

Investigating the Difficulties Encountered by Sudanese Basic Government Schools' Pupils in Articulating some English Consonant Sounds

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Abstract

This study investigates the difficulties encountered by Sudanese EFL basic government schools' pupils in articulating some consonant sounds. The participants of the study are forty pupils of the 6th level at Al Izba Basic School for Girls-Al-Amlak-Khartoum North. The study pursues descriptive analytical method. A pronunciation diagnostic test and questionnaire are used as tools to obtain data from pupils. The results shows that the majority of Sudanese EFL basic school pupils mispronounce the consonant sounds which do not exist in Sudanese spoken Arabic. Based on the findings, the study revealed that some factors have negative impact on pronunciation, such as the sound systems differences between English and Arabic, inadequacy training in phonetics and phonology, in addition to irrelevancy of the syllabus to the Sudanese pupils' needs. Accordingly, the study concludes with some recommendations.

المستخلص:

هدفت الدراسة إلى تقصي الصعوبات التي تواجه تلاميذ مدارس الأساس الحكومية في نطق بعض الأصوات الصامتة للغة الانجليزية. شارك من مجتمع البحث اربعين تلميذة من تلميذات الصف السادس بمدرسة العزبة الاساسية الحكومية بنات بحى الاملاك - الخرطوم بحري. استخدمت الدراسة المنهج الوصفي التحليلي منهجاً للبحث. أُجري الاختبار التشخيصي للنطق لجمع المعلومات من التلميذات. أظهرت نتائج البحث أن معظم التلميذات السودانيات اللاتي يدرسن الانجليزية لغة اجنبية يجدن صعوبة في نطق الأصوات الصامتة التي ليس لها نظير في اللغة العربية الدارجة التي يتحدثها السودانيون. كشفت الدراسة عن بعض العوامل التي تؤثر سلباً علي عملية النطق مثل الاختلافات في الأنظمة الصوتية بين العربية و الانجليزية خلصت الدراسة لبعض التوصيات.

Introduction

Pronunciation is the way in which language spoken; the way in which a word is pronounced; the way a person speaks the words of language (Hornby, 1987). Gilakjani (2012:119) assumes that pronunciation is a set of habits of producing sounds. Speaking is an important factor in learning and using English appropriately (Gussenhoven & Jacobs, 1998). Burns and Claire (1994:5) emphasize pronunciation refers to the phonology of the language –or the meaningful perception and production of the sounds of that language and how they

impact on the listener. While pronunciation refers to the manner in which we make speech sounds, Articulation refers to the usage of speech organs such as tongue, jaws, lips, etc. According to vocabulary .com. Articulation is the act of expressing something in a coherent verbal form, or an aspect of pronunciation involving the articulatory organs. The pronunciation of English involves the ability to pronounce both vowels and consonants. In our case, Bussmann (2006) defined consonants as “phonetically, a speech sound that is not an approximant, and therefore, is either a stop or fricative.”

1.1 Statement of The Problem

A close observation of Sudanese EFL pupils at 6th level Basic Government Schools disclosed that many learners encountered difficulties in articulating some English consonants, hence mispronouncing some words with /p/ sounds as /b/, others use /b/ for /v/ and (face/faith), (very/berry) as well as mother –tongue interference (Arabic language) which hardens the pronunciation of some English consonant sounds.

1.2 Questions of the Study

1. To what extent are Sudanese Basic Schools Pupils encounter difficulties in Pronouncing English consonant sounds?
2. What are the most Consonants Sounds that constitute difficulties to Basic School Pupils?
3. To what extent basic school teachers are trained in phonetics and phonology?

1.3Hypotheses of the Study

This study has the following hypotheses:

1. Sudanese Basic Schools Pupils encounter difficulties in pronouncing some English Consonant Sounds.
2. There are Consonants Sounds that constitute the most difficulties in Pronunciation.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

This study aims to achieve the following:

1. Identify Difficulties encounter Sudanese Basic Schools Pupils in pronouncing some English Consonant Sounds.
2. Explore the most Consonant Sounds that constitute Difficulties to Sudanese Basic School pupils in pronunciation.
3. Identify the impact of mother- tongue interference on Sudanese basic schools pupils in pronouncing English consonant Sounds.

