

# مشاكل لفظ الأصوات الإنكليزية غير الموجودة في اللغة العربية: دراسة حالة طلاب اللغة الإنكليزية في الجامعات السورية

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## ملخص البحث

تستعرض هذه الدراسة مشكلات لفظ الأصوات الإنكليزية غير الموجودة في اللغة العربية التي يواجهها الطلاب السوريون في قسم اللغة الإنكليزية في جامعة حماة، كون لغتهم الأولى اللهجة السورية العامية. بمعنى آخر للحصول على الأصوات الإشكالية والعوامل التي تسبب هذا الإشكال. تركيزها على الأصوات اللينة والساكنة يجعل من تلك الأصوات محورها. تدور الدراسة حول قدرة المتعلمين على إتقان اللفظة الأصلية فيما يخص الأصوات الإنكليزية غير الموجودة في اللغة العربية منبثقة من حقيقة أن أغلب المتعلمين لديهم معرفة نظرية كافية إلا أن أدائهم لا يتناسب مع كفاءتهم المعرفية. من هنا تقترح الباحثة أن أغلب المتعلمين غير مدركين للدور الذي يلعبه تباين مدى الصوت في جعل الرسالة المقصودة بارزة، كما أنهم لا يدركون التغيير الدلالي والنحوي الذي يسببه أحيانا تغيير اللفظ. لإثبات فرضيات البحث ومقترحاته وبعد الاطلاع على الأدوات المستخدمة من قبل الباحثين السابقين، اعتمدت الباحثة على أداتين هما: استبيان واختبار. استهدف الاستبيان مئة طالب وطالبة بينما استهدف الاختبار عشرين من الطلاب السوريين في قسم اللغة الإنكليزية في جامعة حماة بمعدل عشرة طلاب من كل سنة دراسية. أظهرت نتائج الاختبار فشل الطلاب الخاضعين للاختبار في لفظ الأصوات الإنكليزية غير الموجودة في اللغة العربية بطريقة صحيحة وذلك في أغلب

الأصوات المقترحة، فضلا عن أنها بينت أيضا اعتماد المتعلمين على اللغة العربية في تحديد اللفظ و قراءة الأصوات بطريقة مطابقة لتهجئتها. وعكست إجابات الاستبيان إمام المتعلمين ببعض البنود ذات الصلة باللفظ عموما والأصوات الإنكليزية غير الموجودة في اللغة العربية خصوصا على الرغم من أنهم أثبتوا عدم إمامهم باللفظ في بعض البنود. وهذا ما أثبت إلى حد بعيد اقتراحات الباحثة السابقة فيما يخص الكفاءة العلمية والأداء وعدم قدرة المتعلمين على تطبيق النظريات، أي أنهم غير قادرين على خلق توازن بين الاثنين. وتوصي الباحثة بتعزيز دور الاستماع في التعليم وإجراء اختبارات سماعية وشفهية والتركيز على المهارات التي تركز على استخدام اللغة بشكل تواصلية.

## **Problems of Pronouncing English Sounds that do not Exist in Arabic: A Case Study of Syrian Students of English**

### **Abstract**

The present study explores the problems of pronouncing English sounds that do not exist in Arabic faced by Syrian learners at the Department of English, Hama University whose first language is Syrian Arabic. In other words, it attempts to identify the problematic sounds and the factors that cause these problems. Its main emphasis on vowel and consonant sounds makes them its core. It revolves around learners' inability to learn the native accent in what is related to English sounds that do not exist in Arabic, arising from the fact that most learners are knowledgeable enough, yet their performance does not really match their competence. The researcher, thus, suggests that most learners are not aware of the role the varying voice range plays in making the intended message salient nor are they aware of the semantic and syntactic change pronunciation sometimes causes. To prove the research hypotheses, and after going on the tools employed by previous researchers, this study relies on two research tools, namely a questionnaire and a test. The questionnaire targeted 100 students, while the test targeted 20 Syrian learners at the Department of English, Hama University, an average of ten students per year. The test results illustrate testees' failure to produce some

