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Teaching Pronunciation to Young Learners in Middle Schools in Algeria

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Submitted by/   Supervised by/

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Dedication

To myself,

To all members of my family,

To my dearest cousins Ghoulam, Sadja and Wassim,

To the memory of my grandfather,

To all people who know me.

Acknowledgements

Iam deeply indepted to all those who have given me the benefit of their remarks. In particular, I should express my gratitude to Pr. Ahmed Moumene for his guidance, insight and patience.

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Abstract

This work aims at determining the reasons that make third-year middle school pupils fail in pronouncing English correctly. They learn the English pronouncing but still they have problems in speaking the language. The objective of this study is to help the teachers to diagnose the problems faced by the learners in learning pronunciation and to find solutions to improve the teaching of pronunciation in Middle Schools.

To achieve the above objective, a teachers' questionnaire was opted. It was administrated to seven teachers of English in two Middle Schools in Constantine. The questionnaire aims at tapping into the teachers' experiences and ideas. The analysis of data shows that the time devoted to teaching pronunciation is not enough and teachers focus much more on writing. The majority of teachers are aware of the importance of teaching pronunciation, but they lack the tools to teach it such as language laboratories. The questionnaire shows also that the amount of exposure to the English language is a very important factor in the failure of learning pronunciation. The pupils listen and speak English only inside the classrooms. Thus, the only way to make the pupils speak English properly is to let them speak in classrooms as much as possible.

Résumé

Le travail que nous présentons, à pour objectif de déterminer les raisons qui mènent les élèves de troisième année moyenne à prononcer l'anglais incorrectement. Les élèves apprennent la prononciation d'anglais mais ils ont des problèmes en la parlant. L'objective de cet étude est aider les professeurs pour diagnostiquer les problèmes de l'apprentissage de la prononciation de la langue anglaise et trouver les solutions pour le développer.

Pour achever notre objectif, une questionnaire est utilisée. Elle est donnée à sept professeurs d'anglais en deux écoles moyennes en Constantine. L'analyse de les informations dit que le temps attribué pour les leçons de la prononciation n'est pas suffisant, et le professeurs concentrent sur l'expression écrite. La majorité des les professeurs dit que l'apprentissage de la prononciation est très importante, mais il n'y a pas des moyens nécessaires comme les laboratoires. La questionnaire dit aussi que la quantité d'exposition sur la langue anglaise est une facteur importante dans l'échec de l'apprentissage de la prononciation. Les élèves écoutent et parlent la langue anglaise dans les classes seulement. la seule méthode pour mener les élèves à prononcer l'anglais proprement est de les donner la chance pour parler en classe.

ملخص

يهدف هذا العمل الى تشخيص الاسباب التي تجعل تلاميذ السنة الثالثة من التعليم المتوسط غير قادرين على نطق اللغة الانجليزية نطقا سليما. رغم أنهم يدرسون كيفية النطق الصحيحة للغة الانجليزية إلا أنهم لا يزالون يعانون من بعض الصعوبات عند تكلمها.

الهدف من هذه الدراسة هو مساعدة الاساتذة في تحديد و تشخيص المشاكل التي يواجهها التلاميذ في تعلم نطق اللغة الانجليزية و كذلك ايجاد الحلول لتطوير تدريس النطق في المدارس المتوسطة . لتحقيق هذا الهدف تم وضع مجموعة اسئلة موجهة لاساتذة اللغة الانجليزية للاجابة عليها، و تشمل هذه الاسئلة سبعة اساتذة في مدرستين متوسطتين في قسنطينة. هذه الاسئلة تهدف الى الافادة من خبرات وأفكار الاساتذة.

من خلال تحليل المعلومات تبين أن الوقت المخصص لتعليم كيفية النطق في المدارس المتوسطة غير كاف حيث أن الاساتذة يركزون على التعبير الكتابي بصفة كبيرة. إن أغلبية الاساتذة واعون بأهمية تدريس كيفية النطق ولكنهم يفتقدون الى الوسائل كمخابر اللغة. كما تبين أيضا أن نسبة الاستماع الى اللغة الانجليزية عامل مهم في الاخفاق في تعلم نطقها، التلاميذ يستمعون و يتكلمون هذه اللغة داخل الاقسام فقط لذلك فالطريقة الوحيدة التي تمكنهم من نطق اللغة الانجليزية نطقا صحيحا هي جعلهم يتكلمونها داخل القسم قدر المستطاع.

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Phonetics symbols

Vowels and diphthongs	Consonants
/ ɪ / as in sit	/p/ as in pen
/i :/ as in see	/b/ as in bad
/e/ as in ten	/t/ as in tea
/æ/ as in hat	/d/ as in did
/ɑ:/ as in arm	/k/ as in cat
/ ɒ/ as in got	/g/ as in got
/ɔ:/ as in saw	/tʃ/ as in chin
/ʊ/ as in put	/dʒ/ as in june
/ʊ:/ as in too	/f/ as in fall
/ʌ/ as in cup	/v/ as in van
/3:/ as in fur	/θ/ as in thin
/ə/ as in ago	/ð/ as in then
/eɪ/ as in pay	/s/ as in so
/aɪ/ as in five a	/z/ as in zoo
/əʊ/ as in home	/ʃ/ as in she
/aʊ/ as in now	/ʒ/ as in vision
/ɔɪ/ as in join	/h/ as in how
/ɪə/ as in near	/m/ as in man
/eə/ as in hair	/n/ as in no
/ʊə/ as in pure	/ŋ/ as in sing
	/l/ as in leg
	/r/ as in red
	/j/ as in yes
	/w/ as in wet

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INTRODUCTION

1. Statement of the problem

Learning a language means learning its grammar, vocabulary, phonology and even culture. This research will be devoted to the English phonology. The problem we are confronted with is the learners' failure in pronouncing English correctly. They do not speak English properly though they learn the English pronunciation. In other words, the problem is about the causes that lead to the learners mispronunciation of English.

Research questions:

 - Do third- year middle school pupils apply the rules of pronunciation they learn in class when they speak actually?

- Do third- year middle school pupils speak English or just memorize rules in their brain for examinations?

- Why do third- year middle school pupils fail in speaking English accurately though they are aware of its rules pronunciation?

2. Aim of the study

The objective of this work is to shed light on the reasons that make Algerian third-year middle school pupils fail in pronouncing English in a correct way and to make teachers aware of the problems learners face in learning pronunciation. In short, the study aims at finding solutions for the betterment of teaching pronunciation in middle schools in Algeria.

3. Hypothesis

I hypothesize that if Algerian third- year middle school pupils speak the English language inside the classrooms , then they will pronounce it accurately.

4. Tools of research

Concerning data collection, I have taken as a sample third- year pupils in two Middle Schools in Constantine, Algeria. The Brothers Ramram Middle School in Hamma Bouziane and Mahmoud Filali Middle School in Bekira. A questionnaire is opted for collecting data.

The questionnaire is for teachers of English in the two middle schools mentioned above. It aims at tapping into their experiences and ideas concerning teaching English in middle schools in Algeria. The questionnaire consists of eighteen questions, the teachers are asked to tick the appropriate box or make a full statement wherever needed.
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5. The structure of the study

The present research is divided into three main chapters: the first and the second are devoted to the literature review, the last one will be concerned with the analysis of the responses and results obtained from the teachers' questionnaire.

The first chapter is divided into three sections. The first section is about learning pronunciation and the factors that influence this process. The second section deals with the notion of intelligibility, the problems that lead to the unintelligibility and how to assess it. The last section is about sounds and spellings. It speaks about how the English spelling system works. It deals also with the differences between written and spoken English and speaks about linking, deletion of consonants and assimilation.

The second chapter is composed of five sections. The first one is about the history of pronunciation teaching. It provides an explanation about how pronunciation is taught under some recent approaches. The second section is concerned with teaching pronunciation under the Communicative Approach. The third section deals with the innovative techniques that are used nowadays in the teaching of pronunciation. The firth one speaks about designing a pronunciation syllabus and what variables to be considered. Finally, some details are brought concerning evaluating the learner's pronunciation.

The last chapter is mainly an investigation of how teachers in Middle Schools teach pronunciation and what techniques are used.

CHAPTER ONE

Preliminary Considerations in Teaching Pronunciation

Introduction

This chapter deals with preliminary considerations in the teaching of pronunciation. It speaks about the factors that affect pronunciation learning and the role of both the teacher and the learners. It has to do also with the notion of intelligibility and it's problems. Another section is about sounds and spellins, it deals with how the English spelling system works and the phenomena of connected speech: linking, deletion of consonants and assimilation.

I. Learning pronunciation

In the learning process, the teacher's and the learners' role is very important as shown in the following.

1. The teacher's role

The role of the teacher is very important in any learning process. The teacher is the guider who controlls and direct the learners. According to Rivers and Temperley(1968:preface), teachers cannot learn the language for their students. They can set their students on the road and wait on the sidelines, ready to encourage them. In teaching pronunciation, the most important thing the teacher should do is helping the learners to perceive sounds. The teacher should teach them how to hear carefully before they try to speak. If the learners learn how to hear very well to their teacher while he is speaking, they will be able to produce sounds exactly as they are produced by the teacher. Hence, they will speak accurately. Some sounds of English do not occur in other languages. The teacher, here, needs to be able to help his learners to make the new sounds, if they find difficulties.

The teacher is required to tell learners how they are doing as they may make inaccurate assumptions about the way English is pronounced. The teacher should provide the learners with information about their performance, in other words, whether they have got it right or not.The teacher role also is to direct the learners' attention to what to work on, because they may miss something important. For example, they may not realize that when a particular word is stressed or said in a different way, this can affect the message which is sent to the listener,

that is why Kenworthy (1994: 2) said that "Teachers need to make learners aware of the potential of sounds".

Learners need the help of the teacher in establishing a plan for action, in deciding what to concentrate on and when to leave well enough alone, because they may notice that something about their pronunciation is not like the way English people do it and may automatically try to change this, but their efforts are misplaced because that feature is a refinement, or acceptable to the English ear, or not essential for intelligible speech.

The teacher is responsible for designing the exercises and activities that will be helpful, which activities will provide the most opportunities for practice, experimentation, and exploration?The teacher must also be aware that certain activities suit the learning styles and approaches of some learners better than others.

1.2. The learners' role

Based on Kenworthy (1994: 2), what all learners need to do is respond. But of course it is not as simple as that. It is very important that the learners have the willingness to take responsibility for their own learning. The teacher may be highly skilled at noticing mispronunciation and pointing these out, but if learners take no action and do not try to monitor their own efforts, then the prospects of change or improvement are minimal.