1.5Limits of the Study

This study is limited to:

1. Investigating the difficulties encountered by the 6th class pupils at Al Izba Basic School for Girls in pronouncing some English consonant sounds.

2. Targeting a selected group of (40) pupils at the 6th class of the Al Izba Basic School for Girls – Al-Amlak – Khartoum North, as a sample of the study m via a Systematic Random Sampling.

2.0 Literature Review and Previous Studies

This section comprises of two parts. part one reviews the literature relates to the research topic ,such as a historical brief of English and Arabic languages in the Sudan, Basic education and the English language in Sudan ,definition of pronunciation and English consonants . Part two deals with the previous studies on the difficulties of pronunciation of some English consonants.

2.1English in Sudan

In 1850, the Turks ruling the Sudan at the time decided to open some schools in which Arabic and Turkish were taught. In 1898, British and Egyptian armies invaded Sudan and established what came to be known as Condominium Rule in Sudan or the Anglo-Egyptian rule. The British, who were the policy makers, drew all the educational policies. In 1902, they opened primary and intermediate schools and Gordon Memorial College was established as the first of its kind in the country. The teaching of English language became the major objective of the British educational policy in Sudan, a land dominated by Arabic and Islam.

One of the educational objectives of teaching English language at the time was to create a small administrative class of Sudanese to fill minor posts in the civil service, thus the use of English was limited to a class of an educated elite. Liz Sandell (1982).



Since then, the status of the English language in the Sudan has passed through several stages. The educational ladder of 1970, 6+3+3, years, has replaced the ladder of 4+4+4 years which was established since the independence of Sudan in 1956. In 1992, the educational ladder was changed again to become 8+3 years, 8 for Basic level. Since the independence of Sudan, the status of English language has changed from being a second language to its current status as a foreign one. English language in Sudan has not been consistent due to the changing educational policies. The 1990s witnessed the last developments in in the status of English in Sudan. “Arabic has replaced gradually English as a medium of instructions in tertiary education. Consequently, has now rightfully regained its ground as a medium of instruction in the entire system of education “Abdalla (2003:80). As a result, this change seemed to have contributed to the deterioration in the standard of English in Sudan such as mastering pronunciation skill.

2.2 Arabic in Sudan

Arabic came to Sudan in the seventh century with the Arabs and eventually became the national language of the country. Sudanese Arabic is the most widely spoken language in the country. It is the variety of Arabic spoken throughout northern Sudan. It has much borrowed vocabulary from the local languages (El Rotana). This has resulted in a variety of Arabic that is unique to Sudan, reflecting the way in which the country has been influenced by both African and Arab cultures .Arabic as the national language is spoken by around 54% of the population (Lodhi, 1993) and as a native language is known almost by 80%of the population as L1 or L2 or L3 (Abu –Manga, 2007).

2.3 Basic Education (Primary Education) in Sudan

Children are admitted to basic education school at the age of 6. Basic education lasts eight years (grades 1 to 8) and is compulsory since 1998. In 1992, the former 6-3-3 system (adopted in the 1970s) with admission to school at age 7, was replaced by eight years of basic education followed by three years of secondary education , lowering the school entry age to 6 years . Basic education is divided into three stages: grades 1-3, grades 4-6, and grades 7-8. At the end of grade 8 pupils sit the final exams and if successful receive the basic education certificate. The government is the largest provider of basic education. The Arabic language is the main medium of instruction. The use of local languages, if needed, is allowed.