English sounds that do not exist in Arabic correctly in most of the assigned instances. Moreover, it also demonstrates learners' reliance on Arabic when both assigning pronunciation and reading sounds in a way consistent with their spelling. The questionnaire responses, however, reflect learners' acquaintance with some items relevant to pronunciation, in general, and English sounds that do not exist in Arabic, in particular, although, in other items, they prove their incompetence in pronunciation. This highly confirms the research's earlier suggestion regarding competence and performance and learners' inability to put theories into practice; that is, their lack of success in striking a balance between the two. It is then recommended that teaching pronunciation should be carried out through listening and repeating. Moreover, enhancing speaking can, undeniably, help learners to use their input orally, so they get corrected.

## 1. Introduction

Nowadays, English is considered an international language and is used all over the world. English remains the most important language among other languages of the world. There are a lot of people all over the world who have strong desire to learn and speak English. Every student dreams of having a native speaker pronunciation. But, there are many barriers that hinder them to speak with good pronunciation. Cruttenden (2001) defines language as a group of signals used for communication. It comprises significant sound units called phonemes. By putting these phonemes together, people can share thoughts, knowledge and experience. Setting aside sign language, language can be spoken or written. Although spoken languages are prior to written ones, through ages, language has always been looked at as a sign of civilization, for ancient tribes brought their own languages and cultures with them wherever they settled down. In spite of the fact that animals possess their own forms of communication, language is considered unique to humans. According to Fromkin & Rodman (1998: 3), "the possession of language, more than any other attribute, distinguishes humans from other animals".

Pronunciation is the first aspect to be noticed in oral interaction. Consequently, it has always been an outstanding source of difficulty to language learners of all levels. This is mainly because of the complexity and uniqueness of the English sound system that is hard to adapt to on the part of the learners and the lack of oral practice assigned in the language classroom. As a result, English language teachers should be familiar with the articulatory system of sounds, in general, and vowels, in particular. Teachers can teach learners how to produce them correctly and efficiently as in Hijazi (2000).

## **2. Research problem and significance**

Pronunciation has received little attention from some researchers and teachers as they believe that pronunciation is fossilized at a certain stage and it not worth teaching Morley (1994). In fact, Arab learners, in general, and Syrian learners, in particular, encounter problems in the pronunciation domain, particularly, English sounds that do not exist in Arabic such as some long and short vowels [ e, æ, ə, ɜ:, ʌ, ɒ, ɔ:, a: ], diphthongs [ aɪ, ɔɪ, eɪ, əʊ, aʊ, ɪə, ʊə, eə ] and some consonants [ p, g, v, ŋ, tʃ ]. Since the topic of pronunciation is fairly dense and broad, it is better to focus on the previously mentioned forms. Furthermore, many learners can successfully perform pronunciation in a written test but fail to do so orally. In other words, they cannot put their knowledge, including rules

and theories, into practice as they are not used to practicing English nor are they exposed enough to it. So, this paper focuses on pronunciation problems among university students, who do not care much about the areas of symbols and do not know that some letters have more than one way of pronunciation.

This research is an attempt to investigate Syrian learners' awareness of English pronunciation. These learners have generally been observed to achieve limited success in mastering the sounds of the foreign language. This has, in most cases, been reflected in the various aspects of misunderstanding and miscommunication. A close observation of students at Hama University, Department of English, disclosed that students confused the pronunciation of some set of words including most of the English words that have sounds which do not exist in Syrian Spoken Arabic, such / p / in "experience" / θ / in "think" and / ð / in "this". It was also observed that students did not differentiate between some vowel sounds which had more than one way of pronunciation, e.g. the vowel in "mat" and "mate".