1.3. Factors affecting pronunciation learning
1.3.1. Biological factors

A common observation made by people involved in the field of second language learning is that adult second language learners almost often have a foreign accent while child second language learners almost often attain native-like accent pronunciation. The reason behind this ability is the critical period hypothesis as Mc Donough stated that:

"Young children learn languages better because they are nearer the age at which they became native speakers of their mother tongue". (2002:91)

Thus, we assume that if someone pronounces a second language like a native, he probably started learning it as a child. Conversely, if a person does not begin to learn a second language until adulthood, he will never have a native-like accent even though other aspects of

his language such as syntax or vocabulary may be indistinguishable from those of native speakers.

1.3.2 Personality factors

The personality of the learner is a very important determination of acquiring the sound system of a second language. Avery and Ehrilich (2008: 6) state that learners who are confident and willing to take risks probably have more opportunities to practise the pronunciation of the second language because they are more often involved in interactions with native speakers. On the other hand, learners who are introverted, inhibited, and unwilling to take risks lack opportunities for practice.

Concerning the influence of the personality factor on the progress in a second language, teachers should create a non-threatening atmosphere in their classrooms and should not force students to participate if they are not ready.

1.3.3. The native language factor

The native language is an important factor in learning to pronounce English. Every language has a different inventory of sounds, different rules of combining these sounds into words, and different stress and intonation patterns. Thus, the pronunciation errors made by a second language learner reflect the sound system of his native language.

The influence of the native language can be seen in three different ways as stated by Avery and Ehrlich (2008: 6). First, problems of English sounds that are not found in the sound system of the mother language; that is why adult learners have difficulties in pronouncing new sounds since they have never exercised their mouth in producing that sound. For this reason rivers (1968:114) concentrates on the role of teachers in teaching mouth positions for those sounds which do not exist in the native language, while allowing students to produce native-language near-equivalents for the rest. Second, difficulties that arise when the rules of combining sounds are different in the learner's native language. Finally, problems of transferring the patterns of stress and intonation from the native language into the second language.

The native language affects also the students' ability to hear English sounds. Thus, sounds which occur in the native language will be heard rather than the actual sounds of English which are being produced by the teacher.

3.4. The amount of exposure

Another factor that influences the acquisition of the sound system is the amount of exposure to English the learner receives.This does not mean that the learner should live in an English-speaking county. Many learners live in an English-speaking environment but spend much of their time at home using their mother language. Conversely, many people live in non-English-speaking countries but use English in many areas of their lives such as work or school as Kenworthy (1994: 6) states "It is not merely exposure that matters, but how the learner responds to the opportunities to listen to and use English".

4. Setting realistic goals

O'connor (1999:1) states that million of foreign students want to learn English only for reading and writing it. But others want to speak English well, with a pronunciation that is understood by their classmates and by English people.

The teacher should not attempt to completely eradicate a foreign accent, it seems an unrealistic goal. However, some learners may want to approach a native-like accent. Learners who plan to become teachers of English will want, more than others, to approximate a native accent. For other learners, a more reasonable goal is to be intelligible. In other words, they can transmit a comprehensible message, that is why they do not pay too much attention to how their pronunciation is good. The teacher must focus on the critical errors, features of a students' speech most responsible for incomprehensibility. The teacher should let his learners know that mispronunciation of some words may make the listener unable to understand them.

II. Intelligibility

1. Defining intelligibility

We have seen that the more reasonable goal for teaching pronunciation for second language learners is achieving intelligibility. One definition of the word intelligibility is that stated by Kenworthy (1994: 13): "Intelligibility is being understood by a listener at a given time in a given situation". From this definition, we can conclude that intelligibility is the same as understandability. To be more precise, intelligibility means the ability of a listener to match a sound produced by a foreign speaker with the sound a native speaker would use without too much difficulty. This works similarly with the way the English-speaking adults understand the speech of their young children. Kenworthy states a very nice example on that; if a child

has problems in pronouncing the sound /r/and use /w/ instead, he would say: 'I see a wabbit'. The parents understand that their child means a 'rabbit', because they know that /w/ counts as /r/ for the child.

2. Factors affecting intelligibility

2.1. The sender

The speaker is the most important participant in transmitting a message. If, for example, a learner's speech is full of self-correction, hesitation, and grammatical restructurings, then the listener will find difficulties in following his speech. Based on Kenworthy (1994:14), speakers who hesitate when they are speaking will make more errors in pronunciation than speakers who are confident and do not pause too much while they are speaking.

Another factor that affects intelligibility is that the person speaks too quickly. Learners of second language think that the reason behind their inability of understanding the native speakers is that they speak too quickly, they are right to some extent. It happens that two speakers are speaking with the same speed, but one is less intelligible than the other. In fact, it is not the speed that is causing difficulties, but the fact that we cannot seem to pick out the most important bits from the less important bits. If it is easy for listeners to hear the important words, then there will probably be few intelligibility problems.

2.2. The receiver

Intelligibility has as much to do with the listener as with the speaker. The first listener factor is familiarity with the foreign accent. Based on Catford (1967:149), it is clear that the hearer's cultural background, particularly his familiarity with the speaker's cultural background may affect intelligibility. An American speaker who gets many opportunities to talk with Japanese speakers of English and very few opportunities to hear Indian English will find the Indian speaker of English more difficult to understand than the Japanese speaker. Familiarity and exposure work at the individual level. If you know a non-native speaker very well, you will be able to understand him without too much difficulty. Conversely, if you listen to a stranger who speaks with the same accent you will not be able to understand him. To return to our comparison with the speech of young English children, it is the same case of the parents understand their child easily, but that other adults will have problems in understanding what this child is saying.

The second listener factor is the ability to use contextual clues when listening to someone speaking. If the topic of conversation is clear and there are plenty of meaning clues, then listeners may be able to understand a word which would have thrown them completely if it had been pronounced in isolation.

3. Intelligibility problems

In learning a new language, the learners find themselves using unconscious strategies in order to cope with the new set of sounds. Some of these strategies may lead to intelligibility problems.

3.1. Sound substitution

If a speaker substitutes one sound for another, this may cause difficulties for the listener. Some sounds are close enough to count as the same to the listener. In this case, there will be no serious problem. But in some instances the learner may substitute a sound with another which is strongly identified by the listener. Kenworthy (1994: 17) gives the example of a speaker who substitutes the sound /θ/ with /s/, perhaps because the former does not exist in his native language. This learner will pronounce, for example, the words 'sick' and 'thick' exactly the same. Unless context helps, the listener will have problems in understanding the speaker.

3.2. Links between words

English native speakers usually use links between words, they can add a sound, use a composite or a merger sound. Let us take some examples: when saying 'go in', English speakers add the consonant /w/ between the two words, it sounds like 'go win'. When saying 'nice shoe', the final consonant of 'nice' merges with the first consonant of 'shoe'.The result sounds like 'ny shoe'. When saying 'this year', English speakers may use the consonant /ʃ/ as in 'shoe' at the border between the two words. The phrase will sound quite like 'the shear'.

3.3. The use of stress

If an English learner does not stress one syllable more than another, or stresses the wrong syllable, it may be very difficult for the listener to identify the word. Experiments showed that native speakers mishear a word, not because the speaker mispronounced the sounds of the word but because he puts the stress in the wrong place. Here are two interesting

examples. The word 'written' was pronounced with the stress on the second syllable instead of on the first. The listener thought the speaker had said 'retain'. The other example is of the word 'confortable' which was pronounced with stress on, 'com' and on '-ta-'. The listener heard this as 'come for a table'.

3.4. The use of intonation

Intonation is important for intelligibility, because it is used to express intentions. A speaker can show that he or she is asking for information, or asking for confirmation, seeking agreement, or simply making a common remark. An inappropriate intonation pattern can lead to misunderstanding just as a mispronounced sound can, even though it is rarely to cause problems with the identification of words. For example, if a foreign speaker always uses very low pitch, listeners may get the impression that they are 'bored' or 'uninterested' when this is really not the case.

4. Assessing intelligibility

Based on Kenworthly (1994:20), all what you have to do to assess intelligibility of particular speakers is simply to ask someone to listen to them speak and say how difficult or easy they are to understand. Assessing intelligibility dose not need complicated tests and procedures. If we want to evaluate the intelligibility of a group of learners, it is quite clear that their teachers are unsuitable as judges of intelligibility because of the factors of exposure and familiarity. The teacher becomes accustomed to his students' voice and develops special skills to understand their speech.

The ideal judges are listeners who have not had an abnormal amount of exposure to non-native speech nor any previous contact with the speakers being assessed. Non-native listeners can also be used as judges. The best source of this type of judge is, of course, other learners of English in the class or school.

5. Analysing ease of intelligibility

A teacher, who has a new class of learners and wants to know how much they are intelligible, could use the following steps:

The sample

The teacher can choose between a sample of learners reading aloud or speaking spontaneously. In fact, studies showed that learners make more pronunciation errors when reading aloud than when speaking spontaneously. Another problem concerning spontaneous speech is that some learners will like to speak on a topic while others will not. On balance, it is probably best to go for a spontaneous speech sample, with a bit of reading aloud. At least with a reading-aloud task, roughly equivalent stretches of speech are being judged.

The topic of the sample

The samples of speech should be on the same topic. If it is a reading- aloud task, and the learners are supposed to read the same passage, it will not work. Because they will learn it by heart in the tenth reading. The best solution is to ask the learners to describe someone they know or tell a story. In this case, the teacher will have samples on the same topic and are not identical, so that he can make a comparison.

The judges

The judges can be the teacher if it is a new class, or a volunteer listener, then the scores will be interpreted. Two categories will appear: those who are virtually intelligible and those whose speech presents few difficulties.

VI. Sounds and spellings

1. The English spelling system

Pronunciation teaching often focuses on the sound system and ignores the way these sounds are represented in writing. It has often been claimed that the English spelling system is totally irregular. In other words, there is often no one-to-one correspondence between the sounds that we hear and the letters we see on a page. Avery and Ehrlich(2008: 3-5) describe the basic features of the English spelling system:

Feature 1

In English, one sound may be represented by different letters. For example, the words to, two, through, and threw; all these words contain the same vowel sound, but it is represented by four different spellings.

Feature 2

The second feature in that one letter can represent different sounds, for example, the words cake, mat, call, any and sofa contain the same letter 'a', but each time it is pronounced in a different way. The same thing with the words: see, pleasure and resign. The letter 's' is pronounced in three different ways.

