

NEAR EAST UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATIONAL SCIENCES
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING

ISSUES OF PRONUNCIATION AND THE ATTITUDES OF KURDISH
UNIVERSITY STUDENTS AND TEACHERS TOWARDS ENGLISH LANGUAGE
PRONUNCIATION IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE DEPARTMENTS

MASTER THESIS

MOKHLES SALEH IBRAHIM

NICOSIA

December 2015

NEAR EAST UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATIONAL SCIENCES
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING

ISSUES OF PRONUNCIATION AND THE ATTITUDES OF KURDISH
UNIVERSITY STUDENTS AND TEACHERS TOWARDS ENGLISH LANGUAGE
PRONUNCIATION IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE DEPARTMENTS

MASTER THESIS

MOKHLES SALEH IBRAHIM

SUPERVISOR: ASST. PROF. DR. NURDAN ATAMTÜRK

CO-SUPERVISOR: ASSOC. PROF. DR. MUSTAFA KURT

NICOSIA

December 2015

Approval of the Graduate School of Educational Sciences

Prof. Dr. Orhan Çiftçi
Director

I certify that this thesis satisfies all the requirements as a thesis for the degree of Master of Arts.

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Mustafa Kurt
Head of Department

This is to certify that we have read this thesis submitted by Mokhles Saleh Ibrahim titled “Issues of Pronunciation and the Attitudes of Kurdish University Students and Teachers towards English Language Pronunciation in English Language Departments”, and that in our opinion it is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Arts.

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Mustafa Kurt
Co-Supervisor

Asst. Prof. Dr. Nurdan Atamtürk
Supervisor

Examining Committee Members

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Mustafa Kurt

Asst. Prof. Dr. Doina Popescu.

Asst. Prof. Dr. Nurdan Atamtürk

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that all information in this document has been obtained and presented in accordance with academic rules and ethical conduct. I also declare that, as required by these rules and conduct, I have fully cited and referenced all materials and results that are not original to this study.

Name, last name: Mokhles Ibrahim

Signature:

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to express appreciation to my supervisor Asst. Prof. Dr. Nurdan Atamtürk for her assistance, valuable feedback and advice. I also highly appreciate her patience and constructive criticism during the writing stage of my dissertation thesis.

I am particularly grateful for the assistance given by my co-supervisor Assoc. Prof. Dr. Mustafa Kurt for his kind suggestions and advice during my thesis stage.

I wish to thank my professors during my M.A. courses specifically Asst.Prof. Dr. Çise Çavusoğlu, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Johann Pillai and Prof. Dr. Sabri Koc, for their productive feedback.

I am also grateful to the participants of this study for their patience and cooperation. I am grateful to the instructors and administrators at English language department at Soran University for their participation and assistance with my thesis. In addition, I want to express my great appreciation to Ms. Brandi Roach and Mr. Michael Phillips for their assistance in proof reading my work.

Finally, I wish to thank my parents for their support and extend my grateful thanks to my beloved wife and my prince (Zozan Musa and Rawaz) for their encouragement and patience during my studies.

ABSTRACT

ISSUES OF PRONUNCIATION AND THE ATTITUDES OF KURDISH UNIVERSITY STUDENTS AND TEACHERS TOWARDS ENGLISH LANGUAGE PRONUNCIATION IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE DEPARTMENTS

Mokhles Saleh Ibrahim

MA Program English Language Teaching

Supervisor: Asst. Prof. Dr. Nurdan Atamtürk

December 2015

The study investigated issues of pronunciation faced by Kurdish university students in English language departments. The main purpose of this study was to discover the major issues of pronunciation faced by Kurdish university students and their attitudes towards English Language pronunciation. The second research objective was to explore the teachers of phonetics' strategies and suggestions for teaching and improving students' English language pronunciation. Forty students from the English language department at Soran University (SU) participated in the study, consisting of fourteen males and twenty-six females. Also, six teachers who taught pronunciation courses took part in the study. The data were collected by three instruments, primarily; an attitude questionnaire was given to the participants in order to ascertain the students' strategies, difficulties and their recommendations for improving English language pronunciation. Secondly, an attitude questionnaire was distributed to teachers in order to find out the teachers' strategies and recommendations for teaching and improving students' English language pronunciation. Thirdly, a list of twenty sentences were given to the participants to be read aloud, in order to elicit the students' mistakes in articulating /ð/ and /θ/ phonemes, words spelled with silent letters and spelling-induced mispronunciation of English language words. The results for the students' attitude questionnaire indicated they had strategies, difficulties and recommendations in improving their English language pronunciation. Also, the teachers confirmed that they had strategies and suggestions for enhancing students' pronunciation. Finally, the results obtained from the sounds recordings revealed that students made mistakes in articulating the /ð/ phoneme and replaced it with other phonemes such as /z/, /d/, /θ/, /s/ or /t/. They also faced difficulties in pronouncing /θ/ and replaced it with these /s/, /t/, /ð/, /z/ or /d/. For spelling-induced mispronunciation of words, the participants made mistakes or mispronounced them. In addition silent letters were often pronounced by students.