The researcher spent many days at Hama University observing the pronunciation of English words used by the students of English at Hama University, and the result of this observation at the university was twofold. First, it was noticed that the students had

problems in the pronunciation of some English sounds. For instance, they confused the contrastive sounds. Here are some words and how the students pronounced them (s3:vis / s3:rvaɪs), (wɪmɪn / wumɪn) and (pɜ:fɔ:məns / pɜ:fɔ:məns). So in the first word, they used the long form instead of the short form; in the second word they used / ʊ / instead of / ɪ /, and the word "performance" was pronounced with a long vowel / ɜ: / instead of the / ə /. So, we find that they confused different pronunciations of each vowel as if there were only one pronunciation for each sound according to their knowledge. Second, they had some errors with some consonants that did not exist in Syrian Spoken Arabic such as / θ, ð, p, v /, so they replaced them by / s, z, b, f /. Listening to Syrian Students of English when pronouncing English words, the researcher found that they mispronounced some words. For example, they did not differentiate between / s / and / θ /. They used / s / instead of / θ / in words like (bath, math, theatre), where they replaced the dental / θ / by the alveolar / s /, so they pronounced them like (bas, mas, seatre). They also had some mistakes with other fricatives like / z / and / ð /. They replaced the dental / ð / by the alveolar / z /, so words like (the, weather, then) were pronounced with / z / instead of / ð /. They pronounced them as (zə, wezə, zen). The third example is their replacement of bilabials / p / and / b / by each other. So they usually used / b / instead of / p / and in very few cases / p / instead of / b /. For instance, in words like



(pupil, paper, apple) they pronounced them as /bjʊ:bl/, /berbə/ and /æbl/.

It is difficult for a second language learner to speak with native-like pronunciation. Therefore, this research attempts to identify the problematic areas of pronunciation and to identify the exact reasons behind them and try to find suitable techniques that help the students to speak English with better pronunciation.

### **3. Research objectives and questions**

Pronunciation is by far the most salient feature in the communicative approach. Since most language learning courses at learning centres focus basically on the productive skill, which is speaking, then giving heed to pronunciation and making effort to produce prosodic patterns are required to improve speaking. This study, therefore, aims at raising learners' awareness of the importance of English sounds that do not exist in Arabic. The validity of this research arises from the lack of studies tackling English sounds that do not exist in Arabic as it attracts attention to these problems, and suggests solutions to overcome them.

This paper aims at exploring the problems Syrian learners face in the pronunciation domain by:

1. Pinpointing the reasons underlying the difficulties they encounter in the pronunciation domain.
2. Providing a full list of the English vowel and consonant sounds that do not exist in Arabic and familiarising learners with the change their pronunciation undergoes according to where they occur in a sentence which might be neglected or unknown by many learners.
3. Investigating the factors that cause the phonological interference between Arabic and English, and trying to find good solutions for this problem.
4. Drawing students' attention to the significance of English pronunciation in language learning.

In order to fulfil the previous aims, this research attempts to answer the following questions:

1. Does drawing analogies and comparisons between the letters of both languages pinpoint the differences which result in problems?
2. Can the way teachers speak in the classroom facilitate and organise learning?
3. Is it true that most learners are unfamiliar with the different pronunciation of English sounds that do not exist in Arabic?
4. What factors contribute to pronunciation errors and mistakes?

#### 4. Research hypotheses and limitations

Arab learners of English come across a number of pronunciation problems in the process of learning the TL, and these problems can, in a way, hinder mastering it. Being an English teacher at a private centre, the researcher has noticed:

1. Learners' inability to adjust to native speakers' pronunciation, especially when it comes to English sounds that are not found in Arabic mainly because assigning pronunciation does not rely on one fixed rule. Rather, it works better with listening and practicing.
2. learners' unawareness of the difficulties of pronouncing some English vowels and consonants which are not found in Arabic because they are inconsistent.
3. Learners' unawareness of the lexical and syntactic change pronunciation can cause.
4. Learners' unawareness of the English vowel and consonant sounds that do not exist in Arabic and their pronunciations.

This study will be applied only to undergraduate advanced learners of English at the Department of English, Faculty of Arts at Hama University, who descend from different cultural

backgrounds, for they come from different governorates. Most of them speak different dialects as they come from different regions. The researcher has chosen this particular research sample because their textbooks are addressed to advanced learners of English. Moreover, choosing students from various years (namely, first and second year) can show how far they have progressed in learning English. So, the current study is conducted on twenty Syrian students at the English Department, as average of (ten students per year) who will take part in a pronunciation test.

