

Chapter I

Chapter One

Introduction

1.1 overview:

It is well known that while learning English, there are many pronunciation errors that learners of English as a second language (ESL) are likely to make: word and sentence stress, intonation, length of vowel sounds, linking sounds, and ending sounds etc. Good pronunciation should be one of the first things that you learn in English. You can live without advanced vocabulary – use simple words to say what you want to say. You can live without advanced grammar – use simple grammar structures instead. But there is no such thing as "simple pronunciation". If you have bad pronunciation, people may simply not understand what you want to say even if you use correct grammar. And the consequences of bad pronunciation are tragic. Pronunciation is definitely the biggest thing that people notice when you are speaking English. By working on pronunciation skills, one can improve the form of his /her form of communication. Since the form of message must be clear as well as the content.

1.2 Statements of the Problem:

Pronunciation is an essential component of communicative competence, and at the same time communicative activities based on meaningful interaction direct learners' attention away from language form towards the message they want to communicate. Second level student of English Department at Sudan University of Science and Technology need to be aware of this problem since they are classified of learners of English of a second language (ESL) , who are expected to be competent and approximate to native target norm of final-s and final-d sounds pronunciation.

1.3 Objectives of the Study:

This research aims at investing the following:

- (i) To examine the awareness of Second level students of English Department at Sudan University of Science and Technology of the problem of pronouncing final-s and final-d sounds.
- (ii) To examine their actual practice of pronouncing the final-s and final-d sounds.
- (iii) To suggest some useful activities that would help them improve their pronunciation competence.

1.4 Questions of the research:

- (i) Are the second level students of English department aware of the problem of pronouncing the final-s and final-d sounds?
- (ii) Do they know what pronunciation is responsible for?
- (iii) Have such students adequate activities that help them improve their pronunciation competence?
- (iv) How can we devise certain pronouncing activity that might help them improve final-s and final-d sound pronunciation?

1.5 Hypotheses of the research:

- (i) Second level students of English department at Sudan University of Science and Technology are not aware of the problems of pronouncing the final-s and final-d sounds.
- (ii) Second level at Sudan University of Science and Technology has no rigorous actual practice of pronouncing the final-s and final-d sounds.

1.6 Significance of the Study:

According to Proter and Grant (2002, P.230), pronouncing the final sound words, you will be making not just pronunciation errors but grammatical errors as well. This research draws its significance from

Examining the awareness of the problems of pronouncing the final-s and final-d sound among second level students of English department at Sudan University of Science and Technology, their actual practice of pronouncing the final sounds , and suggests some useful activities to keep their spoken English correct as possible.

1.7 Methodology

1.7.1 Design:

The researcher follows the description analytic method, using test and questionnaire among random samples of second level students of English Department at Sudan University of Science and Technology in data collection, and statistics in data processing. The findings will be the result suggests some recommendations to conclude the structure.

1.7.2 Population:

There are 35 second year students from two classes in English DPT. participating in this study. They are about the same age and both genders. Because most students in this university are female, the number of females as subjects in this research is more than of males.

1.8 The limit of the study

In this research, the researcher makes some limitation. There are several pronunciation errors among second year students. In this study the data are taken by the researcher from second year students at Sudan University of Science and Technology in(2014). The researcher also concentrates on two pronunciation errors. These are: final –s and final-d.

Chapter II

Chapter II

Theoretical Framework of the Study

2.0 Overview:

According to James & Smith (2011), the difficulty of English pronunciation comes from the facts that English borrowed many foreign words and returned their original pronunciation, but partly or completely anglicized their pronunciation. Achieving of meaning is what has made pronunciation responsible for "intelligibility" whether or not meaning can be conveyed, because pronunciation involves production and perception of segmental sound of stress and unstressed syllables and of intonation. There are some most crucial concepts chosen to be clarified in this part: standard pronunciation, accuracy, communication and methodology beside English ending with the final - s and final - d sounds (allomorphs).

2.1 English pronunciation:

Since the researcher aspires to investigate the pronunciation errors with ending sounds in English, the definition of English pronunciation is exceedingly important. Standard English pronunciation should also be defined to base on. Generally speaking, pronunciation is simply put as "the way in which a language is spoken" (Oxford Advanced Learner's Encyclopedic, 1992: 718). The American Heritage Dictionary of the English language, 4th ed. (2007) defines pronunciation as "a way of speaking a word, especially a way that is accepted or generally understood" (as cited in Nguyen, 2008:06).