Keywords: Issues of pronunciation, Kurdish university students, Phoneme, Silent letters, Spelling-induced mispronunciation, Strategies and suggestions

ÖZET

TELAFFUZ SORUNLARI VE KÜRT ÜNİVERSİTELERİNDEKİ İNGİLİZCE DİL BÖLÜMÜ ÖĞRENCİ VE HOCALARININ, İNGİLİZCE DİL TELAFFUZLARINA KARŞI OLAN DAVRANIŞLARI

Mokhles Saleh Ibrahim
İngiliz Dili Öğretimi Yüksek Lisans Programı
Danışman: Asst. Prof. Dr. Nurdan Atamtürk
Aralık 2015

Çalışmada, İngiliz dili bölümlerinde Kürt üniversite öğrencilerinin karşılaştığı telaffuz sorunları incelenmiştir. Bu çalışmanın temel hedefi, Kürt üniversite öğrencilerinin karşılaştıkları telaffuz sorunlarını ve onların İngiliz dili telaffuzuna karşı olan tutumlarını keşfetmektir. Araştırmanın ikinci hedefi ise, öğretmenlerin öğretim ve öğrencilerin İngiliz dili telaffuzunu geliştirme için fonetik stratejileri ve önerilerini keşfetmektir. On dördü erkek ve yirmi altısı kız olmak üzere Soran Üniversitesi'ndeki (SU) İngiliz dili bölümünden kırk öğrenci çalışmada yer aldı. Ayrıca, telaffuz dersleri veren altı öğretmen de çalışmada yer aldı. Veriler üç veri toplama aracıyla toplandı, öncelikle; öğrencilerin stratejilerini, yaşadıkları zorlukları ve İngiliz dili telaffuzunu geliştirmek için tavsiyelerini öğrenmek üzere katılımcılara bir tutum anketi dağıtıldı. İkinci olarak, öğretmenlerin öğretim ve öğrencilerin İngiliz dili telaffuzunu geliştirmeleri için stratejilerini ve önerilerini tespit etmek üzere bir tutum anketi öğretmenlere dağıtıldı. Üçüncü olarak ise, yirmi cümleden oluşan bir liste, öğrencilerin /ð/ve /θ/ fonemleri söylerken, sessiz harflerle hecelenen kelimeleri ve heceleme kaynaklı yanlış telaffuz edilen İngilizce sözcüklerdeki hataları ortaya çıkarmak için yüksek sesle okumaları için katılımcılara verildi. Öğrencilerin tutum anketi sonuçları onların stratejilerinin, karşılaştıkları zorlukların ve önerilerinin olduğunu göstermiştir. Ayrıca, öğretmenler de öğrencilerin telaffuzunu geliştirecek stratejilerinin ve önerilerinin olduğunu belirtmişlerdir. Son olarak, ses kayıtlarından elde edilen sonuçlar şunu göstermiştir ki öğrenciler /ð/ fonemini söylerken hata yaptılar ve /z/, /d/, /θ/, /s/ or /t/ gibi diğer fonemleri kullanmışlardır. Ayrıca, /θ/ fonemini de telaffuz etmekte zorluk yaşamışlar ve /s/, /t/, /ð/, /z/ or /d/ fonemlerini kullanmışlardır. Heceleme kaynaklı kelimelerin yanlış telaffuzu için, katılımcılar ya hata yaptılar ya da onları yanlış telaffuz ettiler. Bunlara ek olarak sesletilmemesi gereken sessiz harflerin öğrenciler tarafından telaffuz edildiği bulunmuştur.