As for the second tool, it targets one hundred students who are supposed to fill out a questionnaire. Similarly, this method is dedicated to Syrian learners at the English Department. The aim of this task is to shed light on many items relevant to learning English, in general, and pronunciation or learning phonetics, in particular. For some students who are shy or reluctant to speak, a questionnaire will be a chance to express their opinions freely.

In general, the scope of the current study is limited because of the following factors:

1. This research is carried out on undergraduate Syrian advanced learners at the Department of English, Faculty of Arts, Hama University.

2. The previously mentioned sample, English students, may speak different L1 dialects as they come from different areas in Syria. This might affect the way they pronounce English words.
3. The result of this study may be limited because of the small number of testees compared to the total number of students at the Department.
4. The study is concerned with the problems of pronouncing English sounds that do not exist in Arabic encountered by Syrian advanced learners, so it is concerned with learners only. It does not have to do with teachers or lecturers.
5. The tools employed to prove the research hypotheses are restricted to a test, voice recording, and a questionnaire. Testees' utterances are transcribed and analysed manually, for no labs are available to measure and estimate voices and their range of loudness.

## **5. Theoretical framework and literature review**

Tharp (2010) investigates the significant challenges for L2 that learners of each language –including Arabic– may encounter. She offers the following: an overview of features that may cause pronunciation interference, a discussion of best practice for teaching adult language learners, and specific suggestions for addressing

pronunciation and intonation interference. Al-Dilaimy (2012) discusses some phonetic and phonological problems as reflected in the perception, identification and production of various English speech sounds. Most of these problems are related to the relatively complicated orthographic system of English taught to Arab students at earlier stages of English language learning and to the inconsistent relationship between spelling and pronunciation of English as well as the differences between the sound systems of Arabic and English. They often result in some pronunciation challenges for Arab students of English. Arab regional differences also pose a serious pronunciation problem represented by first language interference in the target language.

Al-Saidat (2010) studied the English pronunciation of Arab learners of English as a foreign language to determine the types of pronunciation difficulties they encountered. The sample comprised twenty fourth-year Arab Jordanian students majoring in English language and literature at two state-run universities. The students were asked to read a list of words designed by the researcher. The participants' pronunciations were recorded on a computer equipped with a sensitive microphone. Using IPA symbols, utterances were phonemically transcribed and then compared with the target language norm in order to decide what was correct and what was not. For such an accurate decision, two native speakers of English (Paul and

Caroline) were asked to evaluate the pronunciation of the participants. The incorrect ones were classified according to the type of error that took place, whereas the correct ones were regarded as irrelevant to the scope of the study. The results indicate that Arab learners of English unintentionally insert vowels in the onset as well as in the coda of certain English syllables. The results also show that the major reason for the declusterization process is the mother tongue influence.

Brown (2000) investigated the spelling mistakes, which were made by undergraduate students while using the letters "b", "p", and "e" for analyzing how the spelling was affected by the phonetic language interference. A list of more than 50 misspelled words was collected from students' written exams. It was observed that 'b' is replaced by 'p' in monosyllabic words if it appeared in the beginning before 'o'. If 'p' was in the beginning of a word before the consonant 'r' in a polysyllabic word, it was replaced by 'b'. In another situation when 'p' was placed after 'm' in the middle of a word, it was replaced by 'b'. The case of substitution of 'p' for 'b' and vice versa was observed mostly in nouns. Omission and addition of 'e' in the final position occurs because students may not find such examples in their mother tongue and also they do not find spelling rules for 'e' at the final position of words in English. Students try to substitute these letters for those in the English alphabet that are closer in pronunciation to Arabic.

