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**Factors Affecting English Accent Acquisition among EFL Learners:
The case of English third year students**

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Declaration:

I hereby declare that this thesis is my own original work, which I have created myself.

All the literature I used is properly quoted and is listed in Bibliography.

I declare that I worked on my final master's dissertation on my own using only cited literary sources, other information and sources in agreement with the disciplinary regulations for the Faculty of Letters and Languages at the University of Jijel and with the regulations and laws of research of the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research in Algeria.

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Jijel:

BETTACHE Nassima

.....

BOULFOUS Zahia

.....

Dedications

There is no way I can express how much I owe to my family for their love, generous spirit, and support through the many years of my education.

I dedicate this work to:

My tender mother for her never ending- love

“Thank you mum”.

My father, I will be always grateful to him for his confidence

in me, love, and for his financial support

“Thank you dad”.

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All my relatives, friends, and classmates.

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In the name of God, Most Merciful, Most compassionate

All the praise is due to God alone, the sustainer of the entire world.

I dedicate this modest work to:

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Abstract

When learners engage in EFL, they seek to attain, more importantly, a native- like accent. Yet, accent is the most challenging aspect of English language for learners, and almost an unrealistic goal to fully achieve. The present study examined the most effective factors on the acquisition of English native- like accent among third year LMD students in Mohammed Seddik Ben Yahia University in Jijel. It also tested the effects of the local dialect of Jijel on that particular process. To test the hypothesis of this study, a questionnaire and recordings were used as research instruments. The results of our study seemed to support the hypothesis that the local dialect of Jijel is an influential factor on the process of English accent acquisition.

Key Words: English native-like accent, English accent acquisition, factors, Jijelian dialect, EFL learners.

List of abbreviations

%	Percentage
&	And
AAVE	American Accent Vernacular English
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
CBA	Competency- Based Approach
CLT	Communicative Language Teaching
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
e.g.	Example
ESL	English as a Second Language
FL	Foreign Language
GA	General American
i.e.	It means
IPA	International Phonetic Alphabet
L1	First Language
L2	Second Language
LMD	License. Master. Doctorate
NNS	Non- Native Speakers
NSs	Native Speakers
Qu.	Question
RP	Received Pronunciation
S. A.	Standard Arabic
TL	Target Language
USA	United States of America

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General Introduction

1. Background of the Study

Language is a means of communication used by human beings. It takes two forms: the spoken form, in which speech is composed of sounds, and the written form, in which meaning is conveyed using graphic symbols. However, speech is prior to writing. In fact, we learn to speak first; and then we proceed with writing since it is the conventional visual representation of speech.

Learning a language means knowing how to use sounds, utterances, and words properly and correctly. One of the general goals in foreign language learning, or the most important one, is to achieve an accent like the native speakers of that language.

As far as English language is concerned, its role as a lingua franca inspires the majority of its non-native speakers to achieve a native-like accent in English language. However, the process of learning a second/a foreign language often met with limited success, especially in connection with the ultimate attainment of the native accent. In fact, researches in the field showed that there exist some constraints that inhibit the ability of a person to master the sound patterns of an additional language.

From our everyday encounters with English learners in our university, we notice that most of them cannot speak English with the complete fluency of a native speaker. Hence, we wish to put the issue of English accent under investigation to know what factors that may impede the acquisition of a native-like accent in English.

2. The Literature Review

An important component in foreign language learning is accent acquisition. Accent plays a significant role in language output as it is perceivable in all oral communication; hence, being an important characteristic feature of our use of language (Parker, 2008, p. 390). However the majority of EFL learners do not master the sound patterns of English with the fluency of a native speaker.

Accent, thus, is one of the most difficult aspects for EFL learners to master. In fact, EFL researchers mentioned some of the important factors that affect, and even hinder, the acquisition of the foreign language native accent.

Odlin (1989) highlighted the powerful influence of first language on the sound system of a second language. In studying cross-linguistic influences of a first language on a second, he suggested that attention needed to be paid to both phonetic and phonemic differences (as cited in Nunan, 1991, p. 101).

Moore (2001) carried out an empirical study of 2 groups of adult German learners of English at a private language institute in Frankfurt, with one group receiving pronunciation instruction and the control group receiving no instruction. The results showed that instruction did have a beneficial effect on the pronunciation of the experimental group (p. i).

The results obtained from Tominaga's study (2009) showed that formal instruction at school did not contribute to learners' acquisition of pronunciation. In addition, external stimuli such as films and music was considered as strong tools for having the students motivated and interested in learning English pronunciation (p. 136).

Abu-Rabia and Iliyan (2011) investigated the factors that may affect native accent acquisition in a second language. Participants in their study were 50 Russians who immigrated to Israel. Their age on arrival was 5 to 25 years. They were asked to fill out a questionnaire, read aloud a test in Hebrew, and speak spontaneously on any topic they chose. Three native Hebrew speakers judged the last two parts of the questionnaire. The results indicated that age of arrival in the host country was the strongest predictor of native accent acquisition whereas level of exposure to the native language proved not to be a good predictor (p. 167).

Kassaian (2011) tested the effect of age and gender in English phonetic perception and production. In his study, there were 60 participants divided in two groups of thirty children and adults, including fifteen males and females each. Both groups participated in tests of discrimination and production of English sounds. The findings of this study revealed that age is not a significant factor in learning the English sounds. Moreover, gender was not found to be an influential factor in this study (p. 374).

Marzá's study (2014) showed that when the students felt comfortable, encouraged to improve, and motivated in a pronunciation class, this positively affect their learning process and eagerness (p. 271).

Several researches on learners' ultimate attainment of the foreign language phonology revealed the complexity of that particular aspect, and the difficulties that EFL learners may encounter as they attempt to pass for the native speakers. This study is designed to obtain a better understanding of the issue of accent, more precisely; it discusses the most effective factors of English accent acquisition.

3. Statement of the Problem

Accent is an important feature in language use, but an aspect that foreign language learners sometimes may not feel comfortable with. In fact, researchers on the field of second language acquisition claimed that there is no full mastery of the foreign/second language as far as accent is concerned because of some effective factors. In the present study, we investigate what are the possible factors that influence foreign language native accent acquisition. We also intend to explore whether the local dialect of Jijel effects English accent acquisition among third year LMD students from the department of English in the University of Mohammad Seddik Ben Yahia.

4. The Purpose of the Study

This research aims to identify some factors which markedly restrict the learners' ability to acquire an English native-like accent. It also investigates whether the local dialect of Jijel has impacts on English accent acquisition.

5. Research Questions and Hypothesis:

The present study aims at investigating the following questions:

- What do third year LMD English students think about English accent acquisition?
- Do they encounter difficulties in acquiring English accent?
- What are the major factors that hinder the acquisition of English native-like accent among third year LMD students?
- Does the local dialect of Jijel effect the acquisition of English native-like accent among third year LMD students in Mohammed Seddik Ben Yahia University?

We assume that the local dialect of Jijel is among the influential factors on English accent acquisition that may affect native-like accent acquisition among EFL third year LMD students.

6. Means of Research

In order to test our hypothesis, obtain the information required from our subjects, and fit the objectives of our present research we will be using two main tools: a questionnaire designed for third year LMD students; the second tool is tape recordings.

7. The Significance of the Study

This study will be of value to all those involved in the teaching/ learning process, especially teachers and learners of English. Through this study, we aim to draw both teachers and learners' attention not to using native accent as the yardstick for intelligibility since it is considered as a difficult, and almost impossible, goal for EFL learners to achieve, but to use it as a model that may offer remarkable practical functions for the sake of developing innovative techniques to improve pronunciation teaching and as a result, English language teaching in its entirety.

8. The Structure of the Study

The present study consists of three main chapters. The first chapter outlines a synthesized and historical review of English pronunciation; its definition and character, its instruction, its role in EFL learning, the nature of English acquisition process, and the most effective factors on this process.

The second chapter deals with general issues on the English accent. It provides a definition of English accent, its compositions and features, an in depth discussion of the nature of English accent acquisition including the influential factors on this process, the issue of foreign accent, and problems encountered in English accent acquisition process. The third chapter deals with data analysis; it contains a detailed analysis of the learners' questionnaire and recordings.

Chapter One: Overview of English Pronunciation and its Acquisition

Introduction

In the process of communication, pronunciation has a crucial role since successful communication cannot take place without correct pronunciation. Moreover, pronunciation can create good or bad impression about the quality of a person's language ability. A speaker who has acceptable pronunciation will be clearly understood and his language is pleasant to listen to by his interlocutors. Conversely, poor and unintelligible pronunciation will make unpleasant and misunderstanding for both speakers and listeners. In almost all cases, pronunciation proves to be a major means by which a message can be transmitted clearly.

In this chapter, we will be mainly discussing some details about English pronunciation, namely, its definition and character, a description of English phonetics and phonology, the features of English pronunciation, teaching English pronunciation, the role of EFL pronunciation, and the nature of English pronunciation acquisition process including the factors that affect this process.

1.1. Definition of Pronunciation

Pronunciation has been defined by Richards and Schmidt (2002) as “the way a certain sound or sounds are produced. Unlike articulation which refers to the actual production of speech sounds in the mouth, pronunciation stresses more the way sounds are perceived by the hearer” (p. 429).

According to McArthur and McArthur (1982), the pronunciation of a language is “(a) the act or result of producing sounds of speech, including articulation, intonation, and rhythm, and (b) the sound system of a language” (as cited in Al-Taee, 2005, p. 1).

Pronunciation, hence, is the manner in which a word or a language is spoken. It includes a collection of all those aspects of speech which smooth an intelligible flow of speech, including the individual segments (i.e. vowels and consonants), in addition to other unique features beyond the level of the individual sounds, such as intonation, stress, timing, rhythm...etc. (usually they are referred to as suprasegmental features).

1.2. The Character of English Pronunciation

Due to a series of historical events, English was promoted worldwide and became the first language in many countries around the world. As a result, many varieties (or accents) of English emerged e.g. British, Irish, Scottish, American, Canadian, Australian, etc.

From the many different accents of English, two standard varieties are accepted and adopted in most English language classes: British English which is spoken in Britain, and American English which is spoken in the USA. EFL teachers usually perform the teaching task by using these two models (or accents). However, they are taught at different educational and academic institutions as completely different varieties since they have occasional differences in pronunciation and in other areas (Rashid, 2011, p. 61).

The standard pronunciation, or accent, of England is referred to as “Received Pronunciation” (RP). “RP” is usually spoken by the English Royal Family and by most announcers and newsreaders on BBC and British independent television broadcasting channels. Moreover, “RP” is the accent that is widely used in teaching ESL or EFL around the world (Roach, 2009, p. 14), and it is the target for pronunciation for many learners because of its traditional status (Kelly, 2000, p. 15).

On the other hand, General American (GA) is used in the US Northern, Mid-Western, and Mid Coast areas. Like RP, it is associated with the accent mostly used in broadcasting that is why it is sometimes called 'Network accent'. "GA" is also used in academic and educational settings in many areas around the world (Rashid, 2011, p. 61).

EFL teaching and learning are usually performed by the use of standardized English accents, particularly RP and GA. In the case of Algeria, the class norm is mostly RP.

1.3. Description of English Phonetics and Phonology

The study of pronunciation consists of two main fields, namely phonetics and phonology. Phonetics is the scientific study of speech sounds (Kelly, 2000, p. 9; Roach, 2001, p. 5; Hayes, 2009, p. 1). It deals with the speech sounds in terms of production, description, and representation by written symbols. This representation is usually referred to as the phonetic transcription, and it is adopted by a universal system known as the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA). This system aims at the accurate representation of any sequence of speech sounds of any language, and attempts to facilitate the process of language learning such as the English language whose writing system is not always in accordance with its pronunciation (Roach, 2001, p. 5).

Phonetics is also concerned with what organs of the body are used in speaking, how these organs function to produce speech, how speech is transmitted from the speaker to the listener, how it is received by the listener's ears, and how it is transmitted to and interpreted by the listener's brain (Roach, 2001, p. 7).

Based on Hayes (2009), a phonetician usually studies speech sounds from three viewpoints:

- **Articulation:** how the parts of the body which are used in speaking (i.e. the vocal tract) produce speech sounds.
- **Acoustics:** how the speech sounds are transmitted through the air from the speaker to the hearer.
- **Perception:** how speech is received by the ears, how it is transmitted to the brain, and how it is decoded back into the sounds originally intended by the speaker (p. 1).

Phonology, on the other hand, is “the study of the distinctive sound units of a language, the patterns they form, and the rules which regulate their use” (Roach, 2001, p. 111). Its goal is to understand the unconscious rules that the speaker uses to understand and control the sounds of his/her language (Hayes, 2009, p. 1). In other words, phonology attempts to explain what/and how rules are used by a speaker to organize and to combine different speech sounds (i.e. phonemes) to each other in order to form meaningful words and then meaningful sentences, and what rules he uses to recognize these meaningful words and sentences.

Phonological knowledge, or rules, tell(s) a speaker what sounds can or cannot appear at the beginning, at the middle, or at the end of a word; what combinations of sounds are expected within a word, a syllable, or an utterance; and what sounds or combinations of sounds are not possible at all in his/her language (Fromkin, Rodman, and Hyams, 2003, p. 274). For example, a native speaker of English knows that the combination of the sounds **/pt/** cannot occur at the beginning but at the end of a word, and the combination of the sounds **/fprm/** is impossible in the English language. However, these combinations would be unexceptional in other languages. So,

whereas phonetics deals with the physical nature of speech, and how it is made; phonology describes the way these sounds function to convey meaning within a given language.

To conclude, because of the lack of a one-to-one correspondence between the English spelling and sounds, it is particularly important to learn to think of English pronunciation in terms of phonemes rather than letters of the alphabet (Roach, 1991, p. 3). Hence, only by studying both the English phonetics and phonology of English it is possible to acquire a full understanding of the use of sounds in English speech (p. 43).

1.4. The Features of English Pronunciation

A broad definition of pronunciation includes segmental and suprasegmental features, as shown in the figure below. A segmental aspect is “any linguistic unit in a sequence which may be isolated from the rest of the sequence e.g. vowels and consonants” (Richards and Schmidt, 2002, p. 473). Suprasegmentals, on the other hand, are “units which extend over more than one sound in an utterance”, e.g. stress, intonation, rhythm (p. 530).

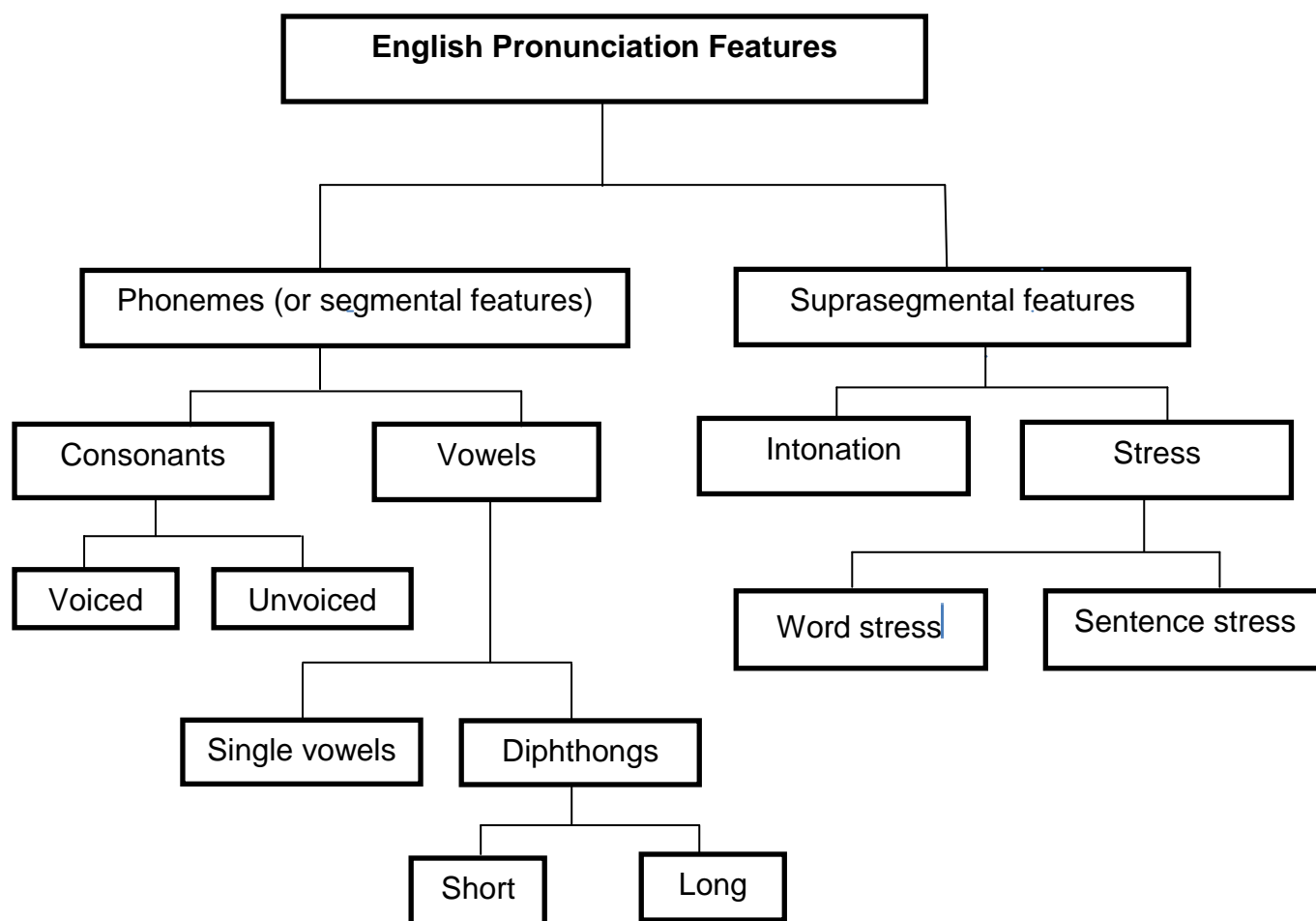


Figure.1: Features of English Pronunciation according to Kelly (2000, p. 1).