In Sudan, English is introduced as a compulsory subject in class 5. To provide high quality reading materials to pupils, national curriculum development Centre, Federal Ministry of General Education, has brought out the Sudan Practical Integrated National English (SPINE) series with the support of British Council Khartoum. SPINE 1 is taught in class 5 and 6, SPINE 2 and 3 are meant for class7 and 8 respectively and SPINE 4-6 is taught at the secondary stage .The books aim at development of language skills through communicative approach. (Arora 2003: 16-17)

2.4 Pronunciation Theories

Pronunciation emerged as a field of systematic study towards the end of the 19th century when International Phonetic Association was established in 1886. Since then, the emphasis allotted to pronunciation teaching in ESL/EFL classrooms has been subject to fluctuations.



While traditional methods such as Grammar-Translation and Reading-Based Approach neglected pronunciation teaching completely and considered it irrelevant to language teaching, in subsequent methods such as Oral Approach and Audiolingualism, it had a more central role. Likewise, from 1940's to 1960's, pronunciation teaching was of primary importance in the English Language Teaching Curriculum. Although each method was at a different end of the continuum in terms of the techniques used, they were similar in the way that they focused on the segmental. Today, contemporary methods value pronunciation. They operate around the assumption that "....there is a threshold level of pronunciation for nonnative speakers of English ; if they fall behind this threshold level , they will have oral communication problems no matter how excellent and extensive their control of English grammar and vocabulary might be" (Celce –Murcia & et.al.2010:8).

Pronunciation has a long and distinguished history in second language teaching. As is pointed out by Seidlhofer (2001:56), it "stood at the very beginning of language teaching methodology as a principled , theoretically -founded discipline , originating with the late-nineteenth-century Reform Movement". Phoneticians interested in the teaching of pronunciation from a number of European countries were brought together by the Reform Movement , and this resulted in the establishment of pronunciation as a major concern of second language instruction lasting well into the second half of the twentieth century , even in the teaching of English (see Collins and Meese 1999; Howatt 2004). Their collaboration also led to the founding of the International Phonetic Association and the development of the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA), capable of representing the full inventory of

sounds of all known languages. In the twenty-first century, the IPA is still the universally acknowledged system of phonetic transcription.

in the phonetic system of Arabic language.

2.4 Mother- Tongue Interference

It is observed that making some pronunciation errors in the second language can be explained by the notion of "transfer", which is defined by oldin (1989:25), cited in Fawzi (2010) as "the influence resulting from similarities and differences between the target language and any other language that has been previously (and perhaps imperfectly) acquired.

Several studies have been conducted on the influence of first language (L I) on learning English language. Mossa (1972:44) reported that "/p/ and /b/ sounds are two different phonemes and each one is distinguished by native speakers. "In Arabic, the situation is different; mainly there is only one phoneme /b/ for this; which is the reason why most of Sudanese EFL learners mispronounce words with /p/ sounds. Learners are confused between /p/ and /b/ as in words like (park, bark), (pen, ben). Even if teachers ask learners to pronounce these words, seemingly, they pronounce /b/ instead of /p/ and sometimes /p/ is used in place of /b/ which rarely happens. Many other sounds are influenced by the mother-tongue of foreign learners.

3.5 Previous Studies

The first study is a research conducted by Mohammad Hossein Keshavarz, a professor of Applied Linguistics at Girne American University in North Cyprus and Mahmud Khamis Abubakar who holds a Master's degree in ELT and worked as an ESL instructor at MK College of Advanced and Remedial Studies in T/Wada, Kano State of Nigeria.



The research was published in 2016 under the title “An Investigation into Pronunciation problems of Hausa- speaking learners of English “. The study investigated the pronunciation problems of Hausa speakers of English in Nigeria. The participants were 60 native speakers of Hausa studding at three universities in Northern Cyprus. The tool used in the research was a pronunciation test that consisted among other items a word list of English consonants and vowels with potential pronunciation difficulties for Hausa speakers of English. The collected data were then transcribed, analyzed, and percentages and frequencies of pronunciation errors were computed. The results revealed that native speakers of Hausa face problems in pronouncing certain English vowels and consonants, due to the notion of negative transfer as a result of mother tongue interference