Alfallaj (2013) investigated most of the teacher's problems with their students in pronunciation. Data were collected by means of a questionnaire to investigate accent, pronunciation, speed of speech, and insufficient vocabulary. Three language institutes in Buraydah, Saudi Arabia, were involved in this study. Sixty-seven students were asked about some English sounds that do not exist in Arabic through a questionnaire. The findings indicated that teachers with background knowledge of linguistics would help their students overcome most of their pronunciation problems. Along with the students' answers, the results showed that sounds whether vowels or consonants which do not exist in Arabic were difficult for Saudi students.

Tajeldin Ali (2013) provided experimental evidence for certain linguistic causes of production errors of English spoken with Sudanese Arabic accent. The study was expected to have problems with pronunciation of English vowels in both individual words and real communication. Participants were ten Sudanese University learners of English who primarily speak Arabic. English vowel data was the material of the native speakers of English. The acoustic differences that would provide insight into the issue under concern were sought. The results indicated that most of the differences appeared in the area of central and back vowels of English. However, some English tense – lax vowels showed no serious problems probably because there is correspondence between English and Arabic long/short vowels.



Moreover, the production errors detected in this study followed different directions that suggest that the Sudanese learners of English had difficulty learning the English vowels. The main linguistic causes of these production errors were mother–tongue interference and lack of English knowledge.

#### **6. Research method and procedure:**

This research implements two tools: a test and a questionnaire. Testees' were 15 females and 5 males, while the questionnaire participants' were 86 females and 14 males. After providing them with a quick overview of the test and obtaining their consent, they were asked to volunteer; they volunteered, and were recorded individually. As participants read the test items, they were recorded. Some of them sought verifications regarding English sounds that do not exist in Arabic. However, feedback was provided after conducting the recording. Having taken the approval of the head of the Department of English, the researcher distributed the questionnaire to the students. About fifty students per year participated in filling out the required questionnaires: 43 females and 7 males. First–year students were the first target sample. They, unfortunately, were the least respondent. During, before or after their lectures, copies were distributed to students of all years. To test their knowledge, some students volunteered to take part. However, the

researcher was willing to respond to students' inquiries, monitored them, facilitated and disambiguated the items. As mentioned above, first-year students were the least helpful, whereas the second-year students were rather cooperative.

## **7. Analysis and discussion of the results**

A 25-item questionnaire was addressed to a hundred Syrian undergraduates of English at Hama University. The target addressees were divided into two groups; 50 from the first year and 50 from the second year. All results are set in tables that present response statistics. Additionally, a recorded test was also deployed to pinpoint pronunciation deficiency. Both groups were asked to pronounce 21 target words in context. These sampling materials are evaluated quantitatively using charts where study outcomes are presented in average values.

Thoroughly, each questionnaire item is analyzed correspondingly with the theoretical study. Purposely, certain English sounds were elected for this survey; simply because they are the most troublesome for the Syrian learners of English. Collecting data is believed to be the vital core of a study, but a field like linguistics in general and phonetics in particular results in parameters change as the contra L2 is contrasted to English. To sum up, this study focuses on systemically different English sound system and pronunciation

problems that Syrian Students of English face at a primary stage of their study in college and palpates potential learning progress.

### 7.1. Questionnaire analysis:

As mentioned before, two groups of fifty students of English each is directed addressed to answer a 25- item Questionnaire. There are three multiple choice answer: a for agree; b for not sure; and c for disagree. Table 1 shows first-year participants' responses to questionnaire items, while table 2 presents participants' responses to questionnaire itmes:

Items	agree	not sure	Disagree	no answer
1	19	7	24	-
2	32	4	13	1
3	29	6	14	1
4	21	6	22	1
5	26	13	9	2
6	33	2	14	1
7	23	9	18	-
8	35	5	10	-
9	27	10	12	1
10	34	10	6	-
11	26	12	10	2

12	31	4	14	1
13	33	4	13	-
14	35	7	7	1
15	37	3	10	-
16	28	13	9	-
17	31	7	12	-
18	38	9	2	1
19	36	7	4	-
20	28	16	6	-
21	44	3	3	-
22	41	5	4	-
23	37	11	2	-
24	46	1	3	-
25	48	2	0	-