The main emphasis along this research falls only on some aspect of connected speech, and the most important suprasegmental features in English since they are considered “a feature of the entire utterance rather than of any individual sound” (Todd, 1987, p. 23), but more importantly because, according to Munro and Derwing (1999), they appear to affect intelligibility more than do single sounds (i.e. vowels and consonants)(as cited in Gilakjani and Ahmadi, 2011, p. 76). Furthermore, second language learners may face difficulties in learning and hence acquiring these unique features that surpass the individual sounds.

Although suprasegmental features are separated here from the single sounds, it is important to remember that they work in combination when we speak, and are therefore usually best learned as an integral part of spoken language.

1.4.1. Strong and Weak Forms of Words

Weak and strong forms are usually applied to function words i.e. words that are necessary to construct a sentence, yet, they do not communicate a large quantity of information such as: pronouns, prepositions, articles, conjunctions, and auxiliaries. All the words which belong to the category of function words have in certain circumstances strong forms, but they are more frequently pronounced in their weak forms.

These function words have strong forms when:

- they are spoken alone (e.g. **the**, **at**, **an**),
- they are stressed (e.g. “ this train is not coming **from** London; it’s going **to** London”),
- they are quoted (e.g. “how do you spell the word ‘**than**’?”),
- they are contrasted (e.g. ‘for’ in “there are arguments **for** and against”),
- they are final in a sentence (e.g. “what are you getting **at**?”) (Roach, 2000, pp. 102-103).

However, according to O’Connor (1980), usually these words are not pronounced alone since they have little semantic meaning of their own, and usually they are not stressed; but rather, they occur in contexts in relating content words to one another (p. 92).

In connected speech, these function words are distinguished by the replacement of full vowels with the weak vowels (e.g. **/bi:/** may be pronounced **/bi/** in contexts), and sometimes by eliminating the vowels at all (e.g. **of** may become **/f/** in 'of course'), and sometimes one or more consonants are dropped or changed (e.g. **/hiz/** becomes **/iz/**; here, **/h/** is dropped, but if it occurs at the beginning of the sentence, it will never be omitted). Weak forms are usually pronounced with the schwa (Katalin, 2006, pp. 102-103), and they are pronounced more quickly and at a lower volume in comparison to the strong forms.

Usually, foreigners tend to use the strong forms more than the weak forms of words, yet they are well-understood by other speakers of English. However, it is important for those foreigners to learn how and when to use weak forms because the extensive use of strong forms makes them sound unnatural and foreign. Another reason is to help English learners to understand native speech (Roach, 1991, p. 102).

1.4.2. Contractions and Elision

According to Kelly (2000), contractions occur "where two words combine to the extent that the two are pronounced as one word or one syllable" (p.113) e.g. **could not** is shortened to **couldn't**. The contraction form is used in spoken language as in informal writing where the apostrophe takes the place of the phoneme we do not pronounce e.g. **we are** becomes **we're**.

Elision is a process where one or more phonemes (sounds) are disappeared within a word or a phrase, usually in rapid connected speech, in order to simplify the pronunciation (Kelly, 2000, p. 110; Roach, 2001, p. 61). For example, in the utterance "I give **him** my car" speakers would drop the **/h/** in **him** and say **/givim/**.

1.4.3. Assimilation

In linking consonants to consonants, there is a change in the place of articulation of the first consonants. This is known as assimilation because the first consonant becomes more like to the second one. Assimilation, hence, is the process by which a sound is changed to become more similar to, or even identical with, a neighbouring sound (Roach, 2001, p. 5).

Assimilation can be:

- Progressive i.e. when a sound changes to match the preceding sound e.g. /s/ of plurals is pronounced with a voiced /z/ after a voiced consonant as in: 'dogs', but with voiceless/s/ after a voiceless consonant as is 'cats'.
- Regressive i.e. when the sound changes to match the following sound e.g. /d/ is pronounced /b/ before /m/ as in: 'good morning' (Roach, 2001, p. 54).
- Coalescence assimilation i.e. when two consonants influence each other and produce a new consonant as in "could you help me?" /d/+/j/= /dʒ/ (Kelly, 2000, p. 110).

The common types of assimilation are:

- Assimilation of place: this refers to changes in the place of articulation of a segment (usually the consonants /t, d, n/). When one of these consonants is followed by a word starts by a consonant whose place of articulation is different, this consonant (/t/or/d/or/n/) is likely to change so that it has the same place of articulation.

e.g.: white **p**aper (/t/changes to /p/before/p/),
grand **m**aster (/d/changes to /b/before/m/),
question **m**ark (/n/changes to /m/before/m/).

- Assimilation of manner: in this type, one sound changes the manner of its articulation to become similar in manner to a neighbouring sound. An English example is: “get **s**ome of that **s**oup” in a rapid pronunciation could be “gessome of thas soup”.
- Assimilation of voicing: when a voiced segment becomes voiceless as a consequence of being adjacent to a voiceless segment; and conversely, when a voiceless segment may become voiced e.g. in “I have **t**o go”, the sound **/v/** becomes **/f/** (Roach, 2001, pp. 54-55).

1.4.4. Liaison

Liaison, as a French loan word, refers to the English word “linking” or “joining together” sounds. Bybee (2001) provided the following definition of ‘liaison’: “the appearance of a word-final consonant before a vowel-initial word in words that in other contexts end in a vowel” (as cited in Howard, 2000, p. 148). In other words, in real connected speech, when a word ends by a vowel, and it is followed by another word starts by a vowel, and then a consonant is introduced to link these two vowels.

In English, speakers often link these vowels by:

- The linking **/r/** as in: “the ‘**car/r**’is in the garage”,
- The intrusive **/r/** as in: “the ‘idea **/r/of**’ Marry”,
- The linking **/j/** as in: ‘I **/j/**agree’,
- The linking **/w/** as in: ‘who**/w/**is?’ (Kelly, 2000, pp. 111-112).

1.4.5. Stress

Roach (2001) defined stress as a property of syllables which makes them stand out more noticeable than others (p. 113). On the other hand, Hayes (2009) defined stress as the relative emphasis or power that may be given to certain syllables (p. 271). Hence, stress can be defined as a strong muscular effort both respiratory and articulatory with which we pronounce a syllable or a word, and which we can feel in relation with some syllables as opposed to others.

Based on Roach (1991), stress can be studied from two points of view: production and perception. The production of stressed syllable is said to imply a greater muscular energy than the production of unstressed syllable(s). From the perceptive point of view, stressed syllables are more prominent than unstressed syllables. Prominent or stressed syllables are louder, longer, produced with greater effort than unstressed syllables, and sometimes different in vowel quality (i.e. the vowel in the stressed syllable is different from other vowels within the word) (p. 85).

In English, there are three levels of stress: primary stress, secondary stress, and unstressed. For example, in the word ('indicator) the first syllable is the most strongly stressed (primary stress), the third syllable is the next most strongly stressed (secondary stress), and the second and fourth syllables are weakly stressed (or they are unstressed) (Roach, 2009, p. 86). Stress is very important because its position can change the meaning or the function of the word (Rogers, 2000, p. 36).

In order to decide on stress placement, it is necessary to make use of some or all the following information:

- Whether the word is morphologically simple, or whether it is complex as a result either of containing one or more affixes (suffixes and prefixes), or of being a compound word.

- The grammatical category to which the word belongs (noun, verb, etc.).
- The number of syllables in the word.
- The phonological structure of those syllables (Roach, 2009, p. 87).

1.4.6. Intonation

For a better understanding of intonation, we should know first what the term 'pitch' stands for. In people's speech, there are higher or lower sounds or groups of sounds than others. This rising or falling of the voice is called 'pitch' (Richards and Schmidt, 2002, p. 402). A slow speed of the vocal folds movements is associated by a low pitch, a fast speed by higher pitch (Collinge, 1990, p. 13). Intonation, hence, is «the way the voice goes up and down in pitch when we are speaking» (Kelly, 2000, p. 86). Intonation is a property of longer stretches of speech rather than of individual words (Roach, 2001, p. 110).

The importance of intonation was stated as follows:

- The use of different intonation patterns can determine different functions of utterances such as statement and question. In addition intonation can determine the meaning of utterances.
- Intonation also helps listeners to understand speakers' attitudes to what they are saying. For instance, the sentence "I think it is time to go now" can be said in three different ways; happily, angrily, or sadly.
- Furthermore, intonation is an essential component of the context in which it is used i.e. it helps in the indication of what is the shared knowledge between speakers and hearers, and what are the new information to communicate (Kelly, 2000, pp. 86-87; Roach, 2001, pp. 33-35).

In conclusion, to understand native-speakers talk and to be understood by their interlocutors, English learners need to be aware of all these suprasegmentals and aspects of connected speech and many others, in addition to the individual sounds in learning English pronunciation. When they are aware of the presence of these features, they will be aware of how the sound system in English works; hence they will pay more attention to them and this will improve their English pronunciation gradually.

1.5. Pronunciation Instruction

Pronunciation plays a significant role in daily communication. In spite of its importance, pronunciation has long been the neglected aspect in second/foreign language teaching. However, in recent years, there has been an ever increasing interest in second/foreign language pronunciation because of its perceived importance in oral communication.

1.5.1. The History of Teaching Pronunciation

Throughout the twentieth century, different methods were used in foreign language teaching, such as the Grammar Translation Method in which the teaching of pronunciation was largely irrelevant, and received little, and almost any, attention in relation to the other aspects i.e. grammar and vocabulary.

Later, the goal of language teaching shifted from developing the learner's linguistic competence to promoting his ability to use language communicatively. Hence, when pronunciation became one of the necessary components of oral communication, the new communicative approaches rejected the old practices in teaching pronunciation which focused on teaching the segmental aspects (i.e.

individual vowels and consonants) since they were incompatible with teaching language as communication. More emphasis, rather, was given to teaching suprasegmental features of language (e.g. stress, intonation, rhythm, etc.). McNerney and Mendelson (1992) expressed this position very clearly as quoted in Celce-Murcia, Brinton, and Goodwin (1996):

... a short term pronunciation course should focus first and foremost on suprasegmentals as they have the greatest impact on the comprehensibility of the learners' English. We have found that giving priority to the suprasegmental aspects of English not only improves learners' comprehensibility but is also less frustrating for students because greater change can be affected in a short time (p. 10).

Then, an approach that put all aspects of English pronunciation into the perspective of language as communication was adopted in the field of foreign language teaching (Brown, 2000, p. 285). This issue was revealed by Celce-Murcia, Brinton, and Goodwin (1996) as explained in the following passage:

Today's pronunciation curriculum thus seeks to identify the most important aspects of both the segmentals and suprasegmentals, and integrate them appropriately in courses that meet the needs of any given group of learners. In addition to segmental and suprasegmental features of English; there is also the issue of voice quality setting; that is, each language has certain stereotypical

features such as pitch level, vowel space, neutral tongue positions, and degree of muscular activity that contribute to the overall sounds quality or “accent” associated with that language (p. 10).

1.5.2. Methods of Teaching Pronunciation

As an important factor in EFL learning, several methods have been used and implemented in both teaching and learning of pronunciation. Accordingly, Celce-Murcia, Brinton, and Goodwin (1996) described some of these methods as follows (pp. 2-7).

1.5.2.1. The Direct Method

In the direct method, “pronunciation should be worked on right from the beginning of language instruction” (Larsen-Freeman and Anderson, 2011, p. 29). It is taught through intuition and imitation; students imitate a model which is the teacher or a recording, and do their best to approximate the model through imitation and repetition.

1.5.2.2. The Reform Movement

This movement was influenced by some phoneticians as Henry Sweet, Wilhelm Viëtor, and Paul Passy who contributed to the teaching of pronunciation in the 1890s. They formed the International Phonetic Association, and then developed the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA). During this period, teachers were focusing on teaching the spoken form of the language; hence, they had to have solid training in

phonetics. Then, learners, on their side, are provided by such phonetic training to establish good speech habits.

1.5.2.3. The Audio-Lingual Method

In this method, pronunciation is very important, and it is taught just from the beginning. The major characteristic of this method is a great deal of oral activity with pronunciation and pattern drills. As in the direct method, the teacher models a sound, a word, or an utterance and the students imitate or repeat.

The teacher also introduces information from phonetics, such as visual transcription system or charts that demonstrate the articulation of sounds. In addition, the teacher often uses the technique of “minimal pair drill”. These drills are based on using pairs of words that differ in only one sound, for example, ‘ship/sheep’. Students are first asked to perceive the difference between the two words, and later to be able to utter them.

1.5.2.4. The Community Language Learning

This approach was developed by Charles A. Curran (1976) for both teaching and learning foreign languages. A typical technique in this method is recording student’s speech (be it isolated words, simple sentences, or complete conversations). Usually, the teacher stands behind one of the students with hand on his shoulder. The student is asked to say a word or a sentence in his mother tongue he wants to be able to say it in the target language. After producing the word or the sentence, the teacher translates what the student says into the target language, and then the student repeats it once and twice until he can produce it fluently. Then the words or sentences are recorded on tape with only the target language. After recording them,

they are played back and the students match the new target language with the word-for-word translation provided by the teacher.

1.5.2.5. The Recent Naturalistic Approaches

In the naturalistic methods, such as Asher's (1977) Total Physical Response and Terrell's (1983) Natural Approach, pronunciation was taught explicitly i.e. there is a period in the process of foreign language teaching devoted exclusively to listening at the expense of speaking which was delayed until later.

This exclusive and dense focus on listening gives the learners the chance to internalize and perceive the sound systems of the target language. Hence, when the learners practice speaking later on, their pronunciation is supposed to be markedly improved.

1.5.2.6. The Competency- Based Approach (CBA)

In early centuries, grammar and vocabulary were the dominant aspects concerning foreign language teaching at the expense of pronunciation which has been marginalized within the field. However, current approaches such as the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and the Competency-Based Approach (CBA) emphasize the use of language in context, and this gives more significance, generally, to oral skills and to pronunciation in particular as it is perceived as “a key to gaining full communicative competence”(Brown, 2000, p. 283).

Consequently, this focus on language as a means of communication called urgently for a threshold level of pronunciation (Hinofotis and Bailey, 1980), especially for NNSs to be intelligible in their communication; if they have a level of pronunciation beneath this threshold, they will be unable to communicate regardless of how good

they are at mastering grammar and vocabulary (as cited in Celce-Murcia, Brinton, and Goodwin, 1996, p. 7).

In the Competency-Based Approach, language is taught in relation to the social context in which it is used (Richards and Rodgers, 201, p. 148). Within this approach, pronunciation has the necessary space to be taught either separately or by integrating it in other aspects of language.

Therefore, learners need to listen to authentic sounds in order to be expected to produce good pronunciation in real life interactions. Consequently, with the advancement of technology, language laboratories become highly recommended as they help learners to get access into tape recorders in order to improve production and be able to record conversations. This approach, thus, is the richest one in terms of techniques as it proposes a set of varied teaching recourses for teachers and learning experiences for learners which enable both teachers and learners to emphasize more on developing the oral skills in students learning, and as a result, pronunciation is effectively dealt with.