2.2 Standard English Pronunciation

Standard English is the most preferable accent in any social setting and to teach students. It is considered to be neutral, easier to remember

and imitate as compared to regional accents and it is heard on radio and TV. In 1914, H.C. Wyld in his book introduced the term *Received English* (RP) to cover the meaning that is generally accepted in the best society. Seidlhofer defines pronunciation as "The production and perception of the significant sound of a particular language in order to find meaning in contexts in language use (Carter and Nunan (ed.) , 2002 , p.56).

2.3 Accuracy, Communication and Methodology:

In terms of language teaching methodology, the communication approach proposes that activities should provide the opportunity for learners to use language in order to communicate meanings with focusing on accuracy content: should we give priority to form or to content Porter and Grant,(1997) answer this question by assessing that "the form of message is as important as its content". (Porter and Grant, 1992, p.223). to them , as well as individual sound of English are important , other features of oral production are often more important for making one understand.

2.4 Crucial Factor in Pronunciation Syllables:

With regard to this dilemma,(Seidlhofer Carter and Nunan , 2002, p.56) state that a crucial factor for any pronunciation syllables is whether it is designed for an EFL (English as a foreign Language) setting. ESL learners will work hard to become comfortably understood by the native speakers; and ultimately many apt to approximate to native target norm in order to integrate with native speakers, as English to him is major. In contrast many of EFL learners are originally aiming at ability to use international settings.

Second level students of English department at Sudan University of Science and Technology who are majoring in English, hence, they should be considered ESL, and they pay attention to both form and content.

2.5 The Final - s Sound in English

(Porter and Grant, 192, p.230), say that if one doesn't pronounce the final-s sound correctly; one will be making not just pronunciation errors, but grammatical ones as well.

2.5.1 Three common mistakes in pronouncing the final sound:

Porter and Grant (Ibid, 1992, p. 23) mention three common mistakes people make when pronouncing the final sounds:

1. Pronouncing the final sound as separate syllable at inappropriate time.

Ex:

cloth – es	instead of	Clothes
/kl): <i>Ō</i> -z/		/kl): <i>Ō</i> s/

Pronouncing the final sound of a voiceless sound after a voiced consonant as /i/ or /r/ or after a vowel:

Ex:

Workers	instead of	Workers
/w3:k)z		/w3:l)s/
Barbara's	instead of	Barbara's
/b)rb)raz/		/b)rb)ar)s/

- 3- Omitting the final sound completely:

Ex:

He goes	instead of	he goes
/gəus/		/gəuz/
many books	instead of	many books
/bukz/		/buks/

In briefs one can say that the final sound comes at the end of the present tense verb in the third-person singular (He goes – She thinks) , in the plural nouns (same opinion/ two cats), and in the possessive: (the author's books/ the rat's tail).

2.5.2 Pronunciation errors:

What is pronunciation error? In language learning, making errors is an inevitable part that can not be avoided. People cannot learn language without first systematically committing errors (Dulay, Burt and Krashen, 1982). Before embarking on Error Analysis, it is crucial to discuss the definition of the term “errors.” In linguistic field, errors are defined by researchers as “flawed side of learner speech or writing” (Burt and Krashen, 1982:138). In pronunciation, errors are defined as the incompetence in language and incorrect pronunciation that may affect intelligibility in communication (Nguyen, 2007). Because in this new era, English is the common means of communication all over the world, it is not always defined as an error when people speak dissimilarly from native speakers. So the definition that seems more precise is according to Jenkins (2006: 36) in Nguyen (2007) pronunciation errors are “variants of pronunciation which prevent one communicator from understanding the propositional content of the other’s utterances” Until the late 1960s, errors were considered as a sign of learning failure that could not be tolerated (Little Lewood, 1984). Although nowadays people have a more tolerant view towards errors in language learning, still they should be paid particular attention so that non-native speakers can achieve the best result in communication. Richards (1971) acknowledges two different kinds of errors: performance errors, caused by, such as, fatigue and inattention, and competence errors resulting from lack of knowledge of the rules of the language. Corder (1967) in his research proposes different terminologies for these two kinds of errors and stresses that we must make a clear distinction between mistakes and errors; the former refers to non-systematic performance errors of chance circumstances, whereas the latter can be defined as “the systematic errors of the learner from which

we are able to reconstruct his knowledge of the language to date, i.e., his transitional competence". Harashima (2006: 40).

In another research, Ellis (1997) states that errors reflect gaps in a learner's knowledge; they occur because the learner does not know what the correct one is. However, mistakes reflect occasional lapses in performance; they occur because in particular instance, the learner is unable to perform what she or he knows (Ellis, 1997). All in all, a mistake occurs because of a slip of the tongue, tiredness, anxiety, etc, it can be self-corrected. However, an error is a performance that a speaker who has not yet mastered the rules of the target language cannot correct by himself and this has to do with his acquired linguistic data. So, concerning errors, one can go on saying the wrong thing without knowing that he is doing it. Errors usually come up with L1, SL or FL learners; whereas, mistakes and errors can occur with everyone performing a certain speech. In this paper, I concentrate only on dealing with errors. Both performance and competence errors are mentioned in here; however, I do not make a clear distinction between the two types but focus on the sounds that students tend to mispronounce.

2.5.3 Making the Correct Sound:

The final sound phenomenon encountered Bloomfield while examining the different strings of morphemes at the level of phonemes (Palmer , date unknown, p.101) Bloomfield called the phenomenon of alternant" though its widely known of allomorphs.

Grant and Porter indicate that final sound |s| is pronounced correctly depends on whether it follows a voiced or voiceless sound (1992, p.230) this can be determined by putting one's hand on the throat s producing the particular sound. If one feels vibration, the sound is voiced; if not, it is voiceless, bearing in mind that all vowel sounds are voiced.

Following this, Grant and Porter made a list of voiceless and voiced consonant; for the consonants that fall into pair, the voiced and voiceless equivalents are shown opposite each other.

Voiceless	voiced
/ p / ship	/ b / robe
/ t / let	/d / word
/ k/ talk	/g/ beg
/f/ graph	/v/ save
/ p/ path	/b/ bathe
/s/ fix	/z/ surprise
/ f/ dish	/3/ measure
/ tf / each	/d3/ pledge
/l/ smile	/ əv/ bore
/m / home	/n/ soon
	/ŋ/ sing

When a final s follow a voiced sound (except /z/, /3/ and /d3/ , it has the voiced sound /z/.

When the final s comes after /s/ , /z/ , /f/ , /3/ , /tf/ or /d3/ it is pronounced as separate syllable, i.e. s /iz/.

2.5.4 Another problem of Allomorphs:

Another problem area of pronunciation for non-native speakers of English is the final- d of verbs, such of the past participle form and the past tense form of regular verbs.

Whether or not a listener can hear the- d at he or she of the verbs can make a difference in the he or she interprets your sentence.

Examples:

They plan to go home for a vocation (this sentence indicates that they are now planning to go).

They planned to go home for a vacation (This sentence indicates that they made the plan in the past).

Making the ed ending is always written the same way, we pronounce it in three different ways, when ed follows a voiceless sound.

Try each of the following verbs twice, first as written, and then with the /t/ ending when pronounced.

Laugh	Laughed
Help	Helped
Cash	Cashed
Work	Worked
Ask	Asked
Dress	Dressed
Improvise	Improvised
Notice	Noticed
Reach	Reached

When ed follows a voiced sound (except /d/) , it is voiced and pronounced /d/.

Examples:

Absorb	Absorbed
Plan	Planned
Care	Cared
Forge	Forged
Live	Lived
Recoil	Recoiled
Drag	Dragged
Bang	Banged
Crane	Craned
Cry	Cried

When ed follow a final /d/ or, /t/, it is pronounced as a separate syllable, is as /id/.

Covet	Coveted
Halt	Halted
Count	Counted
Wait	Waited
Head	Headed
Need	Needed
Decide	Decided
Crowd	Crowded
Play	Played

2.5 Pronunciation drill in classroom:

With regard to pronunciation drills in classroom, Westbrook (English Teaching forum, 2011) mentions that he did not stress its use as EFL teacher. He was more concerned with students being able to communicate in English, and he often felt that pronunciation drills of an unimportant part of communicative learning. But he was always reflecting on his past teaching he realized that he had not focused on pronunciation issues quality enough.

Later Westbrook (Ibid, 2011) reaffirmed his emphasis to simple pronunciation drills for students learning a foreign language. Now, he believes that focus on pronunciation skills for students learning a foreign language is an important part of learning to communicate, especially in a foreign language context.

In fact, one of the most frustrating aspects of language learning experience to Westbrook, as he mentioned, was his seemingly complete lack of ability with Russian pronunciation – which prevented others from comprehending his speech. I was only by practicing full sentences and phrases over and over again that he could train the muscles of his mouth

to pronounce words correctly. At the end Westbrook said that by correctly he means that his speaking could be comprehended by native speakers.

2.6 Making correction:

Answering a question about what should the teacher do with regard to mistakes in pronunciation? Jackson Acy (E. T. Forum, 2012, 30-31), describes the matter as a delicate area in conversation class. "Through students insist on being corrected, teachers should avoid interrupting the rain of thought of students or the flow of conversation with continuous corrections."

The most suitable way to act in case that student mispronounces a word, the teacher may use the same word later in a sentence. Near the end of a class he may point out the way this word and others from the conversation should be pronounced.

Jackson asserts that the teacher should always correct flagrant violations the moment they are made. He should not let them pass. But he should keep in mind the feelings of the one who made the mistake and made the correction as tactfully of possible.

He should always avoid embarrassing the student. Still, the teacher should not overlook value of an attention getting comment that might present a repetition of the mistake.

Chapter III

Methodology

Chapter 3

Methodology

3.1 Introduction

In order to collect the data the researcher uses both a test and questionnaire to examine a random sample of the second level students at SUST in the department of English and to measure their competence in pronouncing the final- s and the final – d.

3.2 Population of the study

The population of this study are students of the second level at SUST in the department of English Language. Subjects data which this study used to analyze were collected from 35 student from two second classes of English Department at SUST. English Department is one of the largest departments in the university. The classes were chosen randomly without any knowledge of the researcher about English level, teaching and studying situation or any special feature of these classes, so that the finding can reflect the real situation of ending sounds problems of students in the university. The subjects at the college were all at age of eighteen to nineteen and graduated from high school all over Sudan. Most of them had studied English for 8 years or more before entering this university. They are from various backgrounds as coming from different parts of Sudan, so some of them had got the local dialect which relatively affects their English speaking and pronunciation. When this study was conducted, all of them had been studying in English department for one year and semester and had studied Pronunciation course book. These subjects had got basic ideas of pronunciation rules. Moreover, they had certain awareness of their own pronunciation problems and had been corrected by teachers.

3.3 The Sample of the study:

The sample amounts to 35 students in the second level who are randomly chosen to undergo a test measuring their ability of pronouncing English words that involve finals – s and final – ed.

3.4 Instrument for Data Analysis

After marking the test the data will be processed through the statistical package of Social Sciences to conclude to the findings.

Chapter IV

Chapter 4

Data Analysis and discussion

4.1 Overview:

The researcher makes a test to 35 students as a sample, to explain how the student response to the test and discuss the response of the students.

When the researcher correct the test the results show a low performance since error frequency is generally reasonable. Herewith, one can follow the results shown in tables with commentary on them.

Answers of part one:

4.2 Answers of part one:

Question (1)

The word	/s/	/ z /	/ iz /	The correct sound
Argues	12	8	0	8
Concepts	16	0	4	16
Students	19	1	0	19
Lists	10	0	10	10
Idioms	9	11	0	11
Total of correct answers	45	19	0	64
Total of errors	21	21	14	36

Table (1): final – s

4.2.1 Percentage of unsuccessful individual sounds:

i) /s/ $\frac{21}{36} \times 100 = 58.3\%$

ii) /z/ $\frac{21}{36} \times 100 = 58.3\%$

iii) / $\frac{14}{36} \times 100 = 37.7\%$

iv) total performance / $\frac{36}{64} \times 100 = 56.2\%$

- Error frequency in /s/ and /z/ are equal, and each amounts to 58.3 percent which is so high.
- Error frequency in /iz/ and /z/ is relatively low compared with /z/ and /iz/.
- Total performance of the respondents is relatively low.

4.2.2 Question (2)

The word	/s/	/ z /	/ iz /	The correct sound
Robes	6	14	0	14
Houses	4	0	16	16
Shops	12	8	0	12
Words	2	16	2	16
Graphs	14	6	0	14
Villages	6	2	12	12
Surprises	8	0	12	12
Adapts	18	0	2	18
Fixes	4	0	16	16
Homes	2	18	0	18
Total of correct answers	44	48	16	148
Total of errors	32	16	0	52

Table (2): final – s

4.2.3 Percentage of unsuccessful individual sounds:

i) /s/ $\frac{32}{56} \times 100 = 61.5\%$

ii) /z/ $\frac{16}{52} \times 100 = 30.7\%$

iii) / $\frac{4}{52} \times 100 = 7.6\%$

iv) Total performance / $\frac{52}{148} \times 100 = 35.3\%$

- Error frequency is so high in /s/ - 61.5%
- Error frequency is relatively low in /z/ compared with /s/.
- Error frequency is low compared with /s/ and /z/.
- Total performance of respondents is so low.

