mots clés interférence phonologique, accent Tébessien, prononciation Anglaise, erreurs phonologiques

الملخص

تتحرى هذه الأطروحة مدى تداخل اللهجة التبسية مع طريقة نطق اللغة الإنجليزية، تحديدا مع طلاب السنة الثالثة في قسم اللغة الإنجليزية في جامعة الشيخ العربي التبسي. هذه الأطروحة تحاول تسليط قليل من الضوء على اللهجة التبسية و تأثيرها على مدى ملاءمة نطق الطلاب باللغة الانجليزية. هناك فرضيتان وراء هذه الدراسة، الأولى هي التداخل المرتفع للهجة التبسية في النطق باللغة الإنجليزية. و الثانية هي أن التداخل الصوتي يؤدي بمتعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة اجنبية لارتكاب أخطاء صوتية. تم استخدام منهجية مركبة لخدمة أهداف البحث. كما تم إرسال استبيان منظم من قبل خمسة أساتذة للتعبير الشفوي/الصوتيات في قسم اللغة الإنجليزية للبحث عن إجابات للسؤالين الأول و الثاني: إلى أي مدى تتعارض اللهجة التبسية مع النطق الإنجليزي؟ ما هي الأسباب التي تؤدي إلى حدوث تداخل اللهجة التبسية باللغة الإنجليزية ؟ تم تحليل ردودهم كميًا كوسيلة لتفحص الفرضية الأولى. بالإضافة إلى ثمانية مشاركين من أصل 147 طالب في السنة الثالثة في قسم اللغة الإنجليزية، تم إختيارهم عشوائيا كنموذج لهذا البحث حيث تم ملاحظتهم و تسجيلهم صوتيا بهدف فحص الأخطاء الصوتية الناتجة عن التداخل و الإجابة عن سؤال البحث الثالث: ما هي أنواع الأخطاء الصوتية التي من المرجح أن تحدث؟ تم تحليل أقوالهم بشكل نوعي باتباع الإجراء الوارد في فرضية تحليل الأخطاء من أجل اختبار الافتراض البحثي الثاني. تشير النتائج التي تم الحصول عليها إلى الموافقة على كلا الفرضيتين و إثباتهما. و من ثم، فإن مدى تداخل اللهجة التبسية في اللغة الإنجليزية مرتفع و هذه الأخيرة لها تأثير على إنتاج أخطاء النطق.

الكلمات المفتاحية. التداخل الصوتي ، اللهجة التبسية، النطق الإنجليزي، الأخطاء الصوتية