1.6. The Role of Pronunciation in EFL Learning

The international spread of English as a lingua franca makes it an urgent necessity for the majority of the world's population to learn it; either as a second or as a foreign language. In fact, most of English speakers today are NNSs; they use English as a means to facilitate a constant communication with other NNSs and with those for them English is the mother tongue. If for their communication to be effective, it is considered essential for those NNSs to speak English in a way that is acceptable to their interlocutors. Hence, pronunciation becomes an indispensable

requirement in EFL learning as it is considered a crucial ingredient of oral communication.

Being able to speak acceptable English in today's global society is helpful. Thus, when a speaker has a proper pronunciation, he will be easily understood by other people. However, if his pronunciation is full of wrong sounds when making English words, and full of wrong prosodic features when making English sentences, others cannot understand him, or they would understand him hardly.

In this respect, Fraser (2000a) argued that "with good pronunciation, a speaker is intelligible despite other errors; with poor pronunciation, understanding a speaker will be very difficult, despite accuracy in other areas" (as cited in Gilakjani, 2011, p. 2).

Having established that proper and intelligible English pronunciation is one of the necessary components of oral communication (Celce-Murcia, Brinton, Goodwin, 1996, p. 8), both the teacher's and learner's roles are very important in ensuring a successful pronunciation learning process.

1.6.1. The Teacher's Role in Teaching EFL Pronunciation

In class, the teacher is the only source of the foreign language. He is, then, a model to his students; they often mimic his pronunciation. Hence, the teacher is responsible in selecting the kind of activities and exercises that are helpful for his students, and in raising their awareness towards the importance of such an aspect.

English teachers have to introduce the different English pronunciation models, and to explain how English is spoken in the accent normally chosen as the standard for people learning the English spoken by its natives (Roach, 2009, p. 12) to their students; then, they can approximate the acceptable threshold level of pronunciation;

thus, they can develop their pronunciation sufficiently to permit effective communication with native speakers (NSs) and with NNSs.

In addition, English phonetics and phonology should be emphasized in English language classes mainly because of the confusing nature of English spelling, and its disagreement with English pronunciation (Roach, 1991, p. 3). This lack of a one-to-one correspondence between spelling and pronunciation in English may present learners with many problems (Kelly, 2000, p. 7). For instance, as stated by Wong (1993), some learners often face problems or confusion of spelling about which vowels (letters) to write in shape, cat last, and shortage (as cited in Gilakjani, 2011, p. 6); or how to represent the English sound /f/; either by the letters **f**, **ph**, or **gh**.

Furthermore, pronunciation features, segmentals and suprasegmentals, should also be introduced in combination in any English pronunciation course, when training learners to use language communicatively because, for example, when L2 learners cannot distinguish between short and long vowels, they tend to confuse these pairs in comprehension and speaking (Marzá, 2014, p. 263). Moreover, their inability to distinguish between stress rules and intonation patterns in yes/no questions can influence their oral communication negatively (Celce-Murcia, Brinton, and Goodwin, 1996, p. 10).

1.6.2. The Learner's Role in Learning EFL Pronunciation

Many EFL learners believe that the aim of learning English pronunciation is to achieve a perfect native- like pronunciation (Brown, 2000, p. 284), and to get rid of their foreign accents if for their speech to be understood, and to be proficient in sending and receiving messages in English. However, this goal is difficult, and almost impossible, to achieve. Therefore, another realistic goal EFL learners should focus

on, to establish successful communication, is intelligible pronunciation which is normally close to the standard, easy to understand, and pleasant to listen to.

The role of the learners is not only responding to their teachers but also taking actions toward their own learning as well as their improvement. They should take some of the responsibility in their pronunciation learning of the English language; they should be aware of the aspects of pronunciation that may impede the intelligibility as proposed by Scarcella and Oxford (1994):

Learners can indeed acquire intelligible pronunciation in the second language when they become active participants in their own learning and the teacher supports their efforts by employing a wealth of techniques to aid students in their efforts to improve their pronunciation (as cited in Mourad, nd, p. 46).

In the classroom, the learner has to do his best to exploit all the opportunities under his disposal, for example, paying attention to the teacher's instructions, asking for clarification when facing ambiguity, taking notes, collaborating with classmates, ... etc. Outside the classroom, each learner is responsible for his / her own progress. In fact, with the availability of the new technological means, learners have more chances to be exposed to the target language directly, and to practice it extensively with both NSs and NNSs so that they can expand the scope of pronunciation learning, and then develop the required threshold level of pronunciation.

In short, learners should take an active role in the learning process. Thus, the responsibility and the awareness of learners will help the teacher to plan lessons and

design activities successfully, so this will help learners in developing intelligible pronunciation.

To summarize, intelligible pronunciation, and not necessarily native-like accent, is a key aspect in the development of good oral communication skills. It is important for teachers to raise the learners' awareness of: the different varieties of English pronunciation, and how it is spoken by its native speakers, the importance of English phonetics and phonology, and the most important segmental and suprasegmental features of pronunciation to help them improve their overall communication ability within today's global society. Wong (1993) suggested that learners, on their side, "need to know that improving pronunciation may have greater significance and importance as it supports some aspects like listening comprehension, spelling, reading, and grammar"(as cited in Gilakjani, 2011, p. 6).

1.7. The Nature of English Pronunciation Acquisition

English has developed from a foreign language used between NSs and NNSs to a global language spoken far more often by NNSs among themselves than between NSs. Therefore, it is obvious that learners learning English for international communication learn to speak it as intelligible as possible.

It is believed that one goal of pronunciation training in any course, is intelligible pronunciation and not perfect native-like accent. Learners feel the need for developing their ability to be easily understood in communication and their ability to meet the communication needs they face. However, they believe that the main difficulty they encounter when speaking the second language is pronunciation and consider this difficulty as the main source of their communication problems.

The importance of investigating pronunciation difficulties stems from the fact that pronunciation stands as an obstacle in communication especially when the meaning of a word or an expression is changed because of its mispronunciation. In this respect, it is necessary to see what factors and problems that may promote or impede the acquisition of the English pronunciation (Al-Saidat, 2010, p. 15).

1.8. Effective Factors of English Pronunciation Acquisition

Learning English pronunciation is one of the most complicated but significant feature of EFL learning. Many EFL learners seek to master a good English pronunciation, and want to speak English accurately and fluently. However, they face lots of problems with pronunciation because of a wide range of affecting factors including age, motivation, gender, and exposure.

1.8.1. Age

The learner's age is considered one of the most important factors affecting the process of foreign language acquisition in general, and its pronunciation acquisition in particular.

Although many adult learners of a foreign language often show an ability to acquire a fluent proficiency in morphology and syntax, they often find it difficult to achieve a fluent control of foreign language phonology. This fact has been often raised several questions among linguists and non-linguists (Celce-Murcia, Brinton, Goodwin, 1996, p. 15).

This inability of adults to acquire FL pronunciation is explained by the existence of a critical age period for language acquisition in general, and for its pronunciation in particular. Based on Scovel (1998), the critical period is approximately the first ten years of life, if a learner started learning a FL after this period, he would never fully acquire the native-like pronunciation of the FL (p. 125). Brown (2000) demonstrated that persons beyond the age of puberty do not attain a native-like pronunciation in the FL. According to him, 'such an age-based factor' is attributed to the maturation of brain and the loss of its plasticity (p. 58).

Hence, we assume that if someone pronounces the English language like a native, s/he must almost certainly start to learn it throughout his/her infancy. While the emergence of 'foreign accents' in the speech of adult EFL learners gives us the evidence that they started to learn English at older ages.

To emphasize the role of maturational constraints in the acquisition of native-like pronunciation in the FL, Celce-Murcia, Brinton, and Goodwin (1996) put forward the example given by Scovel (p. 15). Scovel (1969, 1988) exemplified this inability of adults to acquire the FL pronunciation by the so called "Joseph Conrad phenomenon". This Polish born poet, Joseph Conrad, had a brilliant control of the English lexis, syntax, and morphology which is displayed in his literary works. However, he never reached the same level of perfection in the acquisition of English phonology. Celce-Murcia, Brinton, and Goodwin (1996) stated that "Conrad's speech, in fact, remained partly unintelligible to English speakers throughout his life" (p. 15).

Further EL pronunciation acquisition research findings (Abu-Rabia & Iliyan, 2011, p. 161-168) held the same position as Scovel about the fact that it is almost impossible to improve one's pronunciation after the critical period whereas child L2 learners often attain native-like pronunciation.

1.8.2. Motivation

The importance of motivation as a key factor that influences the rate and success in foreign language pronunciation is widely recognized in SLA investigations. When English learners are motivated to improve their pronunciation, their pronunciation achievement is significantly increased and vice versa. Here it must be pointed out what the motivation is and how the learner will be motivated.

According to Ushioda (2008), motivation concerns what moves and stimulates a person to make certain choices, and to engage and persist in a particular action (p. 19). It is, therefore, a strong desire that drives a person to strive to attain certain goals, or to meet certain needs.

The most widely recognized types of motivation are instrumental and integrative. Instrumental motivation refers to the practical goals such as increasing occupational or business chances, reading technical materials, translation, etc. Integrative motivation is based on interest in learning the second language mainly because of a desire to be integrated in its culture, and to participate in communication with its native speakers (Brown, 2000, p. 162).

It is worthy in this respect to draw the teachers' attention to be sensitive to such sources of students' motivation in order to meet their particular needs i.e. pronunciation teaching should be conducted according to the needs, requirements, expectations, attitudes, etc. of the learners.

Therefore, if the learners' main aim in learning the foreign language is, for example, to be able to produce literacy works, less time and effort may be needed for pronunciation activities, and then teachers will spend less time for getting them motivated.

If learners have a strong desire and need to attain good English pronunciation, they can develop a concern for pronunciation, and become more interested to take part in the activities, and pay more attention to discriminate the English sounds. Hence, their pronunciation will be affected positively. Teachers can help their learners to perceive or develop that motivation by demonstrating, for example, how clarity of speech is significant in shaping their self-image and ultimately, in reaching some of their higher goals (Brown, 2000, p. 285).

Research on second language pronunciation acquisition stressed the influence of motivation. Bernaus, Masgoret, Gardner, & Reyes (2004); Gatbonton et al. (2005); Marinova-Tod et al. (2000); Masgoret & Gardner (2003) found that having a personal or professional goal for learning English can influence the need and desire for native-like pronunciation. Another research conducted by Marinova-Tod et al. (2003) on adult acquisition of English concluded that adults can become highly proficient, even native-like speakers of the second language, especially if they are motivated to do so (as cited in Gilakjani and Ahmadi, 2011, p. 76).

1.8.3. Gender

Another biological influential factor on the ultimate attainment of second language pronunciation is gender. Gender is often neglected as a variable in language learning by writers and researchers, Sunderland (1994) stated that "the effects of gender roles, relations and identities are everywhere. Ironically, because of this, in much

writing and thinking on English language teaching, gender appears nowhere” (as cited in Nyikos, 2008, p. 58).

There is a widespread belief in many western cultures that females tend to be better second language learners than males (Saville-Troike, 2006, p. 84). In fact, studies have found that females place a greater importance on and invest more time in language learning than males because they see greater potential benefit from languages in their future careers and personal lives (Gu (2002) as cited in Nyikos, 2008, p. 78). Moreover, women also prefer social strategies which stress communication such as forming study groups and practicing with native speakers (Jimenez Catalan (2003) as cited in Nyikos, 2008, p. 78).

Men, in general, are more career-oriented, placing lower importance on studying language, and they are more instrumentally motivated for studying what will be on the next test (Nyikos, 1990, p. 78).

From the previous findings, we conclude that since females have integrative purposes, they tend to develop a better pronunciation than males whose purposes are academic or career-oriented (i.e. instrumental).

1.8.4. Exposure

Another factor to which many researchers have attributed success or failure in achieving a good English pronunciation is the amount of exposure to English the learner receives.

According to the language learning theories of Postovsky (1974), Asher (1977), and Krashen (1982), learners acquire language primarily from the input they receive, and they must receive large amounts of comprehensible input before they are required to speak. If true, learners’ exposure to the target language will be a critical

factor in determining their success (as cited in Celce-Murcia, Brinton, Goodwin, 1996, p. 17).

For example, if a learner starts his second language learning process in the target language speaking environment, he will have more advantages than a learner who tries to learn it in his country. For, there are differences between the language use and learning and a direct, intense exposure to the target language.

This does not mean that the learner should live in an English speaking country. 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. Research showed that the quality and intensity of exposure is more important than mere length of time (Brown, 2000, p. 285).

In short, the more the learner invests his time and opportunities for practicing listening to and speaking the target language, the better pronunciation will be.

Conclusion

Through the examination of the above mentioned factors affecting English pronunciation acquisition, we notice that they affect the acquisition of a perfect native-like accent and not an intelligible pronunciation. Having a good pronunciation can help in the communication, especially intelligibility. As in other areas of language learning, pronunciation must be approached in an appropriate way. This involves having motivation to learn, being willing to attempt new sounds even at the risk of embarrassing failure, and exploiting opportunities for exposure to the target language. In this ways, the desired level of intelligibility will be achieved (Brown, 2008, p. 205).

Chapter Two: The Nature of English Accent Acquisition Process

Introduction

Along with the process of acquiring English as foreign language, many learners seek to master native-like accent from the different sources that are available to them. In addition to their teachers whom they first imitate in class, they seek to model their accent from watching movies and videos, and listen to songs. However, these learners sometimes face many problems and difficulties in their process of accent acquisition which lead them to acquire foreign accent.

This chapter introduces the definition of accent and differentiates it from pronunciation and dialect, in addition to the main factors affecting accent acquisition including age, gender, mother tongue interference, and spontaneous talk. It also introduces the definition of foreign accent and the problems encountered in English accent acquisition.

2.1. The Nature of English Accent

2.1.1. Definition of Accent

Accent is a difficult aspect of language because many learners fail to achieve inspite of their trial. Different definitions are given to the term of accent, but they conveyed the same meaning: that accent refers to the characteristics of speech which provide information about the speaker's dialect, which may determine in what country, or what part of the country the speaker has grown up, or to which sociolinguistic group he/ she belongs.

Simpson (1994) defined accent as “the spoken variety of language that is realized in speech sounds...and their combinatorial possibilities” (as cited in Rashid, 2011, p. 59). It is also defined by Lippi-Green (1997) as a decisive factor for characterizing age generation, social identity and class, level of education, and even ethnicity. According to Lippi-Green (1997) different accents are, as a matter of fact, different bundles of prosodic and phonemic features that characterize different geographic areas and or social classes (as cited in Rashid, 2011, p. 3). Crystal (2003), furthermore, claimed that accent reveals clues about people’s identities and social or regional heritage (as cited in Skibdahl & Svensäter, 2012, p. 11).

The Cambridge Advanced Learners’ Dictionary in its (2003) version defined accent as “the way in which people in a particular area, country, or social group pronounce words”. Moreover, Crystal (2003) gave a similar definition to the term of accent in which he stated that accent is the cumulative auditory effect of those features of pronunciation that identify where a person is from, regionally or socially (as cited in Rashid, 2011, p. 60). It can be concluded that an accent is a true reflection of a speaker’s social class, education, or geographic belonging (e.g. American, British, etc.).

2.1.2. The Features of English Accent

In most countries of the world, there is a standard, prestigious accent alongside many other accents associated with particular region, social classes, or ethnic groups. Each of these non-standard accents is different from the standard in the country where it is spoken, but people in much of the time are speaking something in between a particular non-standard and the relevant standard.

The standard or prestigious accent of English is usually referred to as Received Pronunciation (RP). This is what the royal family, all recent prime ministers, and most BBC announcers speak, however, it is spoken as a native accent by no more than 5% of the English population as Rogers (2000) stated (p. 18). RP differs from General American GA in the pronunciation of few vowels and in the way /r/ is pronounced following vowels. For example, in RP, there would no /r/ sounds at all in the phrase “the northern fourth of the park”.

In England, there are many identifiable accents. According to Gasser (2005) London Accent (also called Cockney), has a number of features. For example, many of the vowels in this accent differ considerably from RP and even GA. Moreover, the loss of the initial /h/ as in “e as an ard art” i.e. “**he** has a **hard** heart”. The accents of the north of England are separated from those of the south; furthermore, northern accents are more famous and easier than southern accents thanks to the speech of the Beatles or the characters in films. These accents can be easily identified because they make no distinction between the vowels /ʌ/ and /ʊ/ both are pronounced like /ʊ/. Scottish and Irish English share one feature with northern England accents; the vowels /i/, /e/, and /o/ are not pronounced as diphthongs like in RP and GA. In addition, these accents are similar to GA rather than RP in how they treat /r/ after vowels (p.3).