Feature 3

Some combinations of letters represent only one sound. According to Kenworthy (1994:95), these combinations are called composite symbols. For example, 'ph' represents the sound /f/ as in 'phone'. 'th' can represent two sounds. /θ/like 'thick' and /ð/ like 'there'.

Feature 4

The other feature is that letters may represent no sounds such as the two words: bomb and knee. The final letter in 'bomb' and the initial letter in 'knee' are not pronounced at all, they are called silent letters.

Feature 5

Many of the consonant letters have a consistent relations hip to the sounds they represent, they can be called single. Valued letters such as b, m, and n have one pronunciation.

Feature 6

The pronunciation of some consonant letters depends on the vowels that follow them. For example, the letter c is pronounced /s/ when followed by the vowel letters i, e, or y and is pronounced like /k/when followed by the vowel letters a,o,or u, or when it occurs at the end of a word.

Feature 7

When the vowel letters a, e,i,o and u occur in words ending in a silent e letter, they are pronounced with their long sound which is the sound heard when these letters are pronounced in isolation for example ' mate and note'. When these vowels occur in words without a silent e, they are pronounced with their short sounds such as 'mat and not'.

2. The phonetic alphabet

It is sometimes very difficult to identify sounds in terms of orthographic symbols because different letters may represent the same sound in English as in 'do' and 'two', the vowel sound /u/ is the same in each particular case, but it is represented in actual alphabet in two different ways. In the same manner, the sound represented by the letter or symbol /f/ can be found and spelled differently in: 'enough' or 'photo'. Because of all these problems, a phonetic alphabet was adopted in which each letter stands or represents in one –to-one correspondence with each sound. In other words, a particular sound is always represented by the same symbol.

3. Spelling and pronunciation errors

If the mother language of English second language learners is a language that uses the Roman alphabet like English, the problem of confusing between the sound value of one letter in the native language and its value in English will appear. Let us take the example of German. In this language the letter 'v' represents the sound /f/. For a German-speaking learner the word 'drive' will be read as 'life'. According to Kenworthy (1991: 98), when foreign learners are not sure what the sound spelling correspondence is in English, they follow the strategy of assuming it as that of their native language. In another case, as soon as German learners of English meet written English forms, they will realize that the letter 'w' which stands for /v/ in German has a different value in English. Thus, they will be very careful when pronouncing words like 'weather' and 'will'. Moreover, the desire to avoid making a mistake may actually cause a problem. Some of the learners will pronounce 'very' and 'value' like 'wery' and ' walue'

.

Another cause of difficulty is the English spelling itself. As we have seen English spelling is not a strictly regular alphabetic system. There is no one-to-one correspondence between letters and sounds. In this case, even native speakers make such errors because of the irregularities of English spelling. Richards (1971: 173) calls these errors intralingual and developmental errors. Their origins are found within the structure of English itself. They are called developmental because English children when they start learning their mother language make these errors. For example, the rule that 'gh' at the end of a word is silent. There are exceptions for this rule, where 'gh' is pronounced such as the word 'enough'

The last source of difficulty is the learner's phonetic abilities. For example, if he has difficulty in distinguishing English /p/ from English/b/, then in a dictation test, he will spell 'pill' as 'bill'. Japanese learners, for example, have problems in distinguishing /r/ from/l/. Thus, they would write 'Largerse' instead of 'Rogers'

4. Rules and regularities

Before having a look on some of the regularities of English spelling, learners need to be familiar with certain notions. Learners should be able to distinguish between consonant letters and vowel letters. The teacher can simplify things by saying that 'a,e,i,o,u' are vowels and the rest are consonants.

They have also to know that when the letter 'y' occurs in the middle or the end of a word it stands for a vowel sound. When it occurs at the beginning of a word, it stands for a consonant sound.

Affixes also need to be clearly identified by the learners. They should know that the units with a basic meaning, and which can be added to the beginning of the word such as 'un, re' are called suffixes. The units that can be added to the end of a word such as 'ion, ist' are called suffixes.

Learners have to be aware of the notion of the syllable and can identify how many syllables there are in a word.

4.1. Rules for consonants

Here are some of the regularities of English spelling. We will start by rules for consonants. Table1 shows consonant letters that have one sound value only. (Kenworthy (1994:101))

Letter	Sound	Letter	Sound
d	as in :do,bad	r	as in :right
f	as in :fun,half	v	as in :vision,live
j	as in :jet	x	as in :fix
m	as in :me,arm	y	as in :yet,yellow
n	as in :no,north	z	as in :zoo
p	as in : put, up	t	as in : to,put

Table 1. Single valued consonants.

The following letters are also single valued consonants but they have small cases where they have different values.

Letter	Sounds	Letter	Sounds
b	as in :bad, job silent in : lamb, subtle.	K	as in :kit silent in knee, knowledge
h	as in: he, ahead h is pronounced when it occurs at the beginning of a stressed syllables.	l	as in :lip silent in would, could
		w	as in : weather, will silent in: answer, write.

Table 1.1. Single Valued consonants with some exceptions.

In English, there are some consonants that have two sound values.

Letter	Sounds	Letter	Sounds
c	can be /k/ as in :cat or /s/ in: city	g	can be /g/as in: go or / dʒ / as in :cage

Table 2. Consonants with two sound values.

English uses composite consonant letters. Two or three letters represent one sound.

Letters	Sound	Letters	Sound
ck	/k/ as in : pick	ph	/f/ as in : phone
ng	/y/ as in : sing	sh	/ʃ/ as in : shut
tch	/tʃ/ as in :watch		
wh	/w/ as in : which		

Table 3. Composite consonants that have one sound value

Two composite letters have two possible sound values

- ' ch' can represent: the sound / tʃ / as in: choice, child.

    the sound /k/ as in : character, chord.

- 'gh' can represent: the sound /f/ as in: enough, tough. And it can also stand for silence as in: though, tough.

4.2 rules for vowels

In English, the single vowel letters 'a,e,i,o,u' have two sound values as table 5 shows:

Letter	Sound1	Sound2
a	/eɪ / hate	/ æ / hate
e	/ ɪ / pete	/e/ pet
i	/a ɪ / mine	/ ɪ / fit
θ	/a ʊ/ note	/ ɒ / not
u	/ ju:/ cute	/ ʌ / cut

Table 4. Vowel letters with two sound values.

• If the single vowel letter is followed by a single consonant letter, then the vowel sound will be sound2

• If the single vowel letter is followed by two consonant letters, it will have also sound 2.

• If the single vowel letter is followed by a consonant and the letter 'e', it will represent the sound 1.

• In the case of polysyllabic words and based of Kenworthy (1994:105), all you have to do is count the number of consonants following the vowel regardless of the suffix ending. If the vowel letter is followed by one consonant it will take sound 1, for example, in 'relation' the 'a' letter will pronounced as /eɪ/. If the vowel is followed by two consonants, it will take sound 2 in table 5, for example in 'action', 'a' is pronounced / æ /.

This rule works for the single letters 'a,e, o,u'.

5. Linking, deletion of sounds and assimilation

5.1 linking

Linking is a connected speech phenomena. It applies to what happens at word. Boundaries where either two vowels or a consonant and a vowel meet. Jull et.al.(2008: 84) assumes that "connecting groups of words together is referred to as linking".

Linking consonants to vowels

When a word that ends with a consonant is followed by a word that begins with a vowel, the consonants seems to become part of the following word especially when the word beginning with a vowel is a function word. Here are some examples: stop it, with it, fair enough.

Linking consonants to consonants

When a word that ends with a stop consonant is followed by a word that begins with a consonant, the stop consonant is usually not released. The tongue or lips will move to the place of articulation of the stop consonant and then move immediately to the place of articulation for the next consonant. Here are some examples: stop trying, big boy, let down.

Linking identical consonants

When a word that ends with a consonant is followed by a word that begins with the same consonant, the two consonants are usually pronounced as one long consonant. For example, rip pulm, black cat, big girls.

Linking vowels to vowels

When a word that ends with a tense vowel such as /i:,eɪ,u:,aʊ/ is followed by a word that begins with a vowel, the words are usually linked by the semi-vowel ending the tense vowel, for example, be on time, pay up, grow up.

5.2. Deletion of consonants

Based on Roach (1997:127), the nature of elision or deletion of consonants may be stayed quite simply: under certain circumstances sounds disappear. Here are some of the cases where consonants can be deleted. They are taken from Jull et.al. (2008:86):

Example	Pronunciation when simplified	Delete sound
Band shell	/bæ n ʃe│/	/d/
Left field	/│effi: ld/	/t/
Next month	/neks mʌn θ/	/t/
postman	/pəʊsmən/	/t/

Table 5. Some cases where consonants are deleted

5.3 Assimilation

In the linking of consonants to consonants, there is a change in the place of articulation of the first consonant. This is known as assimilation because the first consonant becomes more like the second one.

Assimilation of nasals

The final nasal consonants of function words assimilates in place of articulation to a following stop consonant.

When the negative 'n't ' is attached to an auxiliary verb, the /t/ is often changed to a short transitional sound at the same place of articulation as the following consonant and the /n/ assimilates to this consonant.

Written form	Spoken form	Assimilation
I can believe it	/aɪ kəm bəli:v ət/	n→m
I can go	/aɪ kəŋ gəʊ /	n → y
I can't believe it	/aɪ kæ mp bəl i:v ət/	nt → mp
I can't go	/aɪ kæŋk gəʊ/	nt → yk

Table 6. Assimilation of nasals

Palatalization

The change of /d/+/y/ to /dz/and of /t/+/y/ to / tʃ / isreferred to as palatalization. It is called palatalization because the tooth ridge sounds/t/ and /d/ are pronounced further back in the mouth, closer to the hard palate. Here we have two examples: not yet /nɒtʃet /

could you move /kʊdʒʒmu:v/

When 'want' and ' going' are followed by 'to' in verb+ infinitive constructions, they are usually pronounced ' wanna', 'gouna' .Similarly, the expression' I don't know' is pronounced 'I dunno'.

Conclusion

It can be said that pronunciation is very important when, for instance, a foreigner is learning a language such as English whose pronunciation is rather difficult and unpredictable in so many cases. In almost all cases, pronunciation proves to be a major tool by which a message can be transmitted clearly.

However, such a feature is neglected in teaching and so long as it is neglected, students will always have pronunciation problems. Such a feature needs to be considered to motivate students; and to motivate them it is also necessary to teach them how the English spelling system is work, in order to take some rules that will help them in speaking English.