Anahtar sözcükler: Telaffuz sorunları, Kürt üniversite öğrencileri, Fonem, Sessiz harfler, Heceleme kaynaklı yanlış telaffuz, Stratejiler ve öneriler

TABLE OF THE CONTENTS

| | |
|--|------|
| APPROVAL OF THE THESIS | II |
| DECLARATION..... | III |
| ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS | IV |
| ABSTRACT..... | V |
| ÖZET | VI |
| LIST OF THE CONTENTS | VII |
| LIST OF APPENDICES | X |
| LIST OF TABLES | XI |
| LIST OF FIGURES | XII |
| LIST OF ABBRIVIATIONS | XIII |
| CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION | 1 |
| Introduction and Background of the Study | 1 |
| Statement of the Problem and the Importance of the Study | 3 |
| Research Questions | 5 |
| Limitation of the Study | 5 |
| Key Concepts | 6 |
| Pronunciation | 6 |
| Second language acquisition | 6 |
| Contrastive analysis | 6 |
| Mother tongue interference..... | 7 |
| Conclusion | 7 |
| CHAPTER II: REVIE OF LITERATURE | 8 |
| Critical Period Hypothesis (CPH) | 8 |
| Age factor | 8 |
| Contrastive Analysis | 10 |

| | |
|---|----|
| Historical background and of (CAH) | 10 |
| Strong version..... | 11 |
| Weak version | 12 |
| Moderate version | 13 |
| First language interference | 14 |
| Kurdish Language Sound System | 15 |
| Kurdish consonant sounds | 16 |
| Kurdish vowel sounds..... | 19 |
| English Language Sound System..... | 21 |
| English consonant sounds..... | 21 |
| English vowel sounds | 22 |
| The Comparison of Kurdish and English Sound Systems | 24 |
| CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY | 26 |
| Research Design | 26 |
| Participants..... | 27 |
| Instruments..... | 29 |
| Reliability and Validity | 30 |
| Data Collection | 31 |
| Data Analysis | 32 |
| CHAPTER IV: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION..... | 34 |
| Students' Attitudes Towards English Language Pronunciation | 34 |
| Teachers' Attitudes Towards English Language Pronunciation | 42 |
| Teachers' strategies for teaching pronunciation..... | 44 |
| Teachers' suggestions and recommendations | 45 |
| Students' Mistakes of Most Commonly Mispronounced Sounds and Words | 47 |
| Students' mistakes of most commonly mispronounced sounds; fricative | |
| /ð/ | 47 |
| Students' mistakes of most commonly mispronounced sounds; fricative | |
| /θ/ | 48 |
| Students' mistakes of most commonly mispronounced words; | |
| spelling-induced mispronunciation | 49 |

| | |
|---|-----------|
| Students' mistakes of most commonly mispronounced words; silent letters | 50 |
| CHAPTER V: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS..... | 52 |
| Conclusion | 52 |
| Students' attitudes toward English language pronunciation | 52 |
| Teachers' attitudes toward English language pronunciation | 53 |
| Students' mistakes of most commonly mispronounced sounds | 54 |
| Students' mistakes in most commonly mispronounced words..... | 55 |
| Recommendations | 55 |
| Suggestions for Further Research | 56 |
| REFERENCES..... | 58 |
| APPENDICES | 65 |

LIST OF APPENDICES

| | |
|---|----|
| Appendix A: Table 13 | 65 |
| Appendix B: Students' Attitude Questionnaire | 68 |
| Appendix C: Teachers' Attitude Questionnaire..... | 70 |
| Appendix D: List of Short Sentences Used in Sound Recordings..... | 74 |
| Appendix E: Request Letter for Using Teachers' Questionnaire | 75 |
| Appendix F: Approval Letter of SU English Language Department | 76 |
| Appendix G: Letter from the NEU English Department | 77 |

LIST OF TABLES

| | |
|---|----|
| Table 1. The Place and Manner of Articulation of Kurdish Consonant Sounds | 16 |
| Table 2. The Place and Manner of Articulation of English Consonant Sounds..... | 21 |
| Table 3. Students' Demographic Profile | 28 |
| Table 4. Teachers' Education and Experience..... | 29 |
| Table 5. Validity and Reliability of the Students' Questionnaire..... | 30 |
| Table 6. List of Short Sentences Used in Sound Recording | 32 |
| Table 7. Students' Strategies, Difficulties and Suggestion Dimensions | 42 |
| Table 8. Teachers' Perceptions Regarding Reasons for Pronunciation Errors | 44 |
| Table 9. Teachers' Preferred Strategy for Teaching Pronunciation | 46 |
| Table 10. The mispronunciation Percentages of Fricative /ð/ | 48 |
| Table 11. The mispronunciation Percentages of Fricative /θ/ | 49 |
| Table 12. The mispronunciation Percentages of Spelling-Induced Mispronunciation and Silent Letters | 50 |
| Table 13. Students' Attitude towards English Language Pronunciation | 65 |