On the other hand, the standard accent of the United States is called General American (GA). According to Rashid (2011) GA is spoken by much of the Midwest and west areas, and it is the accent mostly used in broad-casting that is why it is sometimes called “network accent” (p. 61). Rogers (2000) stated that GA is the accent usually used in teaching an American accent of English to foreigners (p. 18).

USA has some regional accents, just like England, as stated by Gasser (2005). Northern accents which are distinct from GA in the pronunciation of lax (short) vowels. Southern US accent is spoken by people mainly in southeastern part of the country. This accent has different vowels from other English accents. African-American Vernacular English (AAVE) is a dialect associated with an ethnic group rather than a region. The accent associated with (AAVE) dialect is similar in many ways to southern US accent (p. 4). Furthermore, English is the native language of most Australians, New Zealanders, and a sizable minority of South Africans. While the Standard English accents of these countries tend to approach RP.

In short, there are lots of English accents around the world, however, the preferred and the most adopted ones in teaching and learning English as a foreign language are RP and GA because they are the only accents used in science, technology, and media. However, those accents of Standard English do not share the same cultural and historical background; each reflects a totally different culture, history, and body of literature. Moreover, they are taught at educational and academic institutions as quite distinct varieties.

2.1.3. The Compositions of English Accent

Accent, like pronunciation, has some components as indicated by Fleg (1984) who stated that the recognition of foreign accent is related to acoustic differences between native and non-native speakers' segmental articulations and suprasegmental levels which are the main components of accent.

Segmental articulation is concerned with segmental-related problems like saying “tree” instead of “three” and segments such as vowel and consonant allophones. Carr (2008) claimed that Suprasegmental levels, above the level of the segment, are concerned with phonological phenomena such as word stress, intonation, and tone (as cited in Carakaş, 2012, p. 6).

Demirezan (2008) pointed out that prosody and intonation are confused by many people. Thus, he analyzed them and elaborated the ingredients of these terms as seen in the figure below. Such parameters of intonation as prosody, rhythm, tempo, paralinguistic features, and melody are unique to each language and make each one different from one another to a great extent (as cited in Karacaş, 2012, p. 7).



Figure 1: The ingredients of Intonation and Prosody

Figure 1 indicated that the main elements of accents are stress, pitch, and junctures as closely situated to inner circle.

According to Nasr (1997), the term stress refers to the force of breath with which sounds are produced ; that is, the strength or weakness of the force is determined in relation to other forces of breath in the utterance/ or utterances of a person (as cited in Karakaş, 2012, p. 7). It is also defined by Rogers (2000) as a complex auditory impression which the listener perceives as making one syllable more prominent than its neighbours (p. 94).

Pitch, as a component of stress, is also an important character of accent. It is defined by Roger (2000) as the quality we hear in playing two different notes on the piano. In speech, we control the pitch of an utterance by changing the vibration rate of the vocal folds. The faster they vibrate, the higher the pitch gets (p. 96).

Junctures according to Carr (2008) is a boundary or transition point in phonological sequence. They include syllable, foot, morpheme, and word boundaries. Doty and Rose (1973) pointed out that juncture is a pause in utterance but something more than a sole pause. It is regularly accompanied by slowing the rate and changing the pitch of the voice immediately preceding the voice. For this reason, it functions as a signal of primary accent since a word sounds different depending on whether it is enunciated carefully as a single word or uttered in the flow of speech as stated by Gramly and Pätzold (2011) (as cited in Karakaş, 2012, p. 7). Karakaş (2012) stated that most of non-native teachers can not apply the rules of juncture in their speech; that is why, they fail in uttering the words in the flow of speech and they sound foreign-accented (p. 7).

2.2. Accent vs. Dialect

EFL learners confuse between the terms of accent and dialect and they use them interchangeably, however, accent and dialect have completely different meanings. Thus, it is important to distinguish between these two terms in order to guide the learners to the correct use of each term.

The Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English described dialect as "...form of a language which is spoken only in one area, [usually] with words or grammar that are different from other forms of the same language". The same dictionary defines

accent as "... the way someone pronounces the words of a language, showing which country they come from "(as cited in Skibdahl & Svensäter, 2012, p. 8).

According to Skibdahl and Svensäter (2012), accent is based only on pronunciation, whereas specific dialect is distinguished by the phonological sounds, Grammatical and lexical differences, and pronunciation differences as well (p. 11).

2.3. Accent vs. Pronunciation

Pronunciation is a key aspect in developing oral skills. According to Lippi-Green (1997), it refers to the articulation and manner of speaking a language, including both phonetic and prosodic features of spoken language (as cited in Hoff, 2014, p. 35). The Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English defined pronunciation as "the way in which a language or a particular word is pronounced "(as cdited in Skibdahl & Svensäter, 2012, p. 12).

Proper pronunciation is inherent to any competent speaker but this competence can be trained to any non-native speaker. The aim of learning pronunciation is not to achieve a perfect imitation of native accent, but to get the learner to pronounce English words and sentences correctly to be understood by his interlocutors i.e. the learner can be understood by others, if only he/she pronounce language correctly and accurately.

Accent, on the other hand, is completely different from pronunciation because the learners' aim behind acquiring accent is to speak English exactly like native speakers.

Furthermore, accent cannot be trained to any non-native speaker, only those who exposed to the native accent in early age can acquire native-like accent as many researchers have found in their studies. Moreover, accent is defined by Crystal

(2003) as “the cumulative auditory effect of those features of pronunciation that identify where a person is from, regionally, or socially” (as cited in Rashid, 2011, p. 60).

2.4. Nativeness vs. Pronunciation

According to Levis (2005), pronunciation research and pedagogy have for a long period been influenced by the principles of nativeness and intelligibility.

Nativeness according, to Levis (2005), related to the learners’ desire to achieve native-like accent in a foreign language. It was the dominant view in pronunciation teaching before 1960. However, this view is diminished in importance when researches showed that nativeness in pronunciation is biologically appeared before childhood, and this affects the objectives of teaching foreign languages because aiming for nativeness was an unrealistic burden for both teachers and learners (as cited in Skibdahl & Svensäter, 2012, p. 19).

Intelligibility, on the other hand, is defined by Munro & Darwing (2012) as the extent to which a speaker’s message is actually understood by a listener (p. 76). Thus, intelligibility is considered as the main aim of pronunciation teaching because the more the learner is accurate in his pronunciation, the better he will be understood by others.

Furthermore, Munro and Darwing (2012) discussed the principles of intelligibility and nativeness and stated that there is no clear correlation between accents and understanding (as cited in Skibdahl & Svensäter, 2012, p. 19). However, Moyer (1999) stated that the nativeness principle still effects pronunciation teaching in classrooms, where learners aim affecting and changing their non-native accents (as cited in Skibdahl & Svensäter, 2012, p. 19). Moreover, many teachers deal with the

learners who has achieved native-like accent as an ideal. Others try hard to raise the level of intelligibility among their students and believe that it is sufficient to make the student speak correctly and accurately.

2.5. Factors Affecting English Accent Acquisition

Accent is an aspect of second language, which is very difficult and complicated for learners to acquire because their learning process may be influenced by certain variables including age, mother tongue interference, gender, and spontaneous talk, which we are going to discuss in this part.

2.5.1. Age

Many researchers have been conducted concerning the influence of the age, and critical period of the acquisition of the native like accent, this led to the disagreement between those scholars who believe that, accent acquisition can only occur during the critical age period and those who found that it can occur even after the critical age period.

According to Pallier, Bosch, and Sebastian(1997), adults find it harder than younger learners to acquire the native accent of the second language (as cited in Abu-Rabia & Illiyan, 2011, p. 161). Lennenberg (1997) claimed that there is a neurological age period and it ends near the teenage years (as cited in Fleg & Munro, 1995, p. 70). Similarly, Oyama's research (1976) pointed out the existence of a critical age period which is the best period for learners to acquire a native accent (as cited in Abu-Rabia & Illiyan, 2011, p. 161). Thus, the critical age period is the period in which the learner can still learn the new phonetic system of the new language.

Scovel (1981) claimed that there is one critical age period for second language accent acquisition that is neurological, involving the intervention of certain nerves in the human body. According to Scovel, learners who start learning a second language after the age of twelve, they will never be able to acquire native-like accent, although there may be some exceptions. Long concurs with Scovel in that the acquisition of the native accent before age six and not later than age twelve (as cited in Huang, 2008, p. 1). Likewise, Patkowski (1990) examined the level of spoken English of sixty seven immigrants to the United States. His findings were that pre- puberty learners acquire second language better than post-puberty learners (as cited in Fleg & Munro, 1995, p. 2).

Asher and Garcia (1969) found that no one of their subjects who immigrated to the United States had attained a true American accent regardless of the age of arrival and length of residency. However, many were rated as having near-native English pronunciation. The highest probability of this near-native pronunciation occurred when the subject had arrived in the United States as a child between the ages of one and six years, and had lived there five to eight years (as cited in Abu-Rabia & Illiyan, 2011, p. 161).

On the other hand, many other researchers believe that native-like accent can be acquired even after critical age period i.e. even adults can acquire native-like accent. Neufeld (1979) found that even adults can succeed in acquiring the native-like accent. He reached these results from his study on Canadian native speakers who immigrate in French and can acquire native French accent. Similarly, Bongaerts, Planken, and Schils (1995) indicated that Dutch who began learning English in a formal instructional setting after the age of twelve were able to attain English pronunciation rating within the same range as those attained by native speaker

controls i.e. the second language accent was perceived as native by natives (as cited in Abu- Rabia & Illiyan, 2011, p. 161).

Researchers in second language acquisition field have yet to reach consensus on the existence of a critical age period for second language acquisition in general and native accent acquisition in a particular.

2.5.2. Mother Tongue Interference

Mother tongue interference is a significant factor which may affect EFL learners especially beginners during the process of second language acquisition. Zhang (2009) stated that learner's first language can be a main factor to account for foreign accents and can influence the pronunciation of the target language by causing errors in aspiration, stress, and intonation in the target language (p. 44).

Many researchers on the field of second language acquisition believe that mother tongue influences the acquisition of second language in general and it's accent in particular.

Revers (1968) pointed that all learners may face a great difficulty in understanding what foreigners said, this is not because of their lack of knowledge of vocabulary, language structure or grammar, but because the sounds they produce seemed peculiar and the voice rose and fell in unexpected places (as cited in Zhang, 2009, p. 43). Furthermore, a huge number of research studies and teachers experiences show that the learners' first language place a great influence on learning the second system of another language.

In the second language process learners attempt to employ existing phonological categories from the native language. This means that if a sound does not exist in the native language can make a difficulty for learners to find a similar sound in their

mother tongue. Zhang (2009) stated that some researchers attempt to find differences in the processing of the target language pronunciation by comparing the sound systems between native language and target language. The results shown that the more differences the sound systems have, the more difficulties the learner will face (p. 44).

2.5.3. Gender

The acquisition of native-like accent can be effected by the gender factor, since both males and females have a completely different way of thinking, and then the rate of motivation to acquire native-like accent differ as well.

Thompson (1991) tested in his study gender differences. Participants were 36 Russian-born adults who had migrated to the United States. They were asked to conduct three assignments: read sentences in English, and talk spontaneously.

Thompson found in this study that females acquire a better native accent than males. Females also ascribed more importance to speaking in the native accent (as cited in Abu-Rabia & Illiyan, 2011, p. 163).

2.5.4. Spontaneous Talk

Spontaneous talk plays a crucial role in accent acquisition, since accent of learners or emigrants in second language can be tested through read-aloud tasks and spontaneous talk which reflects the real accent learners speak. These assignments can be judged by a team of native speakers who evaluate the learner's accents.

Everson (1998) tested word recognition in 20 native English speakers who studied Chinese as a second language. The aim of his study is to conclude the significant

relationship between word recognition and acquisition of the native accent. The result of his studies indicated significant relationships between the learners' ability to identify and understand Chinese words and their ability to pronounce these words correctly. Thus, he concluded that whenever the students knew the meaning of the target word, they were more likely to pronounce it right and then to speak correctly (as cited in Abu-Rbia & Illian, 2011, p. 163).

From their studies, many researchers found that the more the syllables of the second language similar to those of first language the more learners pronounce those syllables correctly.

Taron (1983) pointed out some internal component that may affect accent acquisition. He noticed that Korean adults were learning to correctly pronounce syllables in English that were different from those Korean; their accent was significantly poorer than when the assignment was with syllables similar to those in Korean. Similarly, Neufeld (1988) found that even people who are highly proficient in the second language found difficulty, like native speakers, in pronouncing non-words and words with complicated phonological rules (as cited in Abu-Rabia & Illiyan, 2011, p. 163).

Thompson (1991) conducted a study similar to Neufeld by testing accent acquisition in the second language. He assumed that acquiring an accent in the second language like that of native speakers was impossible even when the learner was exposed to the language at an early age. Participants were 36 Russian-born adults who had migrated to the United States. Those participants asked to conduct three assignments: read sentences in English, read a paragraph, and talk spontaneously. The results indicated that the younger the immigrants were when

he/she arrived in the United States, the better he/she acquired a native accent (as cited in Abu-Rabia & Illiyan, 2011, p. 163).

2.6. Foreign Accent

EFL learners can acquire only a foreign accent rather than native-like accent because of the factors mentioned above. Foreign Accent is defined by Fleg (1984) as the difference between the pronunciation of a language by a native speaker and the pronunciation of that language by non-native speaker. He stated also that the recognition of foreign accent is related to acoustic differences between native and non-native speakers' segmental and suprasegmental levels, which are the main component of accent (as cited in Ambrozova, 2014, p. 43). Demirezen (2007) reported that foreign accent is the pointer of the inefficiencies of a speaker in the articulation, pronunciation, and intonation of a FL in a native-like habit (as cited in Karakaş, 2012, p. 5).

Thus, foreign accent is considered as an obstacle in acquiring native-like accent because only very young children who exposed to the native accent can acquire it. However, adults can only acquire a foreign accent which is different from the accent that is spoken by native speakers.

2.7. The Problems Encountered in English Accent Acquisition

EFL researchers suggested that, in addition to the above mentioned effective factors on English accent acquisition, there are other problems that may make English accent one of the most difficult parts for an English learner to achieve. This difficulty in acquiring English pronunciation may be attributed to phonological, identity, and communication problems that we are going to discuss in this part.

2.7.1. Phonological Problems

Many factors appear to provoke EFL learners to commit pronunciation errors. The learner's first language and the English language are among many other producers of phonological, productive, and perceptive problems, which in their turn, impede a precise acquisition of the English pronunciation.

General consensus is that many phonological, productive, and perceptive problems which impair the full mastery of English native-like accent are attributed to the learner's native language. Often, when a learner begins to learn a new language, he tends to employ existing phonological patterns from his native language. However, every language has a different inventory of sounds, different rules of combining these sounds into words and utterances, and different stress rules and intonation patterns. Thus, the pronunciation errors made by EFL learners reflect the interference from the sound system of their first languages.

This impact of the first language on English phonology can be seen in three different ways as stated by Avery and Ehrlich (1992). First, problems of English sounds that are not found in the sound system of the mother language of adult EFL learners; that is why they have difficulties in hearing and understanding these new sounds, and then in pronouncing them since they have never exercised their mouth in pronouncing them. 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 to the second language which makes those EFL learners sound unnatural and foreign and their accent, therefore, would not be pleasant to listen to even if it is understood (as cited in Al-Saidat, 2008, pp. 16-17).

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The English language itself may raise some other phonological problems which can affect the learner's productive and perceptive abilities negatively. To illustrate, the different English pronunciation models to which learners are exposed (e.g. British, American, Irish, Australian, etc.), either by their teachers in the classroom, or by the different technological means outside the classroom cause serious problems and confusions in perceiving the difference between, for instance, which vowels, consonants, stress rules, intonation patterns, etc. belong to British, American, Australian, etc., and which ones are not parts of these varieties; consequently, mispronunciation occurs. Thus, this diversity does indeed cause phonological problems on the part of EFL learners, and the acquisition of good English native-like accent becomes a very complicated task for them.

In addition, the lack of a consistent relationship between the English spelling and pronunciation presents learners with many problems, especially for those whose mother tongue consists of a one-to-one relationship between spelling and pronunciation (Kelly, 2000, p. 7-8). Those learners usually pronounce English words as they are written in letters of the alphabet. However, the English written system does not lead them always to the correct pronunciation (Roach, 2001, p. 5). For example, one sound may have many graphical representations as the English vowel /i:/ which can be written:

- **/ea/** as in **read**
- **/ee/** as in **sleep**
- **/ie/** as in **believe**.