CHAPTER TWO
Teaching Pronunciation

Introduction

In this chapter, we are going to provide a historical overview of how pronunciation has been treated in language teaching over the past hundred years. We are going to see also how teaching pronunciation is dealt with under the communication approach. In addition to that, there is a section that speaks about the innovative techniques that are used in teaching pronunciation , which provide alternative ways to better respond to students' learning styles and preferences. Curriculum design and evaluation of pronunciation are included also in this chapter.

I. Pronunciation Instruction in perspective

1. The history of pronunciation teaching

In the early centuries, grammar and vocabulary were the dominant aspects concerning foreign language teaching. Teaching pronunciation was neglected. According to Celce-Murcia etal . (2000: 2), it is for this reason that "grammar and vocabulary have been much better understood by most language teachers than pronunciation".

Two general approaches to the teaching of pronunciation have been developed: an intuitive-imitative approach that was used before the late nineteenth century; and an analytic linguistic approach. Based on Celce- Murcia, the intuitive- imitative approach depends on the learner's ability to listen to and imitate the rhythms and sounds of the target language.

Tape recorders and language labs were used in this approach. The analytic –linguistic approach utilizes information and tools such as a phonetic alphabet and charts of the vocal apparatus. It focuses the learner's attention on the sounds and rhythms of the target language. This approach was developed to complement rather than to replace the intuitive- imitative approach.

Throughout the twentieth century, different methods were used in foreign language teaching, such as the Grammar Translation Method in which the teaching of pronunciation is largely irrelevant. We will focus on the methods for which the teaching and learning of pronunciation is a genuine concern. Celce- Murcia etal. (2000: 3-7) describes some of these methods.

1.1. Direct method

It was at the turn of the twentieth century that the direct method became widely known and practised. In this method, pronunciation is taught through intuition and imitation-students imitate a model which is the teacher and do their best to approximate the model through imitation and repetition.

1.2. The reform movement

In 1890s, phoneticians such as Henry Sweet, Wihelm Vietor, and Paul Passy contributed to the teaching of pronunciation and formed the International Phonetic Association in 1986, then developed the International Phonetic Alphabet (I PA). During this period, teachers focused on teaching the spoken form of the language, and the learners were given phonetic training to establish good speech habits.

1.3. Audiolingualism

This method appeared after the Second World War. In this method, pronunciation is very important. According to Lindsay and knight (2006: 18) "correct pronunciation was strongly encouraged from the beginning". The teacher models a sound or a word and the students imitate or repeat. Furthermore, the teacher often uses the technique of minimal pair drills. These drills are based on using words that differ by a single sound in the same position. For examples, the teacher says the words 'sheep, ship' and asks the learners if these words are the same or different. Then, he can use other examples and ask his learners to identify which sound is produced: the sound that is included in the word 'sheep' or that of 'ship'.

1.4. Community Language Learning

It was developed by Curran (1976) for teaching second and foreign languages, in this method, students sit around a table with a tap recorder. The teacher stands behind one of the students, with hands on the student's shoulder. He asks the student to say something in his native language he wants to be able to say in the target language. Then, the teacher says the utterance in the target language; the student repeats it once and twice until he can produce it fluently. Then, the utterance is recorded one tape.

After recording some utterances, they are played back and students match the new target language with the word –for- word translation provided by the teacher.

2. Pronunciation teaching today

Mac Carthy (1967:137) states that every one who teaches a modern language by word of mouth cannot escape the necessity for pronouncing it and for teaching the pronunciation of it to his pupils. Currently, the communicative language approach is the dominant one in language teaching. It focuses on the pragmatic, authentic and functional use of the language for meaningful purposes as stated by Lindsay and knight (2006: 20):

> "It is no actually a method but an approach to teaching based on the view that   learning a language means leaning how to communicate effectively in the world outside the classroom".

According to Celce- Murcia et.al .(2007:7), this approach indicates that if nonnative speakers of English fall below the threshold level of pronunciation, they will have oral communication problems regardless of how good they are at mastering grammar and vocabulary. The goal of technique pronunciation then is to enable learners to surpass the threshold level so that their pronunciation will not detract from their ability to communicate. In the following section there are more details on teaching pronunciation under the communicative language teaching.

II.A communicative approach to Pronunciation Teaching
1.Teaching consonants and vowels

To teach consonants and vowels, it is important to sheld light on its characteristics. That is to say, learners should know that consonants can be classified according to their places and manners of articulation. Thus, we have bilabials, alveolars, fricatives…etc. Vowels also are classified according to the tongue height, frontness or backness and the lip rounding. Hence there are central vowels, back vowels, open vowels… etc.

There is a variety of communicative activities that can be used in teaching consonants and vowels. Naiman(2008:165-7) describes some of them as the followes

1.1. Information gap activities

This type of activity is used for practicing consonants and consonant contrasts. If learners, for example confuse /b/ and /v/, the following activity can be used. The teacher

chooses a topic such as food and has students brainstorm and think of as many food words as possible which contain /b/ and /v/ sounds. It will be better if learners work in group so that the words will be generated in a communicative fashion. If the learners are beginners, clues or pictures can be used. They are also asked to generate names that contain these sounds. The list may contain: bread, vegetables, beans, veal, Barbara, Steve, Bob….After generating the food words and the names, they are written on slips of paper. One group of the learners will take slips of names, and the other group will take the slips of foods. Then, they work in pairs or in groups questioning each other about 'who bought what?' at the store.

This activity provides communicative practice with these sounds.

1.2 matching exercises

Another activity of practicing a sound contrast such as /b/ and /v/ is the matching exercise. In this exercise, the class is divided into two groups. Group A has a written description of several people .Group B has a picture containing all of the people for which there are descriptions. The role of the learners is to match the written descriptions with the appropriate people. Some sample descriptions might be:

Becky has big boots.

Vicky has a velvet vest.

Barbara is carrying a big bag.

Virginia is wearing gloves.

Through this activity, the learners gain practice producing the relevant sounds. Moreover, if the descriptions are generated by the learners them selves they will have more opportunity to practice producing these sounds in a communicative way.

1.3 'fluency square' activities

This type of activities is less communicative than the two stated above. It also requires less preparation for the teachers. The activity is based on four illustrated squares used to contrast at least two sounds. A large square is divided into four squares with each of the smaller squares depicting an activity differing from a contrasting square in terms of one variable. For example:

Square 1: Cassie took a bus this morning.

Square 2: Cassie took a bath this morning.

Square 3: Cathy took a bath this morning.

Square 4: Cathy took a bus this morning.

Square 1 and 4 differ in the contrast between /s/ and /o/ in "Cassie" and "Cathy". Squares 1 and 2 and squares 3 and 4 differ in the contrast between /æ/ and /ʌ/, /o/ and /s/in "bath" and "bus". Learners should describe the activities in each square so that another student is able to identify the correct square.

The aim of this exercise is to make the learners able to both hear and produce the differences between these vowel and consonant contrasts.

2. Teaching connected speech

There is a considerable difference of opinions about why connected speech should be taught. Gimson and Ramsaran (1982: 62) argue that if speakers avoid all assimilations, they will sound very formal. Rogerson and Gilbert (1990: 31) also advocate teaching connected speech because it helps explain why written English is different from spoken English. The following activities which are taken from Naiman (2008: 168) provide communicative practice in these important aspects of English pronunciation.

2.1 Dialogues and role plays

In this activity, the learners attempt to generate the dialogues, and the teacher servers primarily as a resource person. For example, words can be generated to practise the liking of final stop consonants /p,t,k,b,d,g/with following vowels. Learners can construct dialogues that contain these words. Sentences such as the following could be constructed:

I saw Bob in the bookstore

Did he buy that book about atomic energy?

No, I think he bought a book about an energetic athlete.

2.2. Games

Palatalization (d+y=/dz/) can be practised effectively in games. One game is that the learners ask each other about the activities each one has done on the weekend using yes/no questions beginning' didja…?'. The reduction of initial /h/ in 'he' can also be practised by asking twenty questions. Type game about a famous male no longer living using 'did'e….?'

3. Teaching suprasegmentals

Morley (1987: preface) argues that teaching suprasegmentals, that is to say, stress, rhythm and intonation and how they are used to communicate meaning has a secondary importance assigned to teaching segmentals that is to say; vowels and consonants. Another opinion which is not far from this that of Celce-Muricia (1978: 11) who says: "Iam still having problems with fully integrating stress and intonation in my teaching of English pronunciation". Naiman (2008: 169) focuses on the teaching of suprasegmentals from the earliest stages and develop some communicative activities concerning teaching suprasegmentals .

3.1. Oral reading

Learners should be given an opportunity to practise suprasegmentals in longer stretches of discourse by reading them. It is through these longer samples of real language that the relationship between suprasegmentals and meaning becomes so evident. The language used for this practise should be taken from realistic dialogues.

3.2. Shadowing

This technique requires that learners listen carefully to their teacher and follow the rhythm and intonation contours of natural language samples. The learners produce the language at the same time as the teacher models it. This technique is both useful and fun for learners.

3.3. Focused activities

Learners can practise the difference between content and function words and the stress patterns associated with then by completing tasks. Role plays also could be developed in order to practise the pattern of intonation with the help of tag questions. For example, a sales person is trying to convince a customer to buy an item and says: 'it's not a lot of money for such a wonderful dress, is it?'.

III. Innovative techniques

1. Fluency-building activities

Traditionally, the teaching of pronunciation focused on the accurate production of the sounds, rhythms and intonation. Fluency had not a great importance. According to Celce-

Muricia (2000: 291), the students' fluency levels will almost affect their accuracy, and vice versa. Thornbury (2008: 6) states that fluency is not simply the ability to speak fast, it has to do also with pausing. Pauses can be long but not frequent, they should also occur at meaningful transition points. Celce-Muricia et.al .(2000:291-4) discuss the following techniques of fluency building:

1.1. Eeffective listening exercise

The teacher chooses a student volunteer and converse with him on a topic of the student's choice for three minutes. The other students listen to them, then discuss the strategies used by the teacher to encourage the speaker. After that, students are divided in groups of three: one student is the listener, the other is the speaker and the last one is the observer and discuss a topic of their choice. Roles are switched, until each member has had a chance to assume all three roles.