LIST OF FIGURES

| | |
|---|----|
| Figure 1. The Map of Kurdish Vowel Sounds Distribution | 19 |
| Figure 2. The Map of English Vowel Sounds Distribution..... | 23 |
| Figure 3. The Percentages Variation of /ð/, /θ/, Silent Letters and Spelling-induced Mispronunciation Mistakes | 51 |

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|-------|---|
| CA: | Contrastive Analysis |
| CAH: | Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis |
| CPH: | Critical Period Hypothesis |
| EFL: | English as a Foreign Language |
| IPA: | International Phonetic Alphabet |
| L2: | Second Language |
| SPSS: | Statistical Package for the Social Sciences |
| SU: | Soran University |
| TL: | Target Language |

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter commences with the discussion on the significance of pronunciation in second language learning and the factors which have an implicit role in acquiring it. More specifically, the pronunciation problems of Kurdish learners will be identified and their attitudes towards English language pronunciation will be analyzed. Moreover, this chapter covers the importance of the study and the research questions proposed in the thesis.

Introduction and Background of the Study

Graddol, Leith, Swan, Rhys and Gillen (2007) state that the English language has become one of the most popular languages in the world; people are making a great effort to learn it. In spite of English language learners' endeavors, they face problems in mastering it. Brown (2000) explained that one of the difficulties that make learners get stuck in their interactions with others is the difficulty of pronunciation and the ability to pronounce the sounds of the target language in an appropriate and suitable way. One of the reasons that make learners have such problems in learning languages is neglect of pronunciation skills. Derwing & Munro (2005) acknowledged that "the study of pronunciation has been marginalized within the field of applied linguistics" (p. 379). In addition, Kolokdaragh (2009) reiterates that "pronunciation is neglected and teachers think that learning/teaching pronunciation should be left to higher levels" (p.2). However, Kelly (2000) believes that teachers' hesitation about how to teach pronunciation is another factor that has let it be overlooked.

In contrast to neglecting pronunciation, some researchers have focused more on it. They seeing that it should be regarded as a tool for investigating and manipulating the language barriers. Mohamadi (2014) emphasizes that “.....pronunciation has occupied a place in most English syllabuses and this is why many teachers, researchers and sponsors are involved in teaching English ” (p.1).

However, the pronunciation should be integrated into the language teaching process, but it needs teachers’ and learners’ involvement in the process of teaching and learning pronunciation. As Underhill (2005) stated, learners’ and teachers’ engagement is required in teaching and learning pronunciation because of its relationship and connection with human beings. As a result, it needs to be improved by teachers; for instance, Riswanto and Haryanto (2012) focused on the drilling techniques in teaching pronunciation. They concluded that these have positive effects on learners so they can acquire pronunciation in a rapid way.

Although teaching pronunciation is significant, Tergujeff (2013) indicates that:

“Learning second language (L2) phonology is a complex issue that is potentially affected by several factors. These include e.g. age, length of residence in the L2 context, amount of L2 and first language (L1) use, type of L2 input, language learning aptitude, and motivational and social factors”(p. 15).

According to Zhang and Yin (2009), children acquire the features of L2 in a short amount of time in contrast to adult learners. The pronunciation aspect of the target language is especially more difficult than the other parts that adult learners acquire. Fledge and McKay (as cited in Varol (2012) believed that the length of learners’ staying

in an L2 environment and the amount of L2 input are significant, and they should be observed. Moreover, motivation is another factor that leads the learner to adapt L2 pronunciation in a reasonable amount of time and determines his or her aspiration to master it. Macháčková (2012) asserts that “Motivation appears to be a very influential factor, as some of the nonnative speakers are more concerned about their pronunciation than others” (p.25). According to Richards and Schmidt (2010) social and cultural relationships play a critical role in learning; they base this on the sociocultural theory of Russian psychologist Vygotsky. He believed that learning is constructed by social interaction among persons.

In addition to the above factors having an impact on learners’ language acquisition, mother tongue interference plays another significant role in the process. The theory of Contrastive Analysis (CA) which was proposed by Lado in the 1950s emphasized the role of the mother tongue in learning second languages. As Keshavarz (2014) states, “An obvious case of mother tongue interference is in the area of pronunciation. Students tend to transfer the phonological features of their native language to those of the target language (p.154).