Or, one graphical representation may refer to many sounds as the vowel 'a' which can be pronounced:

- /eɪ/ as in shape
- /ɑ:/ as in last
- /ɪ/ as in shortage.

Furthermore, English may contain sounds or combinations of sounds which do not occur in EFL learners' native languages, or use stress and intonation patterns, and other aspects of connected speech, which feel strange to them (Kelly, 2000, p. 8); so, they may prefer to avoid them when speaking English. As a result, their native-like accent will be really frustrating.

2.7.2. Identity Problems

The identity of the learner is a very important determination of success or failure in acquiring the sound system of a second language. Guiora (1972) suggested that any person develops an identity in reference to the language she/he speaks, which is referred to as the "language ego". This language ego is dynamic and flexible when the person is a young child; that is why children accept any new language in their disposals, and even develop new identities according to the new languages they learn as long as there are no negative attitudes toward these languages. However, when they grow up, this language ego becomes protective and defensive; it develops mechanisms, or inhibitions, to protect it from a probable threat from new identities (Brown, 2000, pp. 64-65).

Therefore, Kenworthy (1987) stated that the ability to develop the native-like accent of the target language has been linked to the extent to which the learner

wants to identify with the target group, culture, community, etc. (as cited in Nunan, 1991, p. 106).

For example, learning a second language will be more difficult for adult learners who have some prejudices and negative attitudes to the target language and community. Those learners develop firm identities which do not support change to identify closely with the target group, and to sound like them; hence, it can hinder native-like accent development. Conversely, if a learner has positive attitudes towards the target language or culture, this will promote his/her native-like accent development easily and accurately.

2.7.3. Communication Problems

Generally, learners who are introverted and have lack of self-confidence and lack of willingness to take risks, make errors in their speech more than those who like to take risks and speak in every opportunity. Therefore, when learners avoid participating in communication in the target language, they diminish their opportunities in developing good native-like accent.

Many EFL learners are unable to speak with the pronunciation that allows them to be understood by a range of people in a variety of different situations. Moreover, research by Derwing and Rossiter (2002) showed that pronunciation problems contributed to difficulties English learners had when communicating in English. Such perceptions about the influence of pronunciation difficulties on interactions in spoken English have the potential to gradually weaken confidence and willingness to speak, and ultimately to effect the amount of English spoken in everyday life (as cited in Zielinski, 2012, p. 18). In such a case, native-like accent will not be developed since its practice is decreased.

On the other hand, introverted learners are very shy, afraid of making mistakes, losing face, feeling nervous when speaking in front of others; hence, they are usually unwilling to take risks and to engage in communication. Thus, they cannot find opportunities to practice the target language, and then to improve their native-like accent.

Conclusion

English native-like accent is the aim that any specialized learner in EFL wants to achieve, but only those learners who are not faced by the factors and problems mentioned above can acquire it. However, those who are faced by those factors and problems can acquire a foreign accent which is either slightly or highly different from the one that are spoken by natives.

Chapter Three: Methodology, Analysis, and Discussion

Introduction

The methodology of our present study consists of a students' questionnaire and some recordings which were conducted with third year L. M. D. students of the English department at the University of Mohammed Seddik Ben Yahia in Jijel. Through this field work, our aim is to investigate the main factors that affect the process of English accent acquisition. Besides, we intend to explore whether the local dialect of Jijel affects the acquisition of an English native- like accent, or not.

3.1. Section One: Methodology

3.1.1. Research Questions

The present research aims at investigating the following questions:

- What do third year LMD English students think about English accent acquisition?
- Do they encounter difficulties in Acquiring English accent?
- What are the major factors that hinder the acquisition of English native- like accent among third year LMD students?
- Does the local dialect of Jijel affect the acquisition of English native- like accent among third year LMD students in Mohammed Seddik Ben Yahia University?

We assume that the local dialect of Jijel is among other influential factors on English accent acquisition.

3.1.2. Tools and Population

3.1.2.1. Tools

Since the purpose of our research is to investigate the main factors that affect English accent acquisition, and to check the influence of the local dialect of Jijel on students ultimate attainment of the English accent; two main tools were used: a questionnaire and students' recordings. The questionnaire was adopted in order to investigate what are the main factors that hinder the acquisition of an English native-like accent among third year LMD students and to explore whether their local dialect affect that particular process. The aim of the recordings is to see whether/and how the learners' local dialect interferes in the process of English accent acquisition.

3.1.2.2. Population

The sample selected for the study consists of third year students, both males and females, in the questionnaire. However, only females took part in the recordings, since male students refused to participate. The questionnaire was directed to all third year EFL students; however, only 137 of them answered it. Concerning the recordings, twenty students (females) accepted kindly to participate and help in this research. It has been decided to work particularly with third year students mainly because students at this level are expected to acquire the native accent of the target language since they have been exposed to it for at least ten years.

3.1.3. Description of the Students' Questionnaire

The questionnaire given to third year EFL learners contained seventeen questions which are categorized under four major sections. The questionnaire's purpose is to gather data about students' personal information, attitudes towards English accent acquisition, problems in acquiring English accent, and factors that affect their English accent acquisition process. All the information are converted into numerical data to facilitate the interpretation of the findings. This questionnaire was distributed on April, 21; and data were collected on April, 25, 2015.

3.1.4. Description of the Recordings

The tape- recordings instrument was basically used to evaluate EFL learners' mastery of the English accent and to explore what factors interfere in the process of English native- like accent acquisition. All the recordings were taped on Tuesday, May, 5, 2015 at Amphi 03. The sessions of the recordings lasted for sixty minutes (1H06). They varied in length from one minute and four seconds (01:04) to nine minutes and thirty seconds (09:30). They were restricted only to girls (20 girls), since boys refused to participate in the recordings.

The recordings were collected during free discussions of four different topics (social and cultural topics were discussed with twelve students; political and economic topics with eight others). We directed the free discussions during the recording sessions as interviewers. We used mobile phones: *Samsung Galaxy mini 2GT-S6500* and *Nokia N8 Orange* in order to record students' voices. At last, we succeeded to reach twenty recordings.

3.2. Section Two: Analysis and Discussion

3.2.1. Analysis of the Students' Questionnaire

Section One: General Information

Qu. 1: It was meant to determine students' age categories. The results are gathered in table 1 below.

Options	N	%
20-25 years	136	99.27
25-30 years	00	00
30years & more	1	0.73
Total	137	100%

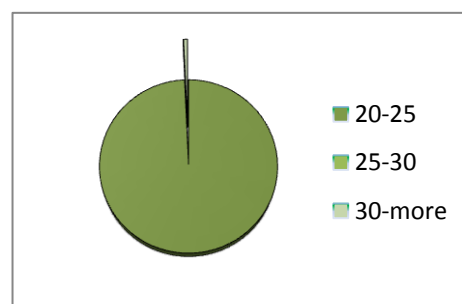


Table 1: Learners' age

Figure 1: Learners' age

This table displays the age categories. They vary from 20 to 25 years old. All the learners are aged between 20 to 25 (99.27%) only one student has 35 years old (0.73%). This shows that the majority of EFL learners in the English department are young students.

Qu.2: it determines the learners' gender as shown in table2.

Options	N	%
Male	14	10.22
Female	123	82.78
Total	137	100%

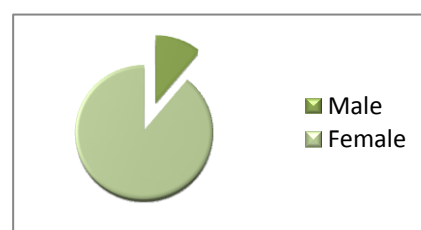


Table 2:Learners'gender

Figure 2: Learners' gender

The results show that the majority of EFL learners (82.78%) are females, as opposed to males who represent the minority of EFL learners (10.22%). This makes it clear that foreign languages, in general, and particularly English attract female learners more than males.

Qu.3: For how long have you been studying English?

Options	N	%
10years	112	81.75
11years	10	7.3
12years	10	7.3
13years	5	3.65
Total	137	100%

Table 3: Learners' exposure to English

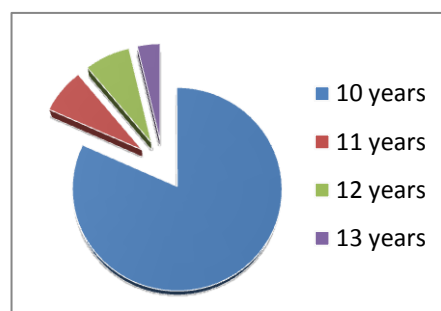


Figure 3: Learners' exposure to English

It is important to know for how long learners have been exposed to the target language. As the answers show in table 3 above, the majority of students have been studying English for 10 years (81.75%), which is the normal situation in Algeria, in general, for students who started learning English in the first year at the middle school at the age of twelve. The students who mentioned 11 years (7.3%), 12 years (7.3%), and 13 years (3.65%) have possibly repeated one year, two years, or three years respectively.

Section Two: Students' Attitudes towards English Accent Acquisition

Qu.1: In your opinion, how important is accent in EFL learning?

Options	N	%
Very important	77	56.20
Important	55	40.15
Not important	05	03.65
Total	137	100%

Table 4: The English accent importance

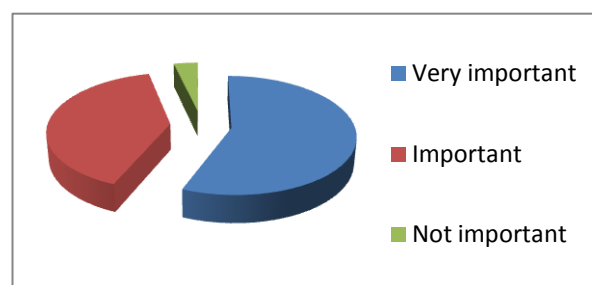


Figure 4: The English accent importance

Based on the results shown in table 4, almost of the students (96.35%) admit that accent has a significant importance in their EFL learning process in that 56.20% of the respondents agree that accent is a very important aspect in EFL, followed by 40.15% who believe that it is an important aspect in EFL. However, only 03.65% of the whole population does not give importance to accent acquisition.

Qu.2: Tick one of the following (strongly agree-agree-neutral-disagree-strongly disagree) to indicate your opinion to the statement: "I want to be able to pronounce English just like the natives". Why?

Options	N	%
Stongely agree	59	43.06
Agree	60	43.80
Nentral	11	8.03
Disagree	6	4.38
Strongly disagree	1	0.73
Total	137	100%

Table 5: EFL learners' opinion of acquiring the English accent

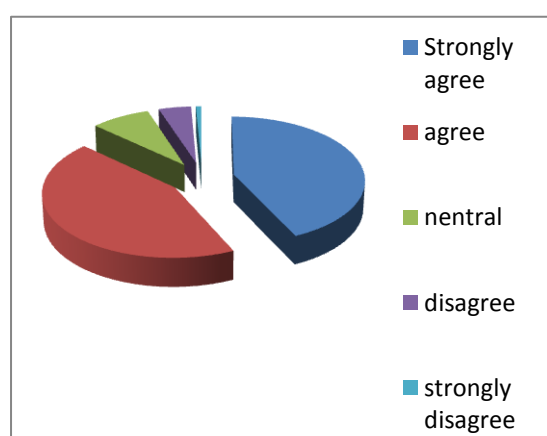


Figure 5: EFL learners' opinion of acquiring the English accent

The results of this question are optimizing; it is good to know that the majority of EFL students strongly agree to have a desire to achieve an English native-like accent since 43.06%, and 43.08% agree that they want to be able to pronounce English just like the native speakers.

The rest are divided between those who hold neutral position towards holding the aim of achieving a native-like accent in English (8.03%), and between those who disagree (4.38%), and strongly disagree (0.73%) that they aim to develop a native-like accent in English.

This question comprised of two parts; 100% of the learners answered the first part, but only 83.94% of them justified their answers. Those who provide justifications to their answers are the learners who agree/ and strongly agree (84.03%), the learners who disagree (3.36%), and the learners who hold a neutral opinion (9.24%) to having the aim of being able to pronounce English like the natives.

The respondents who strongly agree/ and agree that they want to be able to pronounce English mentioned the following reasons:

- “A native-like accent allows me to be understood when communicating with native and non- native speakers” 47%.
- Since I am specialized in EFL, I am required to acquire all its aspects including its native- like accent” 18%.
- “The beauty of the English language is in its accent” 10%.
- “To feel and to be viewed that I am a part of the English community” 9%.
- “To feel confident when speaking English with others” 4%.
- “To ensure my future career” 4%
- “Having a native- like accent reflects my high education level” 4%
- “To gain self-satisfaction” 2%.

The learners whose attitudes are neutral towards the aim of being able to pronounce English like the native speakers give the following justifications:

- “Achieving proper pronunciation is enough for EEL learners” 63.64%.
- “EFL learners should concentrate more on the other aspects which are more important than native-like accent as grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation” 36.36%.

The rest who strongly disagree/ or disagree with the aim of being able to pronounce English just like the natives state the following justifications:

- “Accent is not as important as the other aspects of language, so English learners should give more attention to more significant aspects” 50%.
- “We cannot acquire the English accent without living with the native speakers” 25%.
- “Pronunciation is enough” 25%.

Section Three: English Accent Acquisition Difficulty

Qu. 1: How do you rate your English accents?

Options	N	%
Weak	13	9.49
Average	80	58.39
Good	43	31.39
Excellent	01	0.73
Total	37	100%

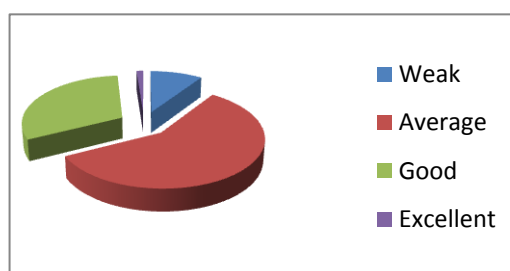


Table 6: Learners' English accent level

Figure 6: Learners English accent level

The majority of learners rate their English accent as average (58.39%). The rest is divided between those who rate their English accent as weak (9.49%), and those who rate it as good (31.39%) and only one student estimated his English accent as excellent (0.73%). This fact makes it clear that most EFL learners do not acquire the English accent perfectly. Furthermore, it is one of the most challenging aspects of English for students.

Qu.2: How do you find acquiring English accents? Why?

Options	N	%
Easy	22	16.06
Difficult	106	77.37
Very difficult	9	6.57
Total	137	100%

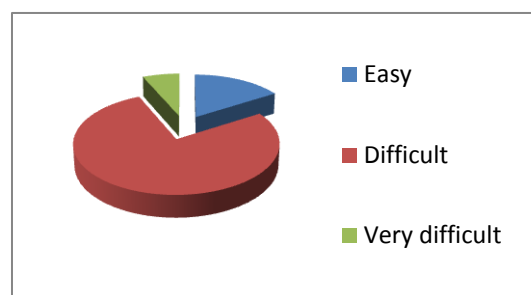


Table 7: English accent acquisition difficulty

Figure 7: English accent acquisition difficulty

The majority of EFL learners (83.94%) believed that English accent is a challenging aspect in EFL learning, since it is either difficult (77.37%), or very difficult (6.57) to be acquired. However, the minority of the learners see English accent acquisition as an easy process (16.06%). The learners who justify their answers, in the second part of this question, represent (81.02%), while the rest do not justify their answers (18.98%). However, those who agree that the process of English accent acquisition is difficult (72.07%) state their justifications as follows:

- “There are multiple English accents which make the learner confused between which one he should follow” 22.5%.
- “The lack of practice” 17.05%.
- “The lack of exposure to the target language” 15%.

- “There are many English words and expressions which learners are unfamiliar with” 13.75%.
- “The native language and the English language are completely different which makes English accent acquisition a difficult aspect” 8.75%.
- “It is not used in our society” 5%.
- “The lack of qualified teachers” 3.75%.
- “Learners are not interested in acquiring English native-like accent” 3.75%.
- “Teachers’ use of traditional methods which neglect the integration of multimedia means and technological tools in teaching EFL, so English learners are not provided by the right source to get right English pronunciation and accent” 2.5%.

The respondents who see that acquiring English accent is very difficult provide the following justifications:

- “The lack of time and practice” 33.33%.
- “The existence of many English accents” 33.33%.
- “The lack of exposure to the target language” 11.11%.
- “The disagreement between English spelling and pronunciation” 11.11%.
- “The difference between the target language and the learner’s first language.” 11.11%.

In contrast, 19.82% of the students who assert that the process of English accent is easy write the following justifications which are going to be represented in statistical forms:

- “I have exposed to native speakers through movies, songs, games, etc.” 63.64%.
- “I have the opportunity to practice it in my daily life” 31.82%.

- “It needs only the learners’ desire and will” 4.54%.