1.2. Personal introduction collage

In this activity, the teacher models a personal introduction by introducing himself via a sample posterboard collage. The teacher holds up the collage and points to the relevant visuals as he introduces himself. Next, students are asked to prepare their own personal introduction collage using pictures and rehearse it until they can speak freely and fluently. Then present it to the whole class.

1.3. Backward buildup

This technique was stated by Jull (2008: 2-3). It involves starting with the final word of a sentence and adding the preceding words, one at a time. For example,

You

Know you

Don't know you

I don't know you

Building sentences up from the end, preserves the intonation contour of the original sentence.

2. Using multisensory modes

Learners' egos influence their pronunciation. Learners with strong egos are likely to have a foreign flavor in their speech because they cannot abandon their self-image. However, learners with permeable egos are more likely to acquire a native-like accent. Using multisensory modes in teaching can help to break down the ego boundaries of learners. Celce-Muricia etal .(2000:295-9) suggest some of these modes.

2.1. Visual and auditory reinforcement

The use of visual support has always been present in the teaching of pronunciation. The visual reinforcements that are used are: charts, diagrams and overhead projectors. Auditory reinforcements also were used through the 'listen and imitate' era of pronunciation teaching. Today's pronunciation classroom tend to view the role of auditory reinforcements. Somewhat differently. The use of memory peg emerges. An example of such memory device is thinking of the sound of a moving train as a peg to help produce / t∫/, or imagining the sound of a buzzing bee to assist in producing /z/.

2.2. Kinesthetic reinforcement

It means the use of hand signals and body movements to augment other instructional practices. The students can trace intonational contours with arms and fingers extended as they pronounce a given utterance. They can also use their fingures to count how many syllables a word has. Vowel length can be indicated through living smaller or larger spaces between the thumb and index fingers.

2.3. Tactile reinforcement

It involves teaching prnunciation through the sense of touch. For example, the students place their fingers or their throat or cup their hands over their ears to experience the vibration of their vocal cords. They can also place their fingers in front of their mouths to ascertain when aspiration is occurring.

3. Use of authentic materials

The teachers should not overlook the rich resources available to them through the use of authentic materials such as jokes, advertising copy, passages from literature and so on. The

teacher can adapt these materials to the teaching purposes. Here are some examples stated by Celce-Murcia et al (2000:300). The first example is a cheer:

Two-four. six-eight

Who do we appreciate?

Tommy,Tommy,hurrah!

Another example is an advertising slogan which says: "you'll wonder where the yellow when you brush your teeth with Pepsodent".

4. Techniques from psychology

Relaxation techniques which are borrowed from the field of psychology are useful in the warm up phase of the lesson. Students stand and place their hands on their diaphrams, breath deeply in and out. While doing that, the teacher gets his students to call up images which is called guided imagery activities. Such warm up activities often help students feel relaxed, during the rest of the lesson, which can be very important for teaching pronunciation.

5. Using multimedia

The use of multimedia learning aids provides a number of advantages as stated by Celce-murcia et al.(2000: 313). It is an access to a wide variety of native-speaker speech samplings and gives an opportunity for self-monitoring of progress. Finally, it makes a gamelike atmosphere for learning. In addition to the visual and auditory aids that were discussed before, other supports can be used. Videos are used to provide the opportunity for learners not only to hear themselves but to see themselves as others see them. It provides students with incentive to attend to features of their pronunciation that they might not monitor.

Another device that can be used is computer assisted instruction. Obviously, many schools do not have the facilities to use such aid. Yet, computer- assisted instruction provides an insufficient number of software programs for language teaching in general and for the teaching of pronunciation specifically.

IV. Pronunciation syllabus design

1. Variables to be considered

To design a syllabus there is a number of variables that must be taken into account. Celce-Murcia et. al.(2000: 320-5) describe those variables as the following.

1.1. Learner variables

They are variables associated with the learners themselves. Firth (2008:174) states that constructing a pronunciation syllabus depends in large part on 'who' the students are. Learner's age, proficiency level, linguistic and cultural background, prior exposure to the target language, language aptitude and motivation to achieve intelligible accent are learner variables that influence designing a pronunciation syllabus. Based on Celce-Murcia et.al. (2000: 320), the teacher has little control over many of these variables. Yet, they play a very important role in the syllabus for young children learning general English differs from that for adult nurse's aids who want to improve their oral communicative skills. With regard to what Celce-Murcia and her collogues advance, the learner's literacy level and prior exposure to pronunciation instruction are the most critical variables that affect pronunciation syllabus design.

1.2. Setting variables

These variables deal with constraints placed on the syllabus by the local in which the language syllabus is being implemented. Two primary setting in which language teachers function are differentiate: the foreign language and the second language setting. In the foreign language, the target language that is to say, English is not an official language of the country, in the second language setting, the target language is a native or an official language of the country.

There are four societal governed settings in which the teaching of English to nonnative speakers occurs: societal governed setting in wich the teaching of English to nonnative speakers occurs: monolingual English. Speaking communities; multilingual communities in which English functions either as an officially recognized language, a lingua franca, or an auxiliary language; communities that recognize English as an international language of wider communication and finally, communities for which English is truly a foreign language or school subject.

In foreign language settings, the target language is used only in classes and teachers are not native speakers of the target language. Thus, they are reluctant to focus on pronunciation. Hence, the learner's exposure to nativelike pronunciation is often limited.

1.3. Institutional variables

They have to do with the educational situation in which the learners find themselves. They include whether the teachers have a basic knowledge of the sound system of the English knowledge or not and if the appropriate teaching materials are available for the students' level and needs.

1.4. Linguistic variables

These variables deal with the first language of the learners. According to Celce-Murcia et al. (2000: 323), differences in the phonological systems and phonetic inventories of languages can cause students to substitute rather predictably known sounds from their first language for new, or unknown, sounds in the target language.

Traditionally, the pronunciation syllabus focused on the production of the phonemes in the second language that do not existe in the first language. However, more current research indicates that the suprasegmental aspects of language contribute more the intelligibility.

1.5. Methodological variables

These variables are related to the specific teaching approach adopted by the teacher or institution. There have been marked differences in the relative emphasis given to pronunciation depending on the language teaching method used. For example, grammar-translation method gives little explicit attention to pronunciation, the audiolingual method places a high emphasis on pronunciation.

2. Applying the variables in the syllabus design

In many English language courses, there is often either an attempt to teach every aspect of pronunciation or to avoid teaching this skill altogether. As stated by Celce-Murcia et al. (2000:325), selecting appropriate items to focus on with a specific group of learners can indeed be a challenge for curriculum designers.

A second syllabus design consideration concerns arrangement of objectives. Whatever is deemed as having the greatest impact on the learner's comprehensibility and fluency should receive the highest priority and weighting in the curriculum, with other high priority items ranked accordingly.

The final consideration in the syllabus design process as viewed by Celce-Murcia et. al. (2000: 328) is presentation of objectives. It refers to the manner in which learners are exposed to new materials. Whether they are taught the phonemic alphabet or whether audio visual aids are used.

V. Evaluation

1. Self-monitoring and correction

Self-monitoring which means the ability of the learners to notice their own inaccuracies in their speech, and self-correction that means the ability to produce more targetlike language upon recognition of a production error (Celce-Murcia et al.348), these features are crucial in the process of developing the learners' pronunciation. Naiman (2008:170) states that:

> "The ability to monitor pronunciation is invaluable. It provides students with the opportunities and the strategies to continue their learning beyond the classroom [….]. They begin to mimic the speech of native speakers whom they hear on the radio, on the television, on the bus, or at work."

Self-monitoring is very important in the sense that the learners cannot correct their mistakes in pronunciation unless they are able to recognize that they are making mistakes.

2. Peer feedback

Peer correction is very beneficial since it helps to "sharpen [the students] own listening skills" (Celce-Murcia et. al. 351). When a learner fails to correct his mistake, the teacher can ask a classmate to do. According to Celce-Murcia et al., working in groups is very helpful in structuring peer feedback. Groups of three or four work better than pairs because there are always at least two students who listen to the speaker and determine whether he pronounces an utterance correctly or not. In pair work there can be disagreement about whether the speaker produces incorrect utterance or the listener heard it incorrectly.

3. Teacher feedback and correction

Obviously, the teacher does not interrupt each speaker every time an error is made. He can call attention to errors on the spot or later. Celce-Murcia et al. (2000: 352), suggest that the most useful feedback comes when the teacher and student listen to a recording and go over the errors together.

Conclusion

Teaching pronunciation has been developed throughout the years. Nowadays, innovative techniques are used to enhance the learners comprehensibility of this important area of the English language. Pronunciation curriculum is adapted with the learners' levels, needs and the teaching purposes.

CHAPTER THREE
Data Analysis

Teachers' questionnaire
Introduction

For the purpose of knowing the reason behind the failure of middle school-pupils in speaking English accurately and learning its pronunciation, a questionnaire is given to English teachers in two middle schools: The Brothers Ramram and Mahmoud Filali in Constantine.

This chapter deals foremost with the answers provided by English teachers in Middle Schools as they have expertise in this domain. The findings of this questionnaire are analysed starting by giving the characteristics of the sample, the description of the questionnaire, and analysing the data. The questionnaire aims at analysing the opinions of the teachers of English towards teaching pronunciation to pupils in Middle Schools in Algeria. Thus, from this questionnaire we can get the right answers to why pupils fail in learning pronunciation in the Algerian Middle Schools.

1. The sample

The sample consists of seven teachers of English from two Middle Schools in Constantine. Algeria: The Brothers Ramram Middle School in Hamma Bouziane and Mahmoud Filali Middle School in Bekira. Three teachers were taken from the former and four from the latter. Each one of the teachers has been teaching English for at least seven years. Their ideas are the result of their experience in teaching English in the Middle School for a long time.

2. The questionnaire

The teachers' questionnaire aims at finding the reason behind the pupils' failure in leaning pronunciation in Middle Schools in Algeria. The questionnaire given to teachers consists of eighteen questions. Three questions are concerned with the experience of the teacher in teaching pupils in Middle Schools.Three questions deal with the English curriculum for third year middle school. Nine questions are devoted to teaching pronunciation in Middle Schools. One question is about how the teachers test the pronunciation of their

pupils and two questions deal with the teachers' feedback on the learners' pronunciation errors.

3. Results

Q01: How long have you been teaching English?

The aim behind this question is to know the degree of expertise among the teachers in the domain of teaching pupils in Middle Schools. The scale of the period of years which have been taught goes from seven to thirty one years in the two Middle Schools.

Q2: Which aspect of the English language is the most important to be taught? And why?