Statement of the Problem and the Importance of the Study

Kulich (2009) stated that fluency and accurate pronunciation of English phonemes are seen by beginner ELLs as especially problematic. Mohammed and Taha (2014) have conducted a study at Koya University in Northern Iraq. They have concluded that Kurdish students in English language departments at that University are facing the following problems:

“Their major problem is /ə/ insertion and intonation. Moreover, their

secondary problem is assimilation. Furthermore, their minor problems are intrusion and elision. Another problem lies in kurdicizing English languages as well as mixing between /ð/ and /z/ and pronouncing /θ/ as /s/. Secondly, the factor of their problem is highlighted, which is the use of TL (Target Language) inside class” (p.19-20).

Since these problems were mentioned by Mohammed and Taha (2014), Mohamadi (2014) in their study has classified and highlighted the errors encountered by Kurdish learners in detail, as: mother language sound segments, syllable structure of target language, the spelling of pronunciation of words and silent letters. Boskany (as cited in Rahimpour & Dovaise, 2011) stated that teaching of English to speakers of Kurdish poses problems which can be attributed to the nature of both languages. Also, Noorman (2008) points out that ELLs have to be guided in appropriate ways so as to enable them to perform at the same standard as native English speakers.

This study will be an important resource for teachers, which enable them to find out what the main problems are. It will highlight the issues that Kurdish students struggle with in relation to pronunciation problems. Furthermore, it serves as a guide for instructors, helping them to understand Kurdish university students’ needs when they are learning English language phonetics. The study concentrated on first- and second-year students because of three main factors: Firstly, the first- year students have not previously practised the English language speaking, and this has affected their pronunciations skills. Secondly, it tried to determine the second years’ pronunciation improvements, because they are being required for the first time both to study English language materials and to communicate in English in classes.

Research Questions

The main aim of this study was to identify the pronunciation difficulties faced by Kurdish students in English language departments in the universities of north Iraq. Also, it shed light on various students' perspectives toward these issues. In addition, teachers' strategies for teaching and improving Kurdish students' English language pronunciation was also investigated. In short, the purpose of the research was to answer the following questions:

- 1-What are the attitudes of Kurdish university students studying in English language departments towards English language pronunciation?
- 2-What are the attitudes of teachers in English language department towards English language pronunciation?
- 3- How do Kurdish university students pronounce the most commonly mispronounced sounds and words?

Limitations of the Study

In the present study, the sample of participants comes as a limitation, because the data were collected from the first-year and second-year students at Soran University, in Erbil city in the Kurdistan region of northern Iraq. The number of the teachers who took part in the study was another limitation because the data were obtained specifically from the teachers who taught pronunciation.

In addition, the students' age was a limitation, because they ranged from 19 to 25. Furthermore, all the students had not travelled or been in English language speaking countries.

Due to the limited number of research on the issues of pronunciation faced by Kurdish EFL learners, the obtained results were supported by a small amount of previous studies in this field. The study was also limited in the number of the used words containing /ð/and /θ/ phonemes, silent letters and the words Spelling-induced mispronunciation.

Key Concepts

Pronunciation. Richards and Schmidt (2010) defined pronunciation 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.469). O’Connor (1980) stated that pronunciation is the process of putting English sound boxes into the right places in the words, and after that hearing and imitating them.

Second language acquisition. Ellis (1994) stated that there is no agreed and fixed definition for second language acquisition among researchers in the second language acquisition field. He proposed the most strong definition as “... the subconscious process of ‘picking up’ a language through exposure and the latter to the conscious process of studying it” (pp. 14).

Contrastive analysis. Is the study of comparing two languages in terms of morphology, syntax, phonology, etc. Yarmohamadi (2014) defined contrastive analysis as follows: “Contrastive is a sub- discipline of linguistics that brings two or more language systems or subsystems together and sets them against one another in order to determine the similarities and differences between them in terms of some specified linguistic features ” (p.6).

Mother tongue interference. Is the influence of a learner's native language on second-language learning. Keshavarz (2012) stated that "an obvious case of mother tongue interference is in the area of pronunciation" (121).

Conclusion

In conclusion, as has been illustrated in this chapter, many researchers, such as Derwing & Munro (2005) and Kolokdaragh (2009), believed that pronunciation has been neglected and marginalized, and absent in language teaching curriculums. Therefore, other researchers as Mohamadi (2014) think that as a result of the importance of this part of the language, it has been focused on and become the title of many research projects in the field of language acquisition. In addition, the problematic areas of pronunciation and mistakes that are encountered by Kurdish EFL learners are as Mohamadi (2014) found: mother tongue sound segments, syllable structure of target language, the spelling of pronunciation of words, and silent letters. Apart from these problematic areas, /ð/