The second study is a research paper carried by Jalal Ahmad of the Department of English, Najran University, Saudi Arabia and published in 2011. The research was under the title “Pronunciation Problems among Saudi Learners: A case Study at the Preparatory Year Program, Najran university Saudi Arabia. The study investigated the difficulties encountered by Saudi students in pronouncing certain English consonant sounds. All participants are adults who graduated from secondary schools and joined the Preparatory Year Program at Najran University. The tool used was a tape –recorded test for samples of 4 problematic consonant sounds. The author selected eight students randomly from different sections. The results show that the Arabic speakers in this study had difficulties in pronouncing certain English consonant sounds, such as: /p/, /d/, /v/. This

study also provides an insight and assists ESL/EFL teachers with some helpful suggestions and teaching strategies that will reduce future problems regarding English consonants pronunciation among Arab learners.

The third study is done by Sawsan Mohamed Ali Mabyou, Sudan University of Science and Technology, College of Graduate Studies and published in 2017, under the title: Investigating Pronunciation Problems among 8th Level Basic Schools. The study investigated the problems of pronunciation for 8th level of basic schools’ students in Khartoum locality, Sahafa Basic Schools. The study employed test research method to investigate difficulties encountered by the experimental group in pronouncing some English vowels and consonants. The findings of the research support the hypothesis that mother tongue interference, spelling and sound system differences between LI and L2 affect pronunciation and lead the learners of other languages to mispronunciation.

3.0 Methodology

This part outlines the research methodology of this study. It introduces the design of the study, participants and characteristics of the samples, tools of data collection, validity and reliability of the test and questionnaire.

3.1 Design of the Study

This study employs the quantitative research methodology with a use of a diagnostic test and questionnaire as instruments to collect data. The researcher also adopts the descriptive- analytic method for describing and analyzing data

3.2 Participants

The participants of this study involve two groups; the first group comprises 40 pupils of the 6th level at Al Izba Basic School for Girls – Al-Amlak, Khartoum North.

3.3 The Sample

The first group of pupils is assumed to be representative of the population and homogenous, since they share the same age, school, and Sudanese cultural and linguistic background. English is taught through SPINE series. They were selected via systematic sampling technique.

3.4. Tools of Data Collection

Two types of research instruments were used to collect data for this study which are diagnostic test and questionnaire.

3.4.1 Diagnostic Test

The aim of conducting the audio recording test was to examine pronunciation difficulties on some consonants sounds which encountered by pupils of the 6th class at AL Izba Basic School. The well-known pronunciation technique (word list) was used for the test. Five words were selected for each problematic consonant sounds which are /p/ in “people”/θ/in “thank”/Ō/in “this” /v/ in “vast” and/tʃ/ in check. Each participant was asked to read these words aloud while being recorded. Pupils will be informed that their recordings are to be deleted at the end of the practice since it is just for the research purpose. This part tests the first hypothesis which assumes that: Sudanese Basic School Pupils encounter difficulties in pronouncing some English Consonant Sounds.

3.5 Research Procedures

A smart phone is used for the diagnostic test. Each individual participant is asked to

Diagnostic Test

Table No (.1) Frequency Distribution for the Pupils’ Production of the target sound /p/ as in people.

RESULT	Pupils’ pronunciation		Frequency	Percentage
Correct	/P/		25	62.5%
Incorrect	/b/		15	37.5%
		Total	40	100

read aloud the already chosen words for the test. The pronunciations are recorded, the recorded sounds are transcribed and the mispronounced ones are analyzed

3.6 Validity and Reliability of the Research Tools

Both the test and questionnaire were validated first by three scholars of the field from Sudan University of Science and Technology, namely: Dr. Sami Balla, Dr. Naglaa Taha Bashary and Dr. Abdul-Rahman Awad-Allah. The reliability of the test is checked according to the criteria of judging and refereeing by the same panel of experts.

4.0 Data Analysis, Results and Discussion

This part aims to analyze, evaluate, interpret and discuss the results of the data collected through a pronunciation recording test and a questionnaire. The diagnostic test was applied to collect data from the sample of (40) pupils from the 6th class of AL Izba Basic School for Girls – Al-Amlak, Khartoum North.