In this question grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation were named and the teachers were asked to tick the appropriate answer, that is to say, the most important aspect that should be taught.

suggestions	N	%
Grammar	04	40%
Vocabulary	01	10%
Pronunciation	05	50%
Total	10	100%

Table7: The aspects of the English language that are most important to be taught.
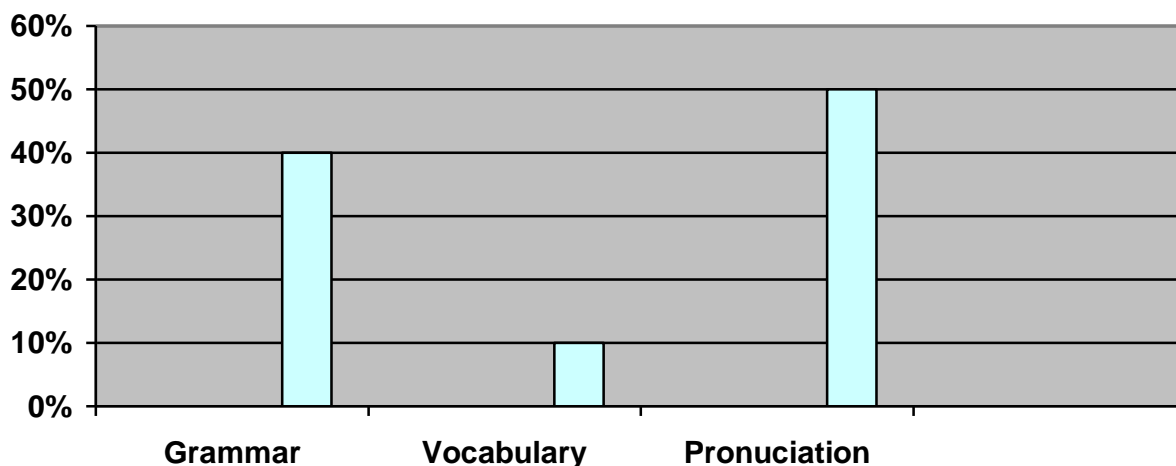

Fig 1: Degree of importance of the aspects of the English language to be taught

The table shows that the most important aspect that should be taught is pronunciation, then comes grammar and finally vocabulary which is represented by the least percentage. In fact, there is only one teacher who claims that Vocabulary is the most important aspect to be taught.

Justifications

The Justifications that are provided by the teachers are the following:

Those who state that pronunciation is the most important aspect to be taught claim that teaching pronunciation helps pupils to speak English accurately. In addition to that, the teachers state that the Algerian pupils do not give too much attention to pronunciation that is why it should be taught.

Teachers who state that grammar is the most important aspect to be taught argue that grammar is the skeleton of any language and pupils cannot ignore it when learning a foreign language.

Only one teacher states that vocabulary is the most important aspect to be taught. He supports his opinion by saying that mastering any language depends on the richness of the vocabulary the pupil has and how he uses it.

Q03: Which one is the most difficult to be taught? grammar, vocabulary or pronunciation?

This question aims at knowing which aspect among the three named above is difficult to be taught. The Teachers are the best ones to answer this question because they have the experience that allows them to do.

Answers	N	%
Grammar	01	14,28%
Vocabulary	00	00%
Pronunciation	06	85,71%
Total	07	100%≈99,99%

Table8: The degree of difficulty of teaching Grammar, Vocabulary and pronunciation
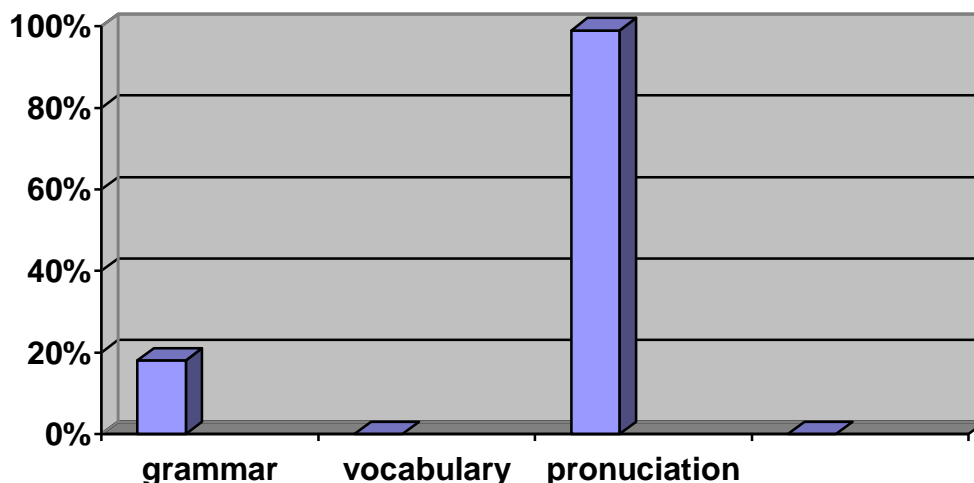
Fig2 The degree of difficulty of teaching Grammar, Vocabulary and pronunciation

The above table shows clearly that pronunciation is considered by the majority of teachers as the most difficult aspect to be taught because there are no fixed rules.

One teacher claims that grammar is difficult to be taught because of some complex features such as the present perfect and the present continuous tense.

Q04: It is better to teach pronunciation to: beginners, intermediate or advanced learners?

It aims at fiding the appropriate level for teaching pronunciation so that the learners get the benefits.

Answers	N	%
Beginners	03	14,85%
Intermediate	04	57,14%
Advanced	00	0%
Total	07	100%≈99,99%

Table9: The appropriate level for teaching pronunciation

There are four teachers who state that the appropriate level for teaching pronunciation is intermediate learners. Whereas three teachers claim that teaching pronunciation should be for beginners .Based on that, we cannot say that beginners should not be taught pronunciation. It is clear that they should learn simple things about pronunciation such as vowels and consonants. Complex things about pronunciation are taught in the following stages.

Q05: Do you think that the English curriculum is appropriate for third- year middle school pupils?

The purpose of this question is to see whether the curriculum goes with the pupils' real level or not

Answers	N	%
Yes	03	42,85%
No	04	57,14%
Total	07	100%≈99,99%

Table10: The appropriateness of the English curriculum for third- year middle school pupils
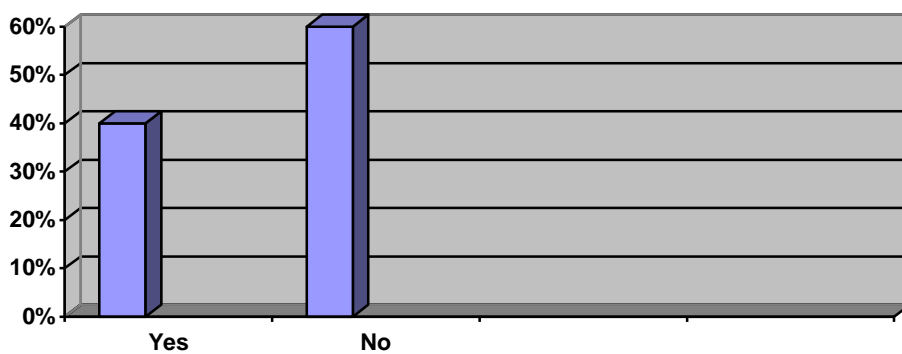

Fig4: The appropriateness of the English curriculum for third- year middle school pupils

Three teachers answered 'yes' because they think that the English curriculum goes with the pupils abilities and there is no problem faced by them concerning it. Four teachers answered 'no'. They gave different reasons for their answer. One reason is that the curriculum is over loaded and it is suggested to slim it down. Another reason is that the curriculum does not go with the pupils' real level. In another word, it is not appropriate for this level and it would be better if it is designed for first-year Secondary School.

Q06: What are the techniques that should be used in teaching pronunciation for young learners?

In this question some techniques were named and the teachers are asked to opt for the appropriate technique.

Answers	N	%
Drills	03	42,85%
Dialogues And Role Plays	04	57,14%
Others	00	0%
Total	07	100%≈99,99%

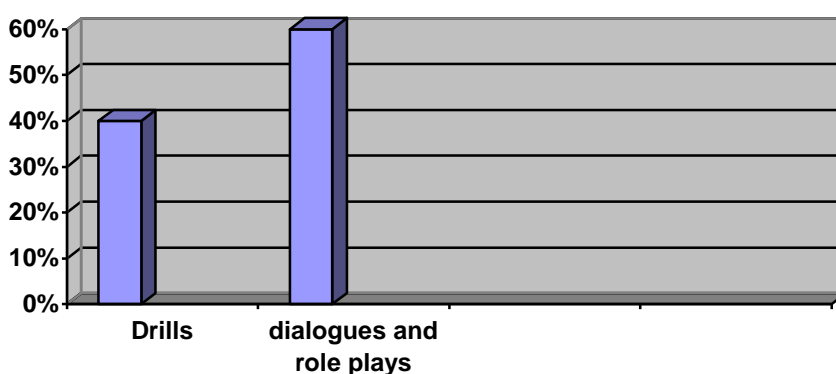**Table 11: The use of techniques in teaching pronunciation**

Fig5: The use of techniques in teaching pronunciation

Three teachers said that drills are the techniques that should be used in teaching pronunciation. The reason behind their choice is that drills are based on repetition which helps

the learners in pronouncing the language accurately. Drills are used generally in teaching vowels and consonants. Four teachers opted for dialogues and role plays because they help the learners in practising the language in a communicative way. Dialogues and role plays are used for teaching supraseg mentals as stated by Naiman (2008:170).

Q07: Which technique do you use and why?

The aim behind this question is to know which technique is used actually by the teacher and why he has chosen to use this technique and to know whether there is a common technique or each teacher uses a specificone according to his pupils.

Suggested answers

Two teachers use drills and claim that in drills the semantic aspect in neglected, that is to say, there is no focus on meaning which make the learners concentrate on pronunciation and try to say the word as it is uttered by the teacher. One teacher uses dialogues because the learners can practise almost every thing through dialogues. They can practise isolated sounds, stress, intonation…ect. Four teachers provided no answer concerning this question.

Q08: Is it necessary to use a language laboratory in teaching pronunciation?

The question is asked in order to know if it is possible to teach pronunciation in the case of not having a language laboratory. In other words, is it true that we cannot teach pronunciation without a laboratory?