Section Four: Factors Affecting English Accent Acquisition

Qu.1: Why do you fail in acquiring English accent? Others (if any).

Options	N	%
The lack of exposure to the TL	58	42.33
The influence of your L1	51	37.23
You are not motivated to achieve a native-like accent	28	20.44
Total	137	100%

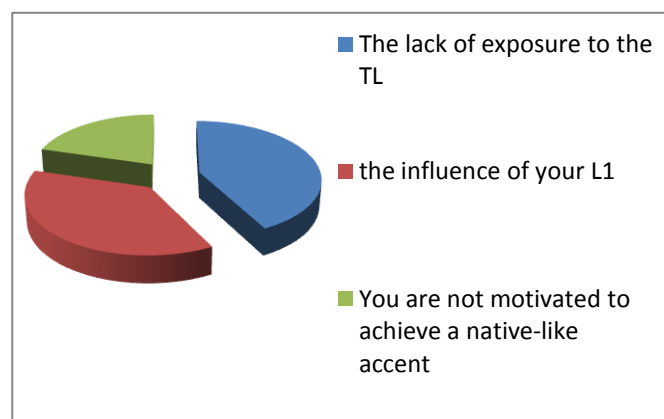


Table 8: Factors affecting English accent acquisition Figure 8: Factors affecting English accent acquisition

The results obtained from the students’ answers on that question show that the major factor which causes their failure in acquiring the English accent is the lack of exposure to the target language (42.33%), the interference of the first language represents 37.23%. However, the lack of motivation, according to the students, is considered as minor effective factor (20.44%) on their failure in acquiring a native-accent in English.

The second part of that question is completed by no more than 12.40% (17 students) of the whole population. Those learners add the following factors:

- “The lack of time and practice” 47.06%.
- “The lack of competent and qualified teachers” 35.29%.
- “The English language is not spoken or used in the Algerian society” 17.65%.

Qu.2: In holding conversations, in English, with your teachers and classmates, do you arrange your thoughts and decide what to say in: English, Arabic, French, or in your local dialect?

Options	N	%
English	95	69.34
Arabic	19	13.87
French	0	0
Your dialect	23	16.79
Total	137	100%

Table 9: Learners 'choice of the language used in arranging thoughts

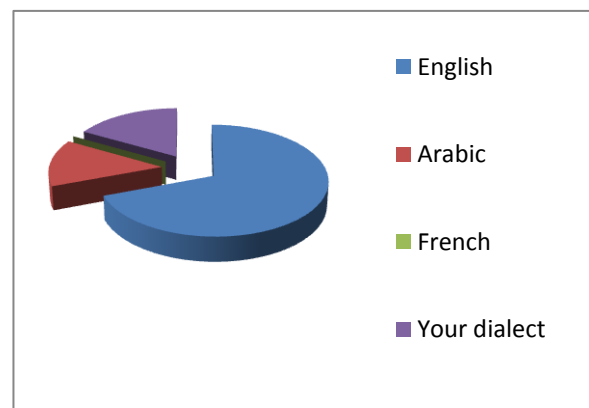


Figure 9: Learners' choice of the language used in arranging thoughts

The majority of the learners (69.34%) use English to arrange their thoughts. Others, on the other hand, are divided between those who use Arabic (13.87%), and those who use their dialect (16.79%). However, French is completely neglected (0%).

Qu. 3: Does your choice of any of the above affect: the meaning of your speech-the structure of your speech-the accent of your speech-nothing?

Options	N	%
The meaning of your speech	28	29.47
The structure of your speech	17	17.89
The accent of your speech	17	17.9
Nothing	33	34.74
Total	95	100%

Table 10: The effects of choosing English In arranging thoughts on EFL aspects

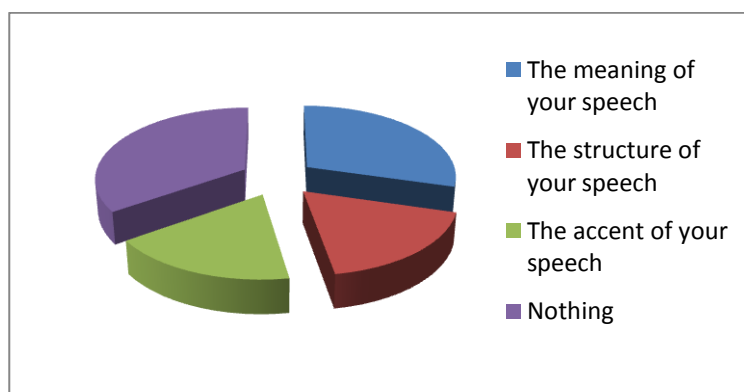


Figure 10: The effects of choosing English in arranging thoughts on EFL aspect

As the learners' answers show, 29.47% of those who use English in arranging their thoughts see that their choice affects the meaning of their speech. In addition, 17.89% of the respondents agree that it affects the structure of their speech. Furthermore, 17.9% say that it affects their accent. However, there are 34.74% of the learners say that their choice of the English language in arranging their thoughts affects nothing.

Options	N	%
The meaning of your speech	6	31.58
The structure of your speech	7	36.84
The accent of your speech	3	15.79
Nothing	3	15.79
Total	19	100%

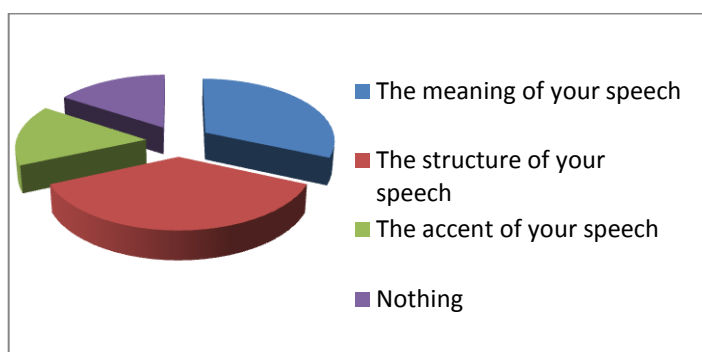


Table 11: The effects of choosing S. A in arranging thoughts on EFL aspects

Figure 11: The effects of choosing S. A in arranging thoughts on EFL aspects

Other answers show that 13.87% of the learners use Standard Arabic in the arrangement of their thoughts. 31.58% of them believe that Arabic affects the meaning of their speech. 36.84% of them believe that it affects the structure of their speech. Moreover, 15.79% believe that it affects the accent of speech. However, 15.79% of the respondents see that it affects nothing.

Options	N	%
The meaning of your speech	2	8.7
The structure of your speech	8	34.78
The accent of your speech	10	43.48
Nothing	3	13.04
Total	23	100%

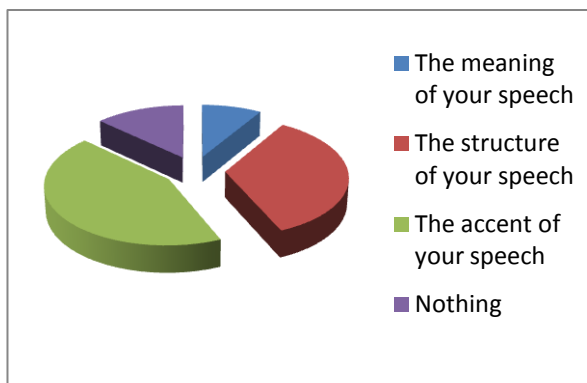


Table 12: The effects of choosing dialect in arranging thoughts on EFL aspects

Figure 12: The effects of choosing dialect in arranging thoughts on EFL aspects

Regarding the dialect, 16.79% of the learners choose it in arranging their thoughts. Only 8.70% of them see that it affects the meaning of their speech. Then, 34.78% say that it affects the structure of their speech. The majority (43.48%), however, believe that choosing their dialect in arranging thoughts affects mostly their English accent. Moreover, 13.04% of the respondents agree that it affects nothing.

Qu.4: How often do you use English out of class?

Options	N	%
Always	7	5.11
Sometimes	77	56.20
Rarely	38	27.74
Never	15	10.95
Total	137	100%

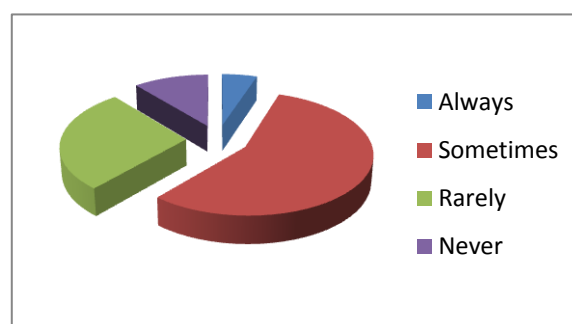


Table 13: The frequency of using English outside class

Figure 13: The frequency of using English outside class

The results obtained from this question show that most EFL learners (56.20%) use the English language sometimes out of class. Others are divided between those who always use it out of class (5.11%), who never use it (10.95%), and who use it rarely (27.74%).

Qu. 5: How often do you use your dialect out of class?

Options	N	%
Always	121	88.32
Sometimes	8	5.84
Rarely	6	4.38
Never	2	1.46
Total	137	100%

Table 14: The frequency of using the dialect outside class

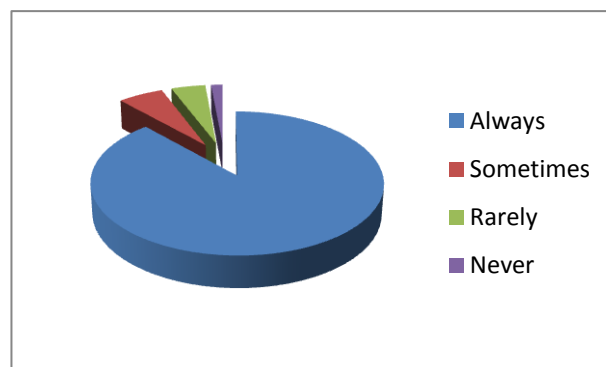


Figure 14: The frequency of using the dialect outside class

From the answers given by the learners, it is obvious that the majority of them (88.32%) use their dialect out of class always since it is the only means of communicating with the outside community. The rest is divided between those who sometimes use their dialect (5.84%), who rarely use it (4.38%), and who never use it out in community (1.46%).

Qu.6: How often do you use English in class?

Options	N	%
Always	65	47.45
Sometimes	65	47.45
Rarely	5	3.64
Never	2	1.46
Total	137	100%

Table 15: The frequency of using English in class

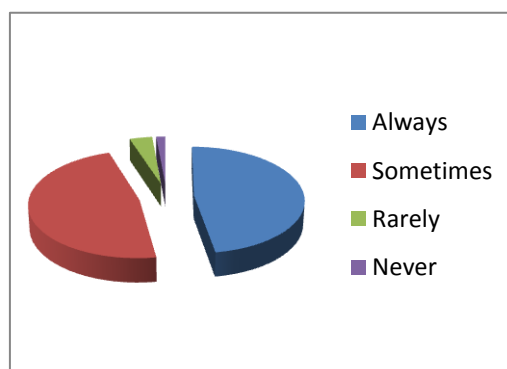


Figure 15: The frequency of using English in class

The table shows that 47.45% of the learners use English always in class, and the same percentage of the learners use it sometimes. Others use it rarely (3.64%), and the rest never use English in class (1.46%).

Qu.7: How often do you use your dialect in class?

Options	N	%
Always	32	23.36
Sometimes	65	47.45
Rarely	34	24.81
Never	6	4.38
Total	137	100%

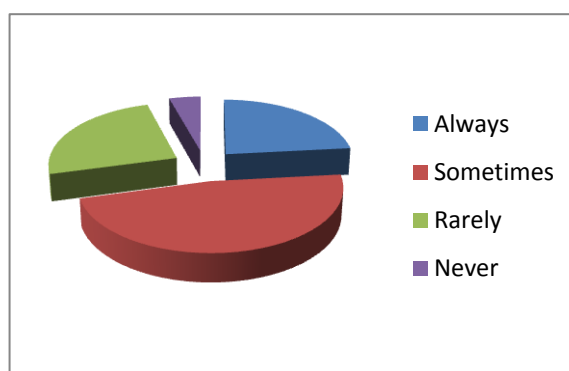


Table 16: The frequency of using the dialect in class Figure 16: The frequency of using the dialect in class

This table shows that EFL learners use their dialect in class either always (23.36%) or sometimes (47.45%). However, others use it rarely (24.81%), and the rest never use it in class (4.38%).

The results obtained from Questions 4, 5, 6, and 7 prove that the learners' dialect is overused and dominant in their lives. They do not use it only in community; they use it also within the confines of classes where the language that should be dominant is English since they are specialized in that language. This fact makes it clear how the practice of English is so reduced.

Qu. 8: Do you code switch from English to other varieties (Standard Arabic-Your dialect-French) during conversations with your classmates out of class?

Options	N	%
Yes	125	91.24
No	12	8.76
Total	137	100%

Table 17: The use of code switching from

English to other varieties

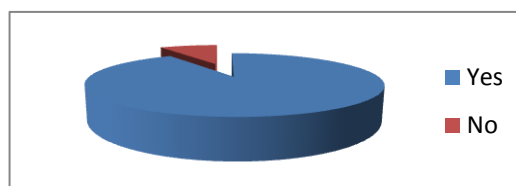


Figure 17: The use of code switching from

English to other varieties

This table shows that 91.24 % i.e. the majority of the learners answer this question with “yes”. On the other hand, only 8.76% of them answer with “no”.

Qu. 9: if yes, rank these varieties in order of frequency (Standard Arabic- Your dialect-French).

Language	S. A		Your dialect		French	
Order	N	%	N	%	N	%
1	8	5.84	103	82.4	14	11.2
2	45	32.85	16	12.8	64	51.2
3	72	52.55	6	4.8	47	37.6
Total	125	100%	125	100%	125	100%

Table 18: The order of frequency of using varieties in code switching.

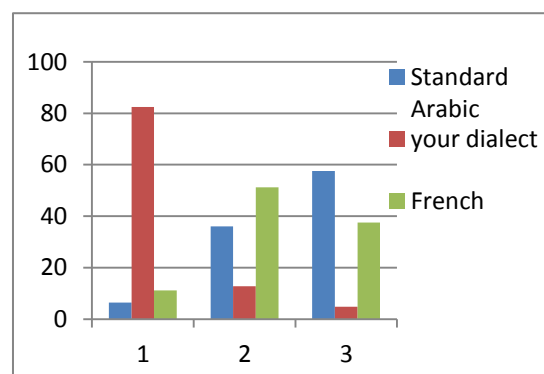


Figure 18: The order of frequency of using varieties in code switching

As the table above shows, the Learners' answers are different. Concerning the Standard Arabic, only 5.84% of the learners code switch to it first, then 32.85% others code switch to it second, and the majority of the learners (52.55%) rank it as the third language they code switch to during their conversations with their classmates.

As far as their local dialect is concerned, the majority of learners (82.4%) rank it as the first variety they code switch to during conversations with classmates. Then, 12.8% of the respondents rank it the second. However, only 4.8% rank it as the third variety they code switch to when conversing with their classmates.

Regarding French, there are only 11.2% of the learners rank it as the first variety they code switch to, 51.2% rank it the second, and 37.6% of EFL learners rank it as the third variety they code switch to during conversations with classmates.

This is another argument to the overuse of the dialect by EFL learners in Algeria which leads to the lack of practice since it is not used in our society. Hence, EFL learners do not find opportunities to exercise their tongues to pronounce it correctly.

Qu. 10: Do you think that your dialect has positive or negative effect on your EFL learning? Justify your answer in either case.

Options	N	%
Positive	44	32.12
Negative	82	59.85
No effect	11	8.03
Total	137	100%

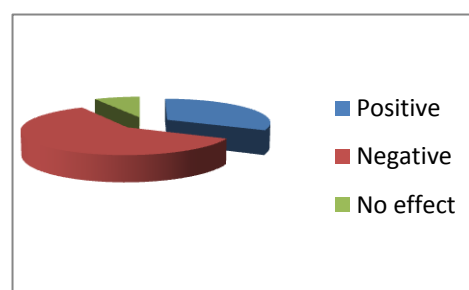


Table 19: Jijelian dialect's effects on EFL learning Figure 19: Jijelian dialect's effects on EFL learning

The table above shows that 59.85% of the respondents believe that their dialect has negative effects on their EFL learning. Others (32.12%), on the other hand, see that their dialect affects positively their EFL learning process. However, 8.03% say that there is no effect from the part of their dialect on their EFL learning.