Table1: First-year participants' responses to questionnaire items

Items	agree	not sure	disagree	no answer
1	10	9	31	-
2	29	8	13	-
3	31	7	12	-
4	14	12	24	-
5	18	17	14	1

6	29	6	15	-
7	14	13	23	-
8	18	8	24	-
9	22	22	5	1
10	26	13	9	2
11	23	20	6	1
12	27	7	15	1
13	23	18	7	2
14	24	7	18	1
15	22	5	12	1
16	21	20	8	1
17	18	11	18	3
18	25	11	11	3
19	29	9	10	2
20	24	18	6	2
21	39	6	4	1
22	34	10	4	2
23	29	13	7	1
24	38	5	4	3
25	46	3	0	1

Table2: Second-year participants' responses to questionnaire items

Bar charts are used to indicate average values that are calculated out of hundred; divided by the number of the participants; respectively labeled as "1st year participants; 2nd year participants" as shown below:

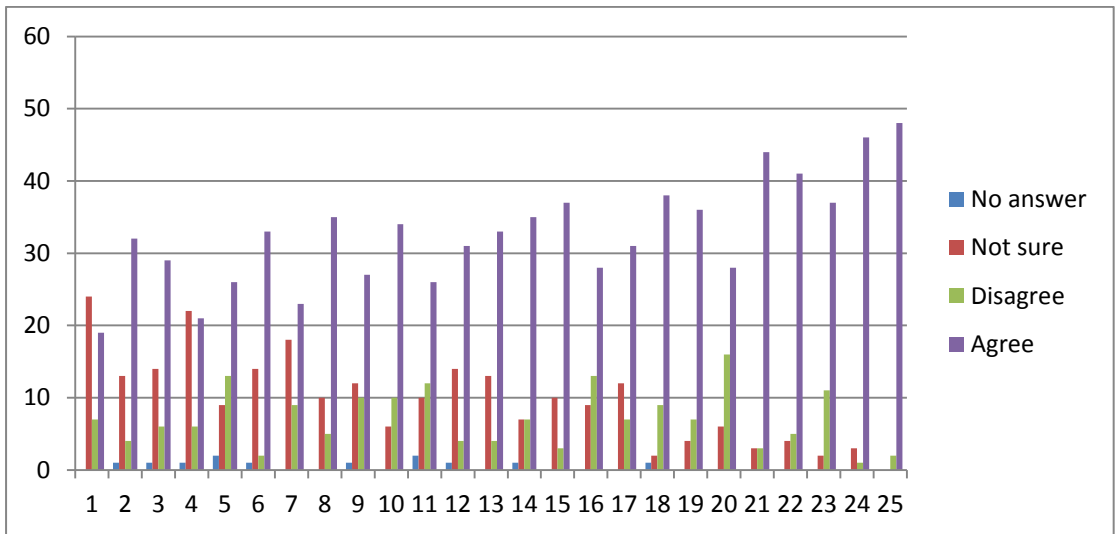


Figure 1: First-year participants' responses to questionnaire items

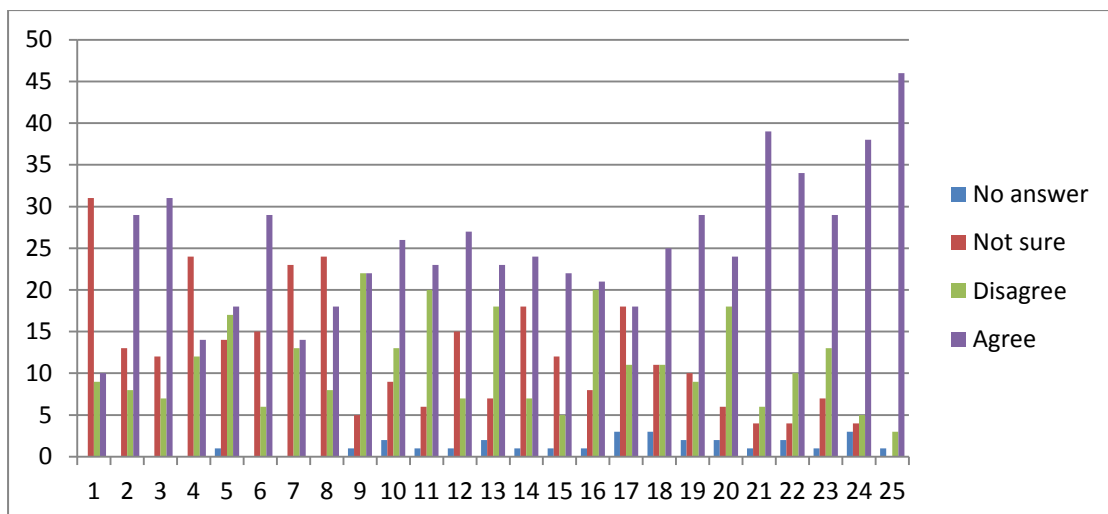


Figure 2: Second-year participants' responses to questionnaire items

## 7.2. Test analysis

These results manifest pronunciation failure factors due to which Syrian Students of English make articulation errors and pronunciation mistakes. These recording statistics present a real world situation of pronunciation competence deficiency and span the gap between the first –year students and their mates in the second year. The crucial obstacle for both groups was the vowel sound, mainly words with mid–position vowels. Vowel sound inconsistency and spelling influence create