4.1 Procedures of Data Analysis

The diagnostic test was conducted first. Six consonant sounds from words of the same number were selected for the test which sounds were assumed to be the most mispronounced by the pupils. /p/ as in people, /θ/ as in Thank, /ð/ as in This, /v/ as in visit, /tʃ/ as in Check and /dʒ/ as in Just.

As seen from the table above,(25) of the pupils (62.5%) out of(40) who participated in the pronunciation test, were able to pronounce the /p/ consonant sound correctly, though the said sound does not exist in the Sudanese spoken Arabic. It is noticed that only (15) of the pupils (37.5%)

had mispronounced it. The result differed completely with approximately all the similar previous studies which indicated that the participants were hardly able to pronounce the bilabial voiceless /p/ and substituted it with the voiced bilabial /b/ in its initial, middle and final position.

Table No (2) Frequency Distribution for the pupils 'production of the target sound /θ/ as in Thank.

RESULT	Pupils' pronunciation	Frequency	Percentage
Correct	/θ/	1	2.5%
incorrect	/S/	29	72.5%
	/ð/	1	2.5%
	/t/	8	20%
	/z/	1	2.5%
	Total	40	100

It can be noticed from the above table and figure, there is only one pupil (2.5%) was able to pronounce the target sound /θ/ correctly in the word (Thank). The majority of the pupils (72.5%) mispronounced the

dental fricative /θ/ and replaced it with the alveolar fricative /s/.

Table No (.3) Frequency Distribution for the Pupils 'production of the target Sound /ð/ as in (This).

RESULT	Pupils' pronunciation	Frequency	Percentage
Correct	/ð/	4	10%
incorrect	/s/	3	7.5%
	/iz/	19	47.5%
	/tk/	2	5%
	/f/	1	2.5%
	/dz/	6	15%
	/z/	5	12.5%
	Total	40	100

The consonant English sound /ð/ was mispronounced by most of the pupils (47.5

%), who pronounced /iz/, /dz/ and /z/ instead of /ð/.

Table No (4) Frequency Distribution for the pupils 'Pronunciation of the Consonant Sound /v/ as in Visit.

RESULT	Pupils' pronunciation	Frequency	Percentage
Correct	/v/	13	32.5%
incorrect	/3 /	1	2.5%
	/f/	26	65% ³
Total	40	100.0	

For /v/ sound, 65% of the participants mispronounced it and replaced it with /f/.

Table No (5) Frequency Distribution for the Pupils 'production of the sound /tʃ/ as in Check.

RESULT	Pupils' pronunciation	Frequency	Percentage
Correct	/tʃ/	0	0%
incorrect	/tk/	29	72.5%
	/ʒ /	9	22.5%
	ʃk	1	2.5%
	/dʒ/	1	2.5%
	Total	40	100.0

None of the pupils (0%) were able to pronounce the target consonant sound /tʃ/ correctly. 29 pupils mispronounced it as /tk/ amounting to 72.5%.

Table No (6) Frequency Distribution for the Pupils 'Pronunciation of the Sound /dʒ/ as in Just

RESULT	Pupils' pronunciation	Frequency	Percentage
Correct	/dʒ/	0	0%
incorrect	/tk/	2	5%
	/ʒ /	37	92.5%
	/t/	1	2.5%
	Total	40	100.0

It is noticed that the Consonant Sound /dʒ/ is more

Problematic for the pupils (0%) whose they confused it with the sound /ʒ / which counted for 92.5% of the participants.