The second part of this question is justified by no more than 59.85% of the respondents. Those who believe that their dialect has a negative effect (61.71%) provide the following justifications:

- “Our dialect prevents us from using English since its use reduces the practice of English language, and hence our tongue is not so used to pronouncing English language” 60.71%.
- “Our dialect affects our English pronunciation i.e. When we think in our dialect, we will mispronounce the English language because they are completely different” 39.29%.

Other respondents who agree that their dialect has positive effects on their EFL learning (18.29%) provide the following justifications:

- “There are some features in common between our dialect and the English language, and this helps us in learning English” 40%.
- “Our dialect helps us in arranging our thoughts in our minds, and as a result, our ideas are clearly transmitted” 60%.

3.2.2. Discussion of the Students’ Questionnaire Results

Taking into account the above facts, one is inclined to think that the analysis of the questionnaire which forms one of the research tools used for gathering data in the present research work results in a number of integral interpretations and conclusions. The later are based on participants’ answers in the four sections that the questionnaire is made up of. To this end, what comes next is hopefully a clear presentation of the conclusions drawn from the aforementioned analysis.

The major aims of the present research are investigating the most effective factors on the accent acquisition among EFL learners, and testing whether their local dialect is an influential factor on this particular process. Placing reliance on the aforesaid results leads one to conclude that the majority of English learners agree that their local dialect has negative effects; generally, on their EFL learning and on its native-like accent acquisition in particular.

The first conclusion obtained from the present dissertation is optimizing in that approximately the whole population hold positive attitudes towards the English accent and towards its acquisition process (section two). On the other hand, they assert that this process is the difficult one in their EFL learning, and they find difficulties in the mastery of English native-like accent (section three).

Another conclusion derived from this study proves that the main factors that affect the acquisition of a native-like accent among the Algerian learners of EFL are: age (Qu. 1; section one), the lack of exposure to the target language, and the lack and its' practice, the influence of their L1, and the lack of motivation (Qu. 1; section four). However, their failure in acquiring the English accent is not attributed to their gender (Qu. 2; section one) although English language attracts females more than males. In fact, all the Algerian learners of English (both males and females) hold positive attitudes towards the English accent, and towards its acquisition process (section two).

Similarly important, the majority of EFL learners agree that their local dialect stands in their way in acquiring the English native-like accent (questions 2, 3, and 10; section four) since its daily use (questions 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8; section four) reduces

the practice of English language, and hence their articulatory apparatus is not exercised to produce the strange English segmental and suprasegmental features.

As a conclusion, the results obtained from the students' questionnaire show that the present research hypothesis which states that "the learners' local dialect (Jijelian dialect) affects the native-like accent acquisition among EFL learners" is confirmed.

3.2.3. Analysis of the Students' Recordings

Subject One

Time	How many words are produced?	How many words are pronounced wrongly?	Grammatical errors	Contextual errors
05:00m	313	06	09	00

Table 22: Errors made by the interviewee 01

This subject discussed two topics, and she spoke English with an acceptable British accent. Actually, it took us a period of time to detect the following mistakes:

- "very": she pronounced it /vɪri/ while it should be pronounced /veri/.
- "deal": she pronounced it /dɪl/ while it should be pronounced /di:l/.
- "religion": she pronounced it /rɪlɪʒən/ while it should be pronounced /rɪlɪdʒən/.
- "Islamic": she pronounced it /ɪslæmɪk/ while it should be pronounced /ɪzlæmɪk/.
- "religious": she pronounced it /rɪlɪʒəs/ while it should be pronounced /rɪlɪdʒəs/.
- "knowing": she pronounced it /nəwɪŋ/ while it should be pronounced /nəʊwɪŋ/.

Regarding grammar, this subject made the following mistakes:

- **we** say that violence is, for **me**,...
- The ethic that **they** maybe **they** like.
- If I know that the behavior, he did, **deserve** (deserved) ... (twice).
- I think that the teacher **is resort** to beating.

- Why it's **we** that **we** should imitate them?
- I think that imitating others **is represent...**
- They can be ashamed **with (on)**.
- But for **non-literate (illiterate)** people...

As far as her ideas are concerned, they were well- related and meaningful in fact.

Subject Two

Time	How many words are produced?	How many words are pronounced wrongly?	Grammatical errors	Contextual errors
01:11m	98	02	01	00

Table 23: Errors made by the interviewee 02

This subject discussed only one topic concisely and precisely; thus, we did not find lots of errors either of grammar or of pronunciation. However, her ideas were not related and completed since she was in hurry to finish the discussion and to leave.

Pronunciation errors she made are the following:

- “problem”: she pronounced it /problæm/ while it should be pronounced /probləm/.
- “adviser”: she pronounced it /ədvaɪsə/ while it should be pronounced /ədvaɪzə/.

This subject made a grammatical error when she said “if the child deserve (deserves) to be punished.... Furthermore, she gave a meaningless sentence which is “we have to take into account the type of beating and the kind of it”.

Subject Three

Time	How many words are produced?	How many words are pronounced wrongly?	Grammatical errors	Contextual errors
02:12m	120	06	01	01

Table 24: Errors made by the interviewee 03

This subject discussed also only one topic, and the errors she made were mostly of pronunciation including:

- “religion”: she pronounced it /rɪlɪʒən/ while it should be pronounced /rɪlɪdʒən/.
- “very”: she pronounced it /vɪrɪ/ while it should be pronounced /veri/.
- “wear”: she pronounced it /wɪr/ while it should be pronounced /weə (r)/.
- “cover”: she pronounced it /qʌvə/ while it should be pronounced /kʌvə/.
- “follow”: she pronounced it /fɒlə/ while it should be pronounced /fɒləʊ/.
- “anything”: she pronounced it /ɪniθɪŋ/ while it should be pronounced /eniθɪŋ/.

This student made a grammatical mistake when she said “they don’t not like you”. Moreover, she made a contextual mistake when she said “we follow this modern..., but in respectful way”.

Subject Four

Time	How many words are produced?	How many words are pronounced wrongly?	Grammatical errors	Contextual errors
01:44m	97	06	06	01

Table 25: Errors made by the interviewee 04

This subject discussed one topic, and she made nine mistakes of pronunciation which are:

- “Islamic”: she pronounced it /ɪslæmik/ while it should be pronounced /ɪzlæmɪk/.
- “Muslim”: she pronounced it /mʊslɪm/ while it should be pronounced /mʊzlɪm/.

- “follow”: she pronounced it /fɒlə/ while it should be pronounced /fɒləʊ/.
- “Islam”: she pronounced it /ɪslæm/ while it should be pronounced /ɪzlæm/.
- “creating”: she pronounced it /kriet/ while it should be pronounced /kriet/.
- “others”: she pronounced it /ʌðə/ while it should be pronounced /ʌðə/.

She made also some grammatical mistakes including:

- Our culture **not** tell us...
- ...and **it's** not **reflect**...
- ...whereas the European one (**ones**) and that (**what**) we are dressing is (**are**) not...
- In their life (**lives**)...

Concerning contextual mistakes, this student made one mistake when she said “whereas the European one and that we are dressing is not like them”. In addition, when she lost the English word (status), she replaced it by an Arabic one.

Subject Five

Time	How many words are produced?	How many words are pronounced wrongly?	Grammatical errors	Contextual errors
08:34m	507	12	19	00

Table 26: Errors made by the interviewee 05

This subject talked on two topics for a long time, and she did not make any contextual error. Her ideas were transmitted clearly since she took her time in discussing the topics, and her pronunciation is understood although the following mistakes:

- “deal” she pronounced it /dɪl/ while it should be pronounced /di:l/

- “pupils” she pronounced it /**p**i:plz/ while it should be pronounced /p**j**u:plz
- “told” she pronounced it /**t**old/ while it should be pronounced /te**ʊ**ld/
- “Totally” she pronounced it /**t**otli/ while it should be pronounced /te**ʊ**tli/
- “whenever” she pronounced it /wenefə/ while it should be pronounced /wene**v**ə/
- “front” she pronounced it /fr**ɒ**nt/ while it should be pronounced /fr**ʌ**nt/
- “treat”: she pronounced it /tr**ɪ**t/ while it should be pronounced /tri:t/
- “definitely”: she pronounced it /dɪf**ɪ**nətli/ while it should be pronounced /de**f**ɪnɪtli/
- “unfortunately”: she pronounced it /ɪnfə:tənətli/ while it should be pronounced /**ʌ**nfə:t**f**əli/
- “Islamic”: she pronounced it /**ɪ**slæm/ while it should be pronounced /**ɪ**z**l**æm/
- “youth” :she pronounced it /j**ʌ**θ/ while it should be pronounced /ju:θ/
- “Islam” she pronounced it /**ɪ**slæm/ while it should be pronounced /**ɪ**z**l**æm/

On the other hand, she made also the following grammatical mistakes:

- I think the **teacher he** must be cleaver, and must have techniques **how** (**how** should be omitted) to deal with his pupils.
- He has to manage his classroom very well in order not to face the **misbehaved** from his pupils.
- It **must** happened...
- I'm agree.
- Their **foot** (**feet**).
- If **that** they did that....
- To be punished **of** (**for**) it..
- Whenever the teacher found (**find**)..

- **It (he)** didn't see that...
- ...so, the teacher take **(s)** him and talk **(s)** with him.
- ...in order not to embarrassed **him**.
- ...so, he may discovered**ed**...
- It affect **(s)**...it reflect **(s)**.
- ...a bad view about our Islamic **(Islam)**.
- Our youth today is **(are)** reflected ... is **(are)** focusing...
- **Is** so **decreases**
- **The our** level.

Subject Six

Time	How many words are produced?	How many words are pronounced wrongly?	Grammatical errors	Contextual errors
06:07m	470	15	27	00

Table 27: Errors made by the interviewee 06

This subject discussed two topics, and gave clear ideas, but she made lots of mistakes in pronunciation:

- “Islamic”, “Islam”: she pronounced them /ɪslæm(ɪk)/ while it should be pronounced /ɪzlæm (ɪk)/
- “religion”: she pronounced it /rɪlɪʒn/ while it should be pronounced /rɪlɪdʒn/
- “exist”: she pronounced it /ɪgzɪʒt/ while it should be pronounced /ɪgzɪzt/
- “follow”: she pronounced it /fɒlə/ while it should be pronounced /fɒləʊ/
- “other”: she pronounced it /ʌðə/ while it should be pronounced /əðə/
- “those”: she pronounced it /ðeʊs/ while it should be pronounced /ðeʊz/
- “country”: she pronounced it /qʌntri/ while it should be pronounced /kʌntri/
- “attentive”: she pronounced it /ətenʃɪv/ while it should be pronounced /ətentɪv/

- “deal”: she pronounced it /dɪl/ while it should be pronounced /di:l/
- “conclude”: she pronounced it /qənqlu:d/ while it should be pronounced /kənklɜ:d/
- “judge”: she pronounced it /ʒʌʒ/ while it should be pronounced /dʒʌdʒ/
- “age”: she pronounced it /eɪʒ/ while it should be pronounced /eɪdʒ/
- “other”: she pronounced it /ɒðə/ while it should be pronounced /ʌðə/
- “intelligent”: she pronounced it /ɪntɪlɪʒənt/ while it should be pronounced /ɪntelɪdʒənt/
- “understand”: she pronounced it /ʌndərstænd/ while it should be pronounced /ʌndəstænd/

This student made also many grammatical mistakes including:

- Affected **with (by)**
- Especially boys, **(they are) dressing** stranger colour **(s)** that **(are)** suitable for girl **(s)** ... and **longing (they are lengthening)** their hair **(s)**.
- This **(is)** the way of become **(ing)** modern people.
- This **is** not exist.
- We have to follow our Islamic **(Islam)** to be successful person **(s)** because all what **(is)** mention **(ed)** in the Coran and El- Sunna are the successful guidelines for having a good life and other **(s)** are not.
- Violence **never be..**
- If you want to deal with students, especially pupil **(s)** in primary school...
- You can use word **(s)**.
- If you find that a student is misbehavior **(ed)**, you can came **(come)** with **(to)** him...because violence **(is)** not a good way.

- I will go to school (**to**) talking about (**with**) the teacher...and if I found (**find**) that he is (**was**) mistaking, I will talked to him...in a respective (**respectful**) way...
- They must be more intelligent than the other (**s**).
- This (**is**) not mean...
- ... but not in a violence (**violent**) way.

Subject Seven

Time	How many words are produced?	How many words are pronounced wrongly?	Grammatical errors	Contextual errors
01:04m	78	03	01	00

Table 28: Errors made by the interviewee 07

This subject did not talk a lot since she discussed only one topic, and she made a few mistakes of pronunciation. They are the following:

- “Islamic”: she pronounced it /ɪslæmɪk/ while it should be pronounced /ɪzlæmɪk/
- “religion”: she pronounced it /rɪlɪʒn/ while it should be pronounced /rɪlɪdʒn/
- “youth”: she pronounced it /jʌθ/ while it should be pronounced /ju:θ/

This subject made also a grammatical mistake when she said “they didn’t” instead of “don’t”. Moreover, she made a contextual error when she said “...and especially, we mean here the especially the Islamic religion”.

Subject Eight

Time	How many words are produced?	How many words are pronounced wrongly?	Grammatical errors	Contextual errors
01:14m	66	01	06	00

Table 27: Errors made by the interviewee 08

This student did not accept to discuss the two topics. She chose to discuss only the social topic, so she did not talk too much. Hence, she made only one mistake is pronunciation when she said /i:fekts/ instead of /ɪfekts/. In addition, her ideas about the topic were well- related in fact.

However, she made some grammatical errors as:

- “is depend”
- “I’m disagree”
- “a bad effects”
- “if the child deserve (s) to be beating (en), he must to be to.

Subject Nine

Time	How many words are produced?	How many words are pronounced wrongly?	Grammatical errors	Contextual errors
01:25m	93	05	05	00

Table 30: Errors made by the interviewee 09

This student took her time in arranging and then writing her ideas, and even in discussing the social topic with us, so her expressions were well- formed and her thoughts were conveyed effectively. In addition, she used a correct pronunciation.

However, this student made some grammatical mistakes such as:

- “the pupils in his..”

- “the teacher(**teacher’s**) punishment
- “...is take (**taking**)...and discuss (**discussing**) ...

Subject Ten

Time	How many words are produced?	How many words are pronounced wrongly?	Grammatical errors	Contextual errors
02:57m	196	03	01	00

Table 31: Errors made by the interviewee 10

This subject expressed her ideas about two topics very well. She did not make any contextual error. She even did not make grammatical mistakes, only one “is represent”. However, she mispronounced the following words:

- “attention”: she pronounced it /ætenʃn/ while it should be pronounced /ətenʃn/
- “carnival”: she pronounced it /ka:nəvl/ while it should be pronounced /ka:nɪvl/
- “Islamic”: she pronounced it /ɪslæmɪk/ while it should be pronounced /ɪzlæmɪk/.

Subject Eleven

Time	How many words are produced?	How many words are pronounced wrongly?	Grammatical errors	Contextual errors
04:56m	84	03	03	00

Table 32: Errors made by the interviewee 11

This subject discussed two topics with hesitation, and she made lots of pauses. Hence, she made the following mistakes in pronunciation:

- “other”: she pronounced it /ɒðə/ instead of /ʌðə/
- “can”: she pronounced it /qæən/ instead of /kæən/
- “countries”: she pronounced it /qʌntri:z/ instead of /kʌntri:z/

Regarding grammar, this student made the following mistakes:

- Algeria is not more develop (**ed**)
- We can produces products like the others but don't (**not**) the same in quality.

As far as contextual errors are concerned, there were no errors made by that student.

Subject Twelve

Time	How many words are produced?	How many words are pronounced wrongly?	Grammatical errors	Contextual errors
06:00m	129	03	03	01

Table 33: Errors made by the interviewee 12

This subject, in discussing the political and the economics topics, made the following pronunciation mistakes:

- “Tunisian”: she pronounced it /tɪnɪziən/ instead of /tju:nɪziən/
- “Libyan”: she pronounced it /lɪbɪnɪən/ instead of /lɪbɪən/
- “can”: she pronounced it /qæn/ instead of /kæn/

Furthermore, this student made the following grammatical mistakes:

- Algeria don't (**doesn't**) have capacities. (Twice).
- Do you think that **Algerian products** can compete the external ones? Yes, **he** can.

In addition, she made a contextual error when she said “in my mind Libyans when they did this war ... (incomplete).”

Subject Thirteen

Time	How many words are produced?	How many words are pronounced wrongly?	Grammatical errors	Contextual errors
06:30m	350	02	03	00

Table 34: Errors made by the interviewee 13

This student spoke proper English with well- expressed ideas, and with no contextual errors. However, she made some errors in grammar and pronunciation.