different wrong utterances of one word but there is always a common error that most students share in words like “hate, hear, colony, color”. The most irritating part is the vowel in the word / kʊlənɪ / in which the / ʊ / sound wrongly replaces the sound /

ɒ / of the correct pronunciation / kɒlənɪ /. Ninety percent of SSEs in both groups have poor competence to produce the correct central and back vowels because their L1 does not contain such presence as referred to by Corder (1981) " a problem is systematic deviation made by learners who have not yet mastered the rules of the L2. A learner cannot self-correct a problem because it is a product reflective of his or her current stage of development, or underlying competence". Additionally, the mother tongue influence always plays the starring role whenever a learner switches to speak English. L1 code is inaccessible for pronouncing some sounds; that is, L2 is named as Syrian spoken English, Indian spoken English and so on. Fossilization of some sounds stands as a barrier for SSEs to sound as natives in the long run; they intuitively deviate to their Syrian code in the word "program", all testees in both groups failed to pronounce / əʊ / sound, replacing it by / ʊ /. Table 3 shows the influence of the English vowel sound inconsistency:



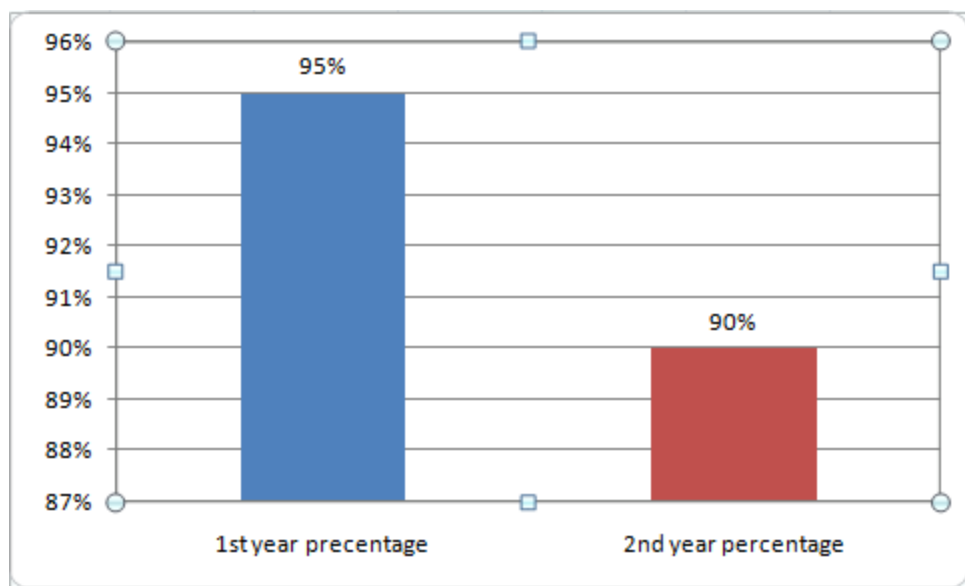


Table 3: Means of test results; the influence of the English vowel sound inconsistency.