"English consonants and consonant clusters which do not exist in the Arabic sound system seem to be problematic when being pronounced by Arabic speakers learning Arabic – Sudanese spoken Arabic inclusive-like/p/ as in pile, /v/ as in save, /ʒ/ as in vision, /tʃ/ as in child, /dʒ/ as in judge,/sp/ as in speak,/spl/ as in split,/str/ as in star,/spr/ as in spring,/skr/as in scratch. " participants were requested to give their opinion on the afore-mentioned statement, which appeared in the teacher questionnaire in support of the data obtained from the pupils 'test. The result shows that 5% of teachers strongly agreed and 85% agreed with the statement, which indicates 90% of the teachers believe that their pupils have problems in pronouncing

English consonants as well as consonant clusters 'sounds which have no equivalence in the Arabic phonemic system. Learners are confused with such sounds, besides having the tendency to replace each of them with other sounds that are found in their first language. The results of this study reveal that consonant sounds which do not have similar sounds in the Arabic consonantal system such as /p/, /v/, /tʃ/, /dʒ/ and /ʒ/ are confusing when being pronounced by many Sudanese EFL learners. Pupils tend to substitute /b/ for /p/ (ben/pen), /f/ for/v/ (fife/five) and /ʃ/ for /tʃ/ (sheep/cheap). For consonant clusters, which refer to phoneme groupings, not alphabet letters, Arabic has far fewer consonant clusters in contrast to English.

Certain English clusters contain sounds that are not in the Arabic consonant inventory or have different pronunciations; such as /spl/, /str/ and /skr/. These clusters are being problematic for Sudanese EFL learners. To avoid this situation, learners often insert a short vowel sound to break up consonant clusters when speaking English, as in (nexist) for (next), instead.

Hypothesis No (2) deals with the statement 'some consonant sounds constitute the most difficulties in pronunciation for Sudanese basic school pupils such as /p/, /v/, /tʃ/, /ð/, /θ/ and /dʒ/.' To sum up, and as shown previously, most of the teachers reacted to the statement in the affirmative in different degrees. For the sound /p/, 70% of the total of the participants had agreed and the remaining 30% was equally divided between those who were undecided and who disagreed. As with the consonant /v/, the result indicates that 20% had strongly agreed, 40% agreed, 25% disagreed and 15% were not sure. Regarding the sound /tʃ/, 25% were strongly agreed, 45% agreed that sound is problematic, 20% were undecided and 10% disagreed. The sound /ð/ was also selected for the teachers, based on the previous assumption. The result shows that only 10% of the total participants were disagreed, equally as with those who were not sure (10%), 35% strongly agreed and 45% agreed. On the difficulty of the sound /θ/, 35% of the teachers were strongly agreed, 55% agreed and the remaining 10% was equally divided between those who were undecided and who were disagreed. For the sound /dʒ/, 20% had strongly agreed that the sound is problematic, 65% had agreed, 5% were uncertain and 10% disagreed.

It is generally known that certain consonant sounds do not exist in Sudanese spoken

Arabic like /p/, /tʃ/ and /v/ which causes problems in pronunciation for Sudanese pupils who learn English. The sound /p/, /tʃ/ and /v/ are often replaced by the sound /b/, /f/ and /f/ respectively, as in the words: (pen-ben), (cheap-sheep) and (five-fife). The sound /θ/ does not usually occur in Sudanese spoken Arabic but it occurs in Standard Arabic. Sudanese EFL learners replace the /θ/ sound with /s/ e.g. (thank-sank). The consonant English sound /ð/ is mispronounced by most of the pupils, where they pronounce /z/ instead of /ð/ as in (this-zis). The sound /θ/ and /ð/ is not in Sudanese colloquial Arabic, but exists in some forms of Arabic dialect, e.g. (Iraqi, Omani, Saudi Arabian, Yemeni, etc.). In addition, the speaker of Sudanese Spoken Arabic is not used to pronounce /θ/ and /ð/ sounds, because these sounds do not exist in his native language as a result from the differences in the sound system of English and the native language. In such a case, this could lead the learner to use the nearest sounds /s/ and /z/ respectively, because his organs of speech are not trained or accustomed to produce such sound systems which are unfamiliar to him. The last in the list was the sound /dʒ/, which is also absent in the Sudanese spoken Arabic, thus becomes problematic for the pupils. Although Sudanese EFL learners are familiar with the sound /g/, they are sometimes getting confused and pronouncing /g/ instead of /dʒ/, as in the word (margin). Since the English sound /dʒ/ is not known in Arabic or Sudanese colloquial, the same as /ʒ/, this to some extent causes difficulty in the production of the English /ʒ/ which is sometimes replaced by /dʒ/.