The following are the mistakes made in pronunciation:

- “competitive”: she pronounced it /kəmpətɪtɪv/ instead of /kəmpətətɪv/
- “can”: she pronounced it /qən/ instead /kən/

Concerning grammar, she made the following mistakes:

- “any kind **from** (of) this”
- “the meaning of **the** spring”
- “it aims to destroy the country from **within** (inside).”

Subject Fourteen

Time	How many words are produced?	How many words are pronounced wrongly?	Grammatical errors	Contextual errors
07:20m	240	04	03	02

Table 35: Errors made by the interviewee 14

This subject made the following errors in pronunciation:

- “either”: she pronounced it /i:ðə/ instead of /eɪðə/
- “main”: she pronounced it /mɪn/ instead of /meɪn/
- “damage”: she pronounced it /dæmɪʒ/ instead of /dæmɪdʒ/
- “Israel”: she pronounced it /ɪzrʌlɪk/ instead of /ɪzreɪl/

The grammatical mistakes this subject made are:

- Algeria can relays
- It cans improve or encourages people to work in their land.
- In this point I' m not totally agree.

In addition, this subject made the following contextual errors:

- So, Algeria in order to ... not to
- Algeria recently

Subject Fifteen

Time	How many words are produced?	How many words are pronounced wrongly?	Grammatical errors	Contextual errors
09:30m	315	04	04	00

Table 36: Errors made by the interviewee 15

This subject made the following mistakes in pronunciation:

- “olive”: she pronounced it /blaiɪv/ instead of /blɪv/
- “through”: she pronounced it /tru: / instead of /θru:/
- “applicable”: she pronounced it /əplɪkeɪbl/ instead of /əplɪkəbl/
- “projects”: she pronounced it /prɒʒekts/ instead of /prɒdʒekts/

Concerning grammar, the following mistakes were made by this subject:

- The local products that are producing (**produced**)...
- If the Algerian government give(**s**).....and it give (**s**).....
- It helps in the **destroyment** (**destruction**) of that country.

As far as contextual errors are concerned, this student did not made mistakes although her hesitation and anxiety.

Subject Sixteen

Time	How many words are produced?	How many words are pronounced wrongly?	Grammatical errors	Contextual errors
08:17m	307	02	04	00

Table 37: Errors made by the interviewee 16

This subject discussed two topics, and she provided well- formed and comprehensible utterances with no contextual errors. However, she mispronounced the following words:

- “trust”: she pronounced it /trest/ instead of /trʌst/
- “investigation”: she pronounced it /ʌnvestɪgæfn/ instead of /ɪnvestɪgæfn/

She made also the following grammatical errors:

- These kind (**s**)
- After the independence of the Algerian (**s**)
- Algerian as a country is rich
- As I saw in **the** TV.

Subject Seventeen

Time	How many words are produced?	How many words are pronounced wrongly?	Grammatical errors	Contextual errors
07: 09m	238	02	02	02

Table 38: Errors made by the interviewee 17

This subject made the following pronunciation errors:

- “these”: she pronounced it /ði:s/ instead of /ði:z/
- “destroyed”: she pronounced it /distrɔɪt/ instead of /distrɔɪd/

In addition, the following grammatical errors were made by this student:

- Algeria have (**has**) capacities
- It is difficult to substitute these things by local one (**ones**).

Furthermore, she made the following contextual mistakes:

- This material overside our country
- People become more courage to present themselves to show their existence.

Subject Eighteen

Time	How many words are produced?	How many words are pronounced wrongly?	Grammatical errors	Contextual errors
07: 42m	118	01	05	02

Table 39: Errors made by the interviewee 18

This subject discussed two topics with brief answers. She made the following mistakes in pronunciation:

- “can”: she pronounced it /qən/ instead of /kən/

In addition, she made the following grammatical errors:

- The wars (**are**) always disasters
- Arabian (**Arab**) people
- Arabian (**Arabic**) countries
- They will not changed
- I think that the only negative aspects..

Furthermore, she made other contextual errors, and provided incomplete utterances as:

- It is famous but

- They should do

Subject Nineteen

Time	How many words are produced?	How many words are pronounced wrongly?	Grammatical errors	Contextual errors
03:08m	190	03	03	00

Table 40: Errors made by the interviewee 19

This subject made the following mistakes in pronunciation:

- “pupils”: she pronounced it /pju:pɪlz/ instead of /pju:plz/
- “judge”: she pronounced it /ʒʌʒ/ instead of /dʒʌdʒ/
- “can”: she pronounced it /qæən/ instead of /kæən/

She made also grammatical errors such as:

- It affect them
- It not necessary to follow them in their style of dressing to be develop

As far as her ideas are concerned, this student provided complete and clear utterances, and did not make contextual mistakes although her panic and hesitation.

Subject Twenty

Time	How many words are produced?	How many words are pronounced wrongly?	Grammatical errors	Contextual errors
05:19m	246	07	04	00

Table 41: Errors made by the interviewee 20

This subject made the following mistakes in pronunciation:

- “many”: she pronounced it /mɪni/ instead of /meni/

- “parents”: she pronounced it /pʌrent/ instead of /peərent/
- “pupils”: she pronounced it /pʌplz/ instead of /pju:plz/
- “towards”: she pronounced it /təwʌds/ instead of /təwɔ:ds/
- “judge”: she pronounced it /ʒʌʒ/ instead of /dʒʌdʒ/
- “person”: she pronounced it /pɪsən/ instead of /pɜ:sən/
- “dress”: she pronounced it /ədres/ instead of /dres/

She made also some grammatical errors as:

- There are things that is (**are**) forbidden
- Style of dressing has not (**no**) relation with development
- Of course not (**no**)
- They must study in peace (**peaceful**) way.

Regarding context, this student gave complete sentences and clear ideas with no mistakes.

3.2.4. Discussion of the Students' Recordings Results

This section discusses also the findings of the students' recordings in order to support the present research's hypothesis formulated in the first chapter. From the data obtained from the recordings, it is noticed that, in addition to pronunciation errors, the subjects make some other grammatical and contextual mistakes. Taking into account these errors, which are analyzed above, EFL learners seem unable to acquire the English language fully inspite of the long period of time they spent in studying it. The current study finds that their local dialects interfere, generally, in their EFL learning, and in their English native- like accent acquisition process in particular.

A noticeable influence of the learners' local dialect of Jijel is the tendency by most students to pronounce /k/ as /q/ in some English words. For example, can /qən/ (subjects 11, 12, 13, 14, 18, 19), cover /qʌvə/ (subject 3), country /qʌntri/ (subjects 6 and 11), creating /qriɛtiŋ/ (subject 4), and others.

Another influence of the learners' local dialect of Jijel is that most students seem to resort to a regular pronunciation of the letters 'j', 'g', and 'dg' that is most frequent in both their dialect and Standard Arabic which is /ʒ/ instead of the English one /dʒ/. For instance, religion /riliʒn/ (subjects 1, 3, 6, and 7), age /eɪʒ/ (subject 6), damage /dæmiʒ/ (subject 14), projects /proʒekts/ (subject 15), judge /ʒʌʒ/ (subjects 6 and 20).

As far as aspects of connected speech and the suprasegmental features are concerned, EFL learners can be identified easily as foreigners to other non-native speakers and to native speakers because of their tone of speech, their overuse of the strong forms of words, and the neglect of other aspects as liaison and elision (all the subjects did not use them in these discussions).

Furthermore, almost all the subjects appear to have serious difficulties in mastering English stress and intonation. This can be explained by the fact that English, like other languages, cannot be strictly classified as syllable timed or stress timed. A more accurate description is that, it is stress based or syllable based i.e. English is not completely in one category or the other, but tend to have more stress-timed or syllable-timed features.

All in all, it appears from the analysis of the errors made by third year EFL learners that all of them do not speak English with a perfect native-like accent. Their local dialect comes at the top of the effective factors on their acquisition of the

English accent since, most often, they are fond of including their dialect's consonants (/ʒ/ and /q/) and intonation as they use English.

Conclusion

The present chapter is divided into two main sections. The first section is devoted to the description of the questionnaire and the recordings. In the analysis section, it is found that the learners' local dialect is an effective factor on their English accent acquisition process.

Limitations of the Study

During the time of conducting our research, a lot of problems have been arisen and caused difficulties for us. These limitations are as follows:

- ❖ Half of the learners refused to contribute in the questionnaire, and most of those who participated avoided justifying their choices.
- ❖ Lack of materials to conduct the recordings, since it is not an easy task to be conducted. This forced the researchers to use their own cell phones to record it.
- ❖ The majority of students refused to be recorded. For this reason the researchers worked hardly on convincing them. Some of them accepted but in condition to select the topics by themselves.
- ❖ Using cell phones as recorders makes it difficult for the researchers to analyze data. Thus, researchers were obliged to repeat the same recording for several times in order to catch each word produced by the learner.
- ❖ The majority of learners hesitated a lot and made long pauses in their speech which make it difficult for the researchers to detect the features of their English accent.

Pedagogical Recommendations

As it is shown above, the findings have positively confirmed the research hypothesis. Therefore, in the light of these findings we recommend the following:

- Teachers should motivate their students to use only English language both inside and outside classroom.
- Learners should bear in mind that speaking English out of class with friends and classmates will improve their English accent and make them speak fluently without complexities.
- Learners should avoid overusing their dialect at the expense of English or at least reduce its use.
- Parents should expose their children to the English language through private schools in early ages to insure their acquisition of English accents.
- In order to be motivated to acquire an English accent, it is better for learners to expose to English native speakers through media and means of technology as Facebook, movies, games, videos...etc.

General Conclusion

The present study attempted to highlight the main factors which justify the failure of EFL learners in acquiring native- like accent with special reference to Algerian third year LMD students of the department of foreign languages in Mohammed Seddik Ben Yahia university of Jijel who are chosen to be the case study of our research.

The theoretical part of the present research is divided into two chapters. The first one is devoted to pronunciation and the necessary data the learner should bear in mind about pronunciation including the main factors affecting its acquisition. The second chapter, on the other hand, is devoted to English accent in addition to the factors and problems which affect its acquisition process among EFL learners and which can be considered as the real reasons behind acquiring foreign accents among those learners.

The practical part of the research is directed to investigate the factors affecting accent acquisition among EFL learners in general, and giving more attention to test the effectiveness of their dialect on the acquisition of English accent. In order to obtain the needed results, we attempted to collect data from the questionnaire answered by third year LMD learners and from the recordings which we taped during free discussions with them. The results obtained from the research tools are successful since the findings supports the ones obtained by the researchers who are mentioned in the literature review of that study. Thus, the findings reflect the expected results concerning the influence of learners' dialect on the process of English accent acquisition.

To put it in a nutshell, this study has confirmed the hypothesis that we set at the beginning that EFL learners' local dialect of Jijel can be considered as an effective factor which influences the process of English native-like accent acquisition.

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Appendix A

QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear students,

The following questionnaire is part of our research work that deals with the influential factors on English accent acquisition. Your answers will be of great help for the research. Would you, please, tick the appropriate box and make a full statement whenever required.

Thank you in advance for your kind collaboration.

Section one: General Information

1. Your age: 20-25 years old ☐ 25 -30 years old ☐ 30 years and more ☐
2. Gender : Male ☐ Female ☐
3. How long have you been studying English? ☐ years

Section Two: Students' Attitudes towards English Accent Acquisition

	Very important	Important	Not important
1. In your opinion, how important is accent in EFL?			

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
2. Tick one of the following to indicate your opinion to the statement: "I want to be able to pronounce English just like native speakers"					

Why?

.....

.....

.....

Section Three: English Accent Acquisition Difficulty

	Good pronunciation	An accent like the natives	General knowledge about the language regardless of its accent
1. According to you, what can you develop as an EFL learner?			

	Weak	Average	Good	Excellent
2. Do you rate your English accent as:				

	Easy	Difficult	Very difficult
3. How do you find acquiring English accents?			

Why?

.....

.....

.....

Section Four: Factors Affecting English Accent Acquisition

	The lack of exposure to the target language	The influence of your first language	You are not motivated to achieve a native - like accent
1. In your opinion, you fail in pronouncing English like the natives because of:			

Others (if any):

.....

.....

.....

	English	Arabic	French	Your dialect
2. In holding conversation, in English, with your teachers and classmates, do you arrange your thoughts and decide what to say in:				

	The meaning of your speech	The structure of your speech	The accent of your speech	Nothing
3. Does your choice of any of the above affect:				

	Always	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
4. How often do you use English out of class?				
5. How often do you use your dialect out of class?				
6. How often do you use English in class?				
7. How often do you use your dialect in class?				

8. Do you code switch from English to other languages during conversations with your classmates out of class?

Yes ☐

No ☐

	Standard Arabic	Your dialect	French
9. If yes, rank these languages from 1 to 3 in order of frequency:			

10. Do you think that your dialect has a positive or a negative effect on your EFL learning?

Positive ☐

Negative ☐

Justify your answer in either case:

.....

Appendix B

Topics of the recordings

Topic 1: Physical punishment in primary schools

In primary schools, lots of teachers deal with misbehaved pupils violently through caning or any other physical punishment;

Questions

- 1- Do you think that physical punishment in primary schools is an effective way to make them good pupils?
- 2- If a teacher use the cane with your little child, brother, or sister, do you think that you have the right to judge that teacher?
- 3- In your opinion, how should teachers react towards the misbehaviour of some pupils?

Topic 2: Today's youth way of dressing

Nowadays, lots of people, especially youth, follow strange dress style.

Questions

- 1- Do you think that the way our today's youth dress reflects our Islamic culture?
- 2- Do you think that we should dress according to our Islamic culture or imitate other cultures which are considered modern?
- 3- Do you think that following Westerns in their style of dressing makes us developed like them?

Topic 3: Algerian economy; problems and solutions.

In the last years, Algerian economy decreased and became weaker, and it will be worse when oil disappears. The Algerian minister of economy declared that to establish a solid basis for our economy, we should consume what we produce.

Questions

- 1- In your opinion, could Algerian government establish an independent economy and avoid external products?
- 2- Do you think that we will be able to compete the international products?
- 3- Could Algerians alter or change external products by local ones?

Topic 4: Wars in the Arabic world (Arab spring).

The Arabic world, these last years, witnesses a phenomenon called “Arab spring” where Arabs people conflict the regime of their countries.

Questions

- 1- Do you think that those wars are really spring or disasters? Why?
- 2- Who is the responsible for these conflicts and what are the aims he wants to achieve behind these wars?
- 3- In your opinion, did “Arab spring” bring positive or negative effects for Arabs?
How?

Résumé

Lorsque les étudiants s'engagent dans l'apprentissage de l'anglais, ils cherchent surtout à atteindre un accent natif et parfait. Pourtant, apprendre de l'accent anglais est un aspect le plus difficile pour les étudiants, et il est presque un objectif pleinement irréaliste de réaliser. La présente étude a examiné les facteurs les plus performants dans l'acquisition de l'accent anglais natif chez les étudiants de troisième année LMD de l'Université Mohammed Seddik Ben Yahia à Jijel. Elle a également pour objectif particulier de tester l'intervention linguistique du dialecte local de Jijel sur ce processus. Pour tester l'hypothèse de cette étude, un questionnaire et des enregistrements ont été utilisés comme des instruments de recherche. Les résultats de notre étude semblaient soutenir l'hypothèse selon lequel le dialecte local de Jijel est un facteur d'influence sur le processus d'acquisition de l'accent anglais.

الملخص

عندما يشرح الطالب في تعلم اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية، أهم جانب قد يطمح إلى اكتسابه هو اللفظة الإنجليزية التي تشبه تلك التي يتحدث بها أصحابها الأصليون. و لكن يعتبر هذا الجانب من اللغة الإنجليزية (اللفظة) من أكبر التحديات بالنسبة للطالب، و في أغلب الأحيان يكون هدفاً يستحيل تحقيقه. تهدف الدراسة الحالية إلى تسليط الضوء على أهم العوامل التي من شأنها التأثير على عملية اكتساب اللفظة الإنجليزية عند طلبة السنة الثالثة ليسانس- ماستر-دكتوراه، تهدف هذه الدراسة أيضاً إلى اختبار مدى تأثير اللهجة المحلية الجبلية على هذه العملية. من أجل التحقق من صحة الفرضية المذكورة آنفاً استعملنا استبيان وزعناه على طلبة السنة الثالثة، إلى جانب بعض التسجيلات الصوتية من أجل جمع المعلومات اللازمة. بعد تحليل المعلومات وجدنا أن النتائج المتحصل عليها تثبت صحة الفرضية التي تنص على أن اللهجة المحلية الجبلية عامل مؤثر على عملية اكتساب اللفظة الإنجليزية.