Pronunciation competence deficiency counts for the difficulty to switch to L2 sound system, which fades by constant practice. Ninety percent of the first year testees pronounced the word "cards" wrongly as /kærdz/; they pronounced /æ/ lacking the competence to transfer to long /ɑ:/. Transfer difficulty resulted from deviating to the Arabic vowel sound /æ/, which is a long vowel in the Arabic sound system, while in the English sound system, it is a short vowel. This conflicting process requires more practice that enables SSEs to master their pronunciation skill more effectively. Sixty percent of testees in the second –year group showed defect, and forty percent

were able to pronounce the word "cards" correctly as / kɑ:dz /, which indicates a remarkable development during the learning process.

Based on the results, ninety percent of both first and second-year students were trapped by the English vowel sound inconsistency. They produced different pronunciation errors in words like "hate", "bird", and "cut". It is the silent "e" which often misleads learners from pronouncing accurately, and the different pronunciations a letter may have or likewise one vowel sound may match many shapes. SSEs swap / heɪt / by / het /; they copied their L1 matching articulation a letter for a sound. On many occasions, SSEs do know the rules, but they articulate pronunciation wrongly as mentioned before by O'Connor (1980, p45)" as it is not simple to know the exact sounds the letters stand for or represent in a certain word". For instance, for the word "aware" /əweə( r )/, results were symmetrical; seventy percent of SSEs in both groups pronounced it wrongly as / əwe( r ) /. The letter "r" must be void and / eə / is replaced by / e /. Even though participants are phonetically fully orientated, they are not used to articulating the proper diphthong unless they keep on practicing.

Similar sounds were very easy for testees to pronounce, corresponding with what is stated by many linguists. In a word like "hat" both groups registered twenty percent of pronunciation errors.

SSEs replaced the vowel / æ / by / e /, while they correctly retained / h / and / t /. There are 23 common pronunciation problems, and some of them are related to vowels. Approximately, ninety percent of students for both drills confuse / ʊə / with / ʊ / in words like "poor", and / ɒ / by / ʊ / in "colony". Other words like 'boy', 'fly', and 'cut' recorded no pronunciation errors mainly because they encoded these words in mind the same as natives did during their childhood and schooling times. Learning a foreign language is a matter of practice aided by knowledge, but acquiring a language is really a style of pronunciation imitation starting from childhood.

## **8. Pedagogical implications**

The following suggestions stem from the previous findings to improve the pronunciation of the Syrian students of English:

1. Reconsidering school curricula and syllabi so that they focus mainly on the productive skills and integrate pair and group work activities.
2. Implementing audio–visual aids which make learning more effective and fruitful in language classrooms.
3. Triggering learners to develop an ear of English by making it a habit to listen to native speakers.

4. Using games and songs when teaching English at earlier stages to enable learners to have a good command of pronunciation towards acquiring it unconsciously rather than merely learning it.
5. Following the communicative teaching approach which enhances speaking and oral practising towards paving the way for learners to use their input communicatively and retrieve the required input automatically.
6. Teachers and lecturers should be perfect models for learners to follow. To be so, they ought to enroll in learning courses, make effort to improve their skills and scope with modern career requirements.
7. Ministries of Education have to change testing and evaluation procedures so that final exams should include a speaking/listening section equal in marks to any other sections.

## **9. Recommendations for further research:**

This study conducted a test and a questionnaire. The test included a variety of sounds for testees to read and get recorded, while the questionnaire consisted of different items that estimated participants' opinions and knowledge. The test, on one hand, can be adapted to cover function sounds in context, and how learners may pronounce them, whereas the questionnaire, on the other hand, can

include other problematic sounds of Arabic origins. Further research, however, can be carried out at state and private schools to estimate teachers, who might be the main source of pronunciation errors, and teachers' input-output of English sounds that do not exist in Arabic.

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