Answers	N	%
Yes	06	85,71%
No	01	14,28%
Total	07	100%≈99,99%

Table 12: The necessity of the language laboratory in teaching pronunciation
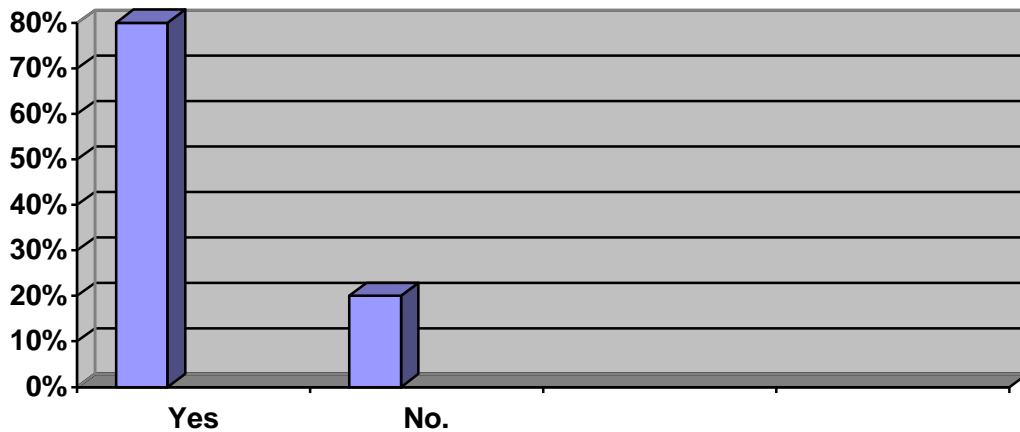
Fig 6: The necessity of the language laboratory in teaching pronunciation

The majority of teachers claim that using a language laboratory is necessary in teaching pronunciation. The reason behind their opinion could be that language laboratories provide a native spoken language which help the teachers too much in teaching pupils.

Only one teacher says that it is not necessary to use a language laboratory. In this case, the teacher will play a very important role because he is the only source the learners refer to.

Q:9-How much time is devoted to phonetic courses per week?

This question is asked to know how much time each teacher gives to teaching pronunciation.

Suggested answers

The majority of teachers give twenty to thirty minutes per week to phonetic courses. Two teachers claim that time devoted to phonetic courses depends on the files. The English book of third year is divided into files, each file has its objectives and goals.

Q:10-Is it enough?

This question was put to see if teachers are satisfied with the amount of time devoted to teaching pronunciation

Answers	N	%
Yes	03	42,85%
No	04	57,14%

Total	07	100%≈99,99%

Table 13: Agreement /disagreement on the sufficiency of time devoted to teaching pronunciation
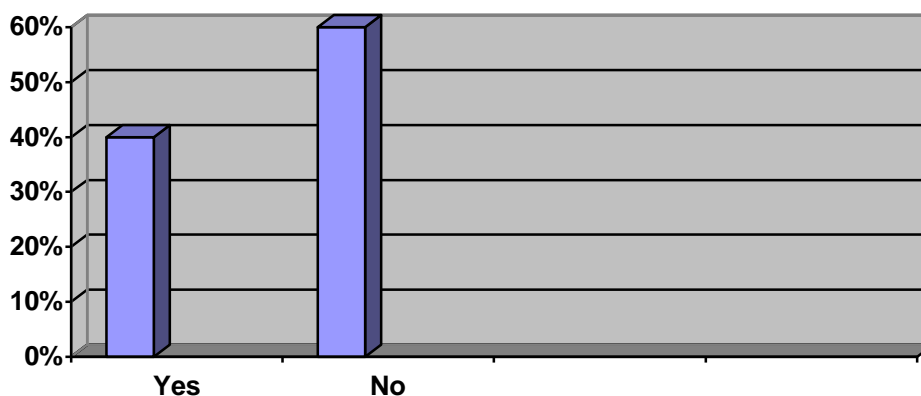

Fig7: Agreement / disagreement on the sufficiency of time devoted to teaching pronunciation

The above table shows that three teachers say that the time devoted to teaching pronunciation is enough though it is little because the learners are beginners, and they do not need a very long time. Moreover, they learn simple things which do not require too much time.

Four teachers say that the time devoted to phonetic courses is not enough. Pupils need time to practice speaking English. They claim that the longer time devoted to teaching pronunciation the better it is for the learners.

Q11-Which aspect of phonetics pupils find difficult?

The purpose of this question is to know the area which is difficult for pupils in learning pronunciation. Teachers tick the appropriate answer : consonants and vowels, stress or intonation.

Answers	N	%
Consonants And Vowels	00	00%
Stress	04	44,44%
Intonation	05	55,55%
Total	09	100%≈99,99%

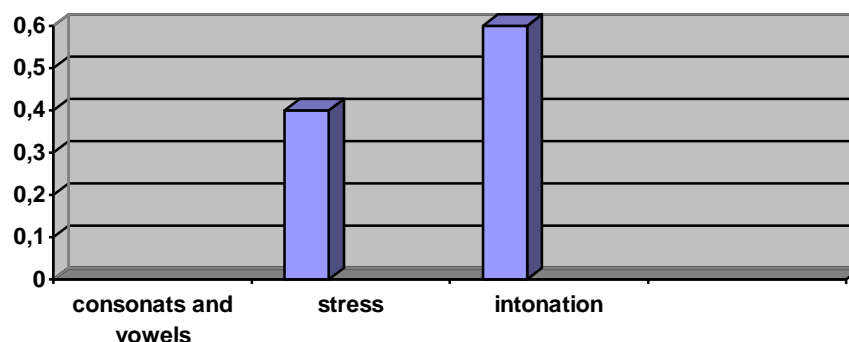**Table14: The phonetic aspects that are difficult to be learnt**

Fig8: The phonetic aspects that are difficult to be learnt

The table shows that pupils do not have difficulties in learning consonants and vowels. Two teachers opt for stress and three teachers for intonation. On the other hand, two teachers say that pupils find difficulties in learning both stress and intonation.

Justifications

The majority of teachers think that pupils find problems within stress and intonation because of the lack of fixed rules. They claim that learners cannot understand why the intonation is rising in one case and falling in another one. Another reason is that pupils find stress and intonation very boring and seem to be lost. The last reason is that there is not enough pactise in using stress and intonation in speaking.

One teacher provides no justification.

Q12 :Is it appropriate to teach intonation for beginners?

The aim behind this question is to know if teaching of intonation for beginners is beneficial or it must be delayed to the following stages

Answers	N	%
Yes	04	57,14%
No	03	42,85%
Total	07	100%≈99,99%

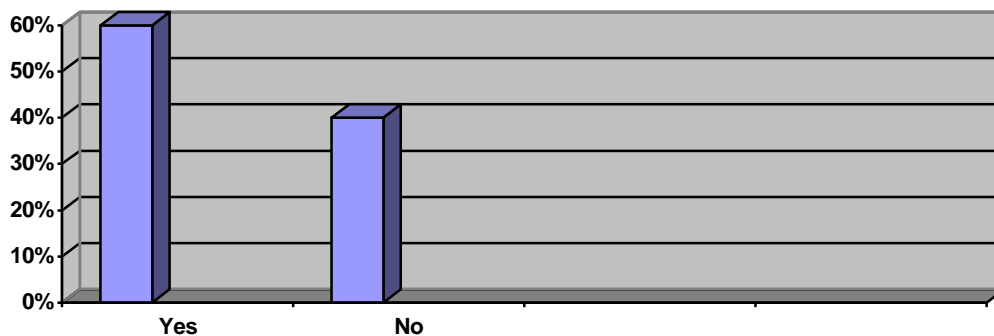**Table15: The appropriateness of teaching intonation for beginners**

Fig 9: The appropriateness of teaching intonation for beginners

The table shows that four teachers support the idea of Naiman (2008:169) who focuses on the teaching of suprasegmentals from the earliest stages. However, three teachers say that intonation should not be taught for beginners. They have to learn just consonants and vowels.

Q13: When you introduce a new word, do you focus much more on its meaning, pronunciation or both?

The aim behind asking this question is more important for the teacher the pupil knows the meaning of a word or pronounces it accurately.

Answers	N	%
Meaning	01	14,28%
Pronunciation	03	42,85%
Both	03	42,85%
Total	07	100%≈99,99%

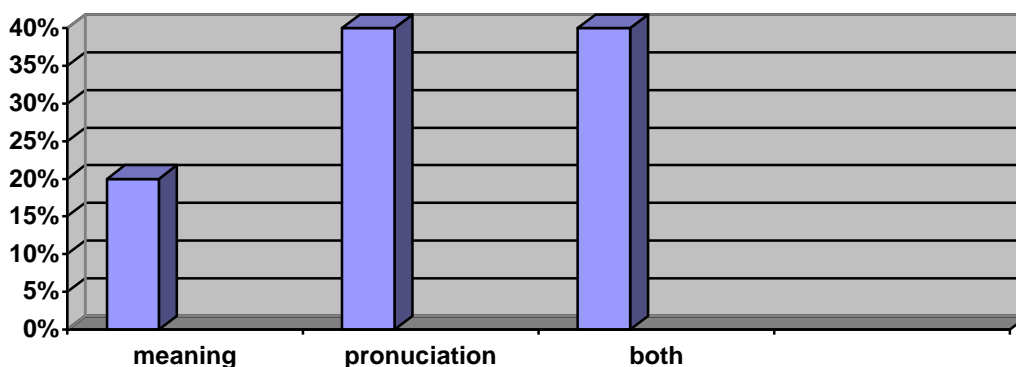**Table16: The important aspect in introducing a new word.**

Fig 10: The important aspect in introducing a new word

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Only one teacher care about meaning without pronunciation. For him, what is important is to know the meaning of the words to enrich one's vocabulary regardless of knowing how to pronounce it.

Three teachers opt for pronunciation and three for both. It means that the six teachers care about teaching the pupils how to pronounce the new words with a focus, of course, on meaning.

Q14: Do you think that the teacher's correction of pupils' pronunciation is useful?