4.3 Answers of part two:

The word	/s/	/ z /	/ iz /	The correct sound
helped	11	5	4	11
laughed	8	12	0	8
headed	0	0	20	20
lived	0	18	2	18
decided	0	0	20	20
planned	0	12	8	12
waited	0	0	20	20
worked	9	3	8	9
dressed	9	9	2	9
needed	0	0	20	20
Total of correct answers	37	30	68	147
Total of errors	43	10	32	53

Table (3): final – ed

4.3.1 Percentage of unsuccessful individual sounds:

i) /t/ $\frac{43}{53} \times 100 = 81.3\%$

ii) /d/ $\frac{10}{53} \times 100 = 18.8\%$

iii) /id/ $\frac{32}{53} \times 100 = 60.3\%$

iv) Total performance / $\frac{53}{147} \times 100 = 35.9\%$

- Error frequency in /t/ is so high in /t/ compared with /d/ and /id/.
- Error frequency in /d/ is relatively low compared with /t/ and /id/.
- Error frequency in /id/ is also high compared with /t/ and /d/.
- Total performance of respondents is so low.

Chapter V

Chapter Five

Findings and Recommendations

5.0 Overview:

The aim of this study is to investigate students' errors in pronouncing the final /s/ and final /d/ sounds. The population are second year male and female student at SUST, College of Languages, English Department. Fifteen males and twenty females are randomly chosen. The errors are classified as errors in pronouncing the final sounds. the researcher uses descriptive analytical and statistical method to convey the results.

5.1 Results of the study hypotheses:

The first hypotheses state that Second level students of English department at Sudan University of Science and Technology are not aware of the problems of pronouncing the final-s and final- d sounds.

The second hypotheses states that Second level at Sudan University of Science and Technology has no rigorous actual practice of pronouncing the final-s and final-d sounds.

5.2 Main Findings:

The statistical analysis revealed that there are differences in pronouncing the final /s/ and final /d/ sounds under study. The final /d/ sound errors were high in the study as shown before. Most errors were due to ignorance of rule.

To sum up, by dealing with the final sounds investigated in this study, the researcher does not claim to have covered the whole subject. The way is open to other.

5.3 Recommendations:

The researcher recommends the following:

- Pronunciation competence should be given care for all undergraduates, particularly for second level students.
- Using games and competitions to make it easy and loveable.
- This phenomenon needs further studies in 3rd and 4th levels.

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Appendixes

Sudan University of Science and Technology

College of Graduate Studies

College of Languages

A Test for Second Level Students in Department of English

**Language at SUST in Fulfillment of a Term Paper to Attain M.A. in
Linguistics**

Pronunciation Competence: Investigating English Allomorphs

(A case study among second year students in Department of English
Language at SUST)

كفاءة النطق: بحث الالمورفات الانجليزية

دراسة حالة طلاب السنة الثانية (قسم اللغة الانجليزية) جامعة السودان - السودان

Submitted by:

Abdulazeem Othman Mohammad Ali

Supervised by:

Prof. Mahmoud Ali Ahmed

2014

Part One:

1. Read the following short passage and show how the final – s is

pronounced: /s/, /z/ or /iz/ ?

Dr. E.D. Hirsch argues that it is necessary for all students to know certain cultural concept in order to make sense of what they read. In his book, he lists a number of idioms which you might like study.

argues / / concepts / /

students / / lists / /

idioms / /

2. Do the same as you have done in the above question:

i) robes / / ii) houses / /

iii) shops / / iv) words / /

v) graphs / / vi) villages / /

vii) surprise / / viii) adapts / /

ix) fixes / / x) homes / /

part two: Show the correct sound of the final –ed of the following

words: /d/ , /t/ or /id/:

i) helped / / ii) laughed / /

iii) headed / / iv) lived / /

v) deaded / / vi) planned / /

vii) wanted / / viii) worked / /

ix) dressed / / x) needed / /