As the sound /dʒ/ contains two different sounds /d/ and /ʒ/, learners usually drop the former so the sound comes as /ʒ/, such as in the word adjust /əʒʌst/ and /əʒdʒʌst/. By doing so, the learners manage to use /ʒ/ in the place of /dʒ/, although the former is not phonemic in Arabic. In other words, since the contrast between /dʒ/ and /ʒ/ in Arabic is not phonemic, thus does not affect meaning, either one or the other is used by EFL learners in pronouncing English words which having these two sounds.

The Pupils' Diagnostic Test was administered first and deals with the first hypothesis which assumes that Sudanese Basic School pupils encounter difficulties in pronouncing some English consonant sounds which have been identified in the test as /p/, /θ/, /ð/, /v/, /tʃ/ and /dʒ/. According to the results demonstrated in the previous pages, there is a significant percentage of mispronunciation of all selected consonants except the sound/p/, where more than 62.5% of the participants had correct pronunciation and 37.5% of them mispronounced it as /b/. For /θ/ sound, only 2.5% of the participants had managed to pronounce it correctly, with a big percentage allotted to those who substituted with /s/ at 72.5%. For /ð/ sound, percentage of mispronunciation was at 90%. The /v/ sound was mispronounced as /f/ with 65% of the participants, which is rather low, if compared with 32.5% which represents the correct pronunciation and also in comparison with the rest of the consonants which were identified for the test. For /tʃ/ sound with 100% mispronunciation, same percentage as /dʒ/ sound, of which the latter was pronounced as /ʒ/ with 92% of the total participants. Based on these results, the main hypothesis

is seen as being fulfilled.

5.0 Findings and Conclusion

This part presents the conclusion of the study. It includes a summary of the study, main findings, recommendations and suggestions for further studies.

5.1 Summary of the study

This study investigates the difficulties encountered by Sudanese EFL basic school pupils in pronouncing some consonant sounds, as well as to identify the most mispronounced ones by the pupils. It also explores the impact of some factors which lead to pronunciation problems, such as: differences in the phonological systems between Arabic / Sudanese Spoken Arabic and English, teachers' insufficient training in phonetics and phonology, lack of exposure to the target language, pupils' attitude towards English and curriculum design. The descriptive and statistic method was used in this study in order to describe, classify and analyze the data collected. The instruments used for data collection were a pupil diagnostic test.

5.2 The Main Findings

Based on the analysis and results of the EFL pupils' test and teachers' responses to the questionnaire, the main findings of this study reveal that the most common pronunciation difficulties- encountered by Sudanese basic school pupils- and which embodied in the consonant sounds of /θ/, /dʒ/, /ð/, /tʃ/ and /v/, were usually replaced by /s/, /ʒ/, /z/, /ʃ/ and /f/ respectively. The widespread of this substitution is mainly attributed to the phonological differences between Arabic and English language. Also mother-tongue interference plays an important part to consonants pronunciation problems. These findings agree with some previous related studies such as Elkhair, M. (2014).



5.3 Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are suggested:

1. Unfamiliar sounds or sounds which do not exist in the

learners' first language should be identified by teachers

and systematically practiced in the classroom.

2. Teachers should recognize the pronunciation errors and correct them and expose pupils to basic knowledge of standard pronunciation.

3. Listen-and-imitate techniques should be adopted to improve pupils' pronunciation.

5.4 Suggestions for Further Studies

Based on the findings of this research, the following suggestions may help teachers and pupils in reducing the latter difficulties in pronouncing problematic English sounds;

1. A similar study can be adopted to cover 7th and 8th level Basic schools.

2. A further study can also be extended to investigate difficulties in pronouncing consonant clusters.

3. A similar study can be conducted to investigate the possibility of introducing language laboratory equipped with audio devices like sound dictionaries, computers and smart phones.

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