This question was asked for the sake of knowing whether it is always beneficial for the pupils when the teacher corrects their pronunciation or not:

Answers	N	%
Yes	06	85,71%
No	01	14,28%
Total	07	100%≈99,99%

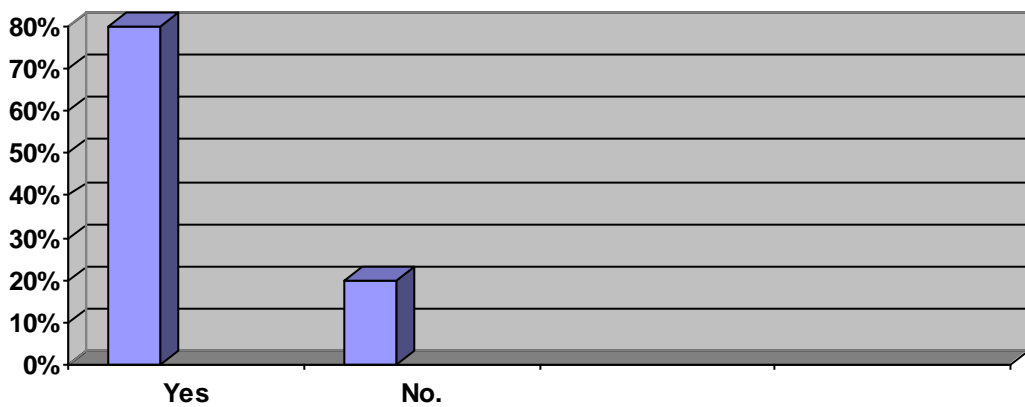**Table17: The usefulness of correcting the pupils' pronunciation**

Fig11 : The usefulness of correcting the pupils' pronunciation

The majority of teachers answer by "yes" , only one teacher opts for 'no'. The reason is that it is not always useful to correct the pupil's pronunciation. Overcorrection may make the

pupils unwilling to speak to avoid being corrected by the teacher. The teacher should know when and how to correct the pupils' pronunciation.

Q15: Do you correct your pupils' pronunciation: always, sometimes, rarely or never?

This question aims at knowing when teachers correct their pupils' pronunciation.

Answers	N	%
Always	03	42,85%
Sometimes	04	57,14%
Rarely	00	0%
Never	00	0%
Total	07	100%≈99,99%

Table18: The frequency of correcting the pupils' pronunciation
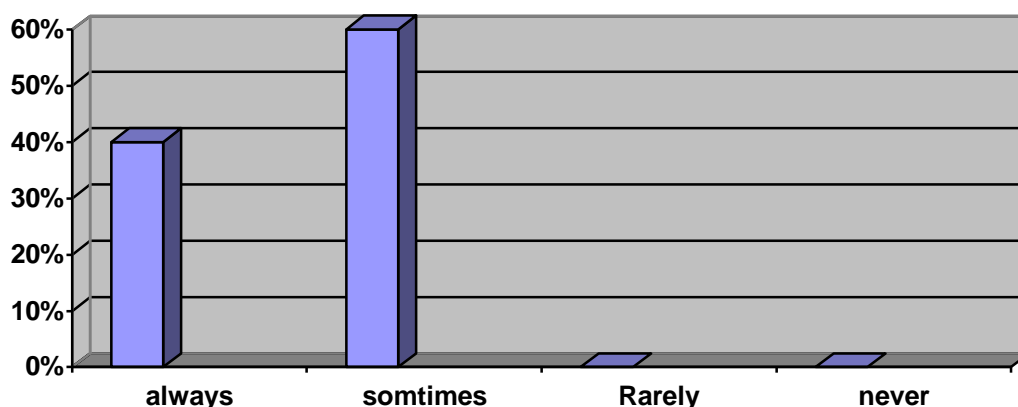
Fig.12: The frequency of correcting the pupils' pronunciation

The table shows that three teachers claim that they always correct the pupils' pronunciation. That is to say, whenever the pupil makes an error, the teacher corrects him. Four teachers say that they sometimes correct their pupils' pronunciation. If the pupils' pronunciation destroys the meaning, it should be corrected. But if it is acceptable there is no need to interfere each time and disturb the pupils.

Q16: How do you test your pupils in pronunciation? Do you focus on the learner's oral production or his written production?

The purpose of this question is to know the best method in testing pronunciation based on the teachers' experience.

Answers	N	%
Oral production	04	57,14%
Written production	03	42,85%
total		100%≈99,99%
	07	

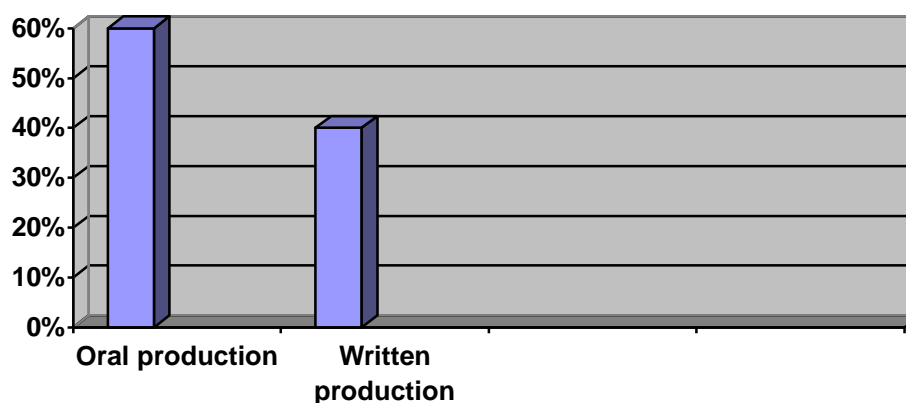**Table19: How the pupils are tested in pronunciation**

Fig.13: how the pupils are tested in pronunciation

Four teachers test their pupils in pronunciation by focusing on their oral production. Three teachers focus on the learner's written production. In fact the two ways are used with each other. Some aspects need to be tested in a written way for example the transcription of vowels and consonants.

Q17:In your opinion, why do pupils fail in pronouncing English accurately?

The purpose of this question is to know the real reasons behind the pupils' failure in pronouncing English. Through their experience, the teachers can diagnose precisely the cause of this problem.

Suggested answers

One reason proposed by the teachers is that pupils hear and use the English language only in classes. They do not speak for enough time so that their pronunciation can be developed.

Another reason is that the learners are not exposed to native speakers. As we have seen in the first chapter the amount of exposure to the native speakers of the language plays a very important role in learning its pronunciation.

One teacher says that the reason behind the failure in pronunciation is that pupils do not read at all in English. Regular reading make pupils familiar with the language and hence develop their pronunciation.

The last reason which proposed by the teachers is that the curriculum in the Algerian educational system does not focus too much on learning pronunciation. It deals much more with writing.

Two teachers did not provide any justification.

Q18: What do you suggest for teaching pronunciation for middle school –pupils?

The aim behind this question is to know the appropriate suggestions that can be given by teachers in order to teach pronunciation in the Middle School.

Teachers suggest that to develop teaching pronunciation, laboratories and recorders should be used, they are very useful in terms of that the pupils listen to native speakers. The oral skills should be developed by using dialogues, listening to songs…etc. Teachers suggest that it would be better if the attention shifts from writing skills to listening and speaking skills. Another teacher suggests that pronunciation should be taught to beginners by introducing simple sounds such as short and long vowels with enough time of practise until they get familiar with the units of the new language, then complex aspects can be introduced. One teacher proposes that it would be better to avoid teaching pronunciation at once in Middle Schools.

4. General discussion

The aim of the teachers' questionnaire is to know the reason or reasons behind the failure of Middle School pupils in speaking English accurately. The analysis of the teachers' answers shows that they are aware of the importance of teaching pronunciation and also its difficulty. The majority of teachers claim that time devoted to teaching pronunciation is not enough and this is what makes the pupils fail in learning pronunciation. The teachers state also that the main reason of the pupils' failure in learning pronunciation is the fact that they hear and speak the English language only in classes. So, pupils should use the language in order to pronounce it correctly.

Conclusion

Teaching pronunciation in middle schools is very important. Thus, the Algerian educational system should give more attention to teach pupils how to speak English accurately. It is clear that using the English language only in classes cannot develop the pupils pronunciation? But if teachers concentrate much more on the oral skills, it will help the learners too much in developing their pronunciation.

CONCLUSION

In this work, the main point is of course to find out why third- year pupils in Middle Schools fail in pronouncing English accurately. Through his research, we have a look on the history of teaching pronunciation, the factors that affect this process and how it is taught nowadays.

The teachers' questionnaire shows that the reason behind the pupils' failure in pronouncing English is that they do not speak the language much enough. The main focus in Middle Schools is on writing; hence pupils learn how to write English more than how to speak it. I suggest that the time devoted to teaching pronunciation should be extended so that the pupils would be given more time to listen to the language and speak it.

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APPENDIX

Teachers' Questionnaire

Dear teachers,

This questionnaire is part of a research work which is about the problems faced by third-year middle school pupils in learning pronunciation. It aims at tapping into your experiences and ideas.

I would be grateful if you could answer the following questions by ticking (√) the appropriate box, or by making a full statement wherever needed.

Thank you for your collaboration.

1- How long have you been teaching English?

……………………………………………….

2- Which aspect of the English language is the most important to be taught?

Grammar ☐   Vocabulary ☐   pronunciation ☐

Why?

………………………………..

……………………………….

3- Which one is the most difficult to be taught?

Grammar ☐   Vocabulary ☐   pronunciation ☐

4- It is better to teach pronunciation to:

Beginners ☐   intermediate ☐   advanced ☐

5- Do you think that the English curriculum is appropriate for third- year middle school?

Yes ☐   no ☐

If no, what do you suggest?

………………………………………

……………………………………….

6- What are the techniques that should be used in teaching pronunciation for young learners?

Drills ☐   dialogues and role plays ☐   others ☐

7- Which technique do you use and why?

………………………………………..

………………………………………….

8- Is it necessary to use a language laboratory in teaching pronunciation?

Yes ☐   no ☐

9-How much time is devoted to phonetic courses per week?

………………………………………….

10-Is it enough?

………………………………………….

11- Which aspect of phonetics pupils find difficult?

Consonant and vowels ☐   stress ☐   intonation ☐

Why?

………………………………………

………………………………………

12- Is it appropriate to teach intonation for beginners?

Yes ☐   no ☐

13- When you introduce a new word, do you focus much more on its:

Meaning ☐   pronunciation ☐

14- Do you think that the teacher's correction of pupils' pronunciation is useful?

Yes ☐   no ☐

15- Do you correct your pupils' pronunciation?

Always ☐   sometimes ☐   rarely ☐   never ☐

16- How do you test your pupils in pronunciation? Do you focus on :

Learner's oral production ☐   learner's written production ☐

17- In your opinion, why do pupils fail in pronouncing English accurately?

………………………………………..

………………………………………….

18- What do you suggest for teaching pronunciation for middle school –pupils?

………………………………………….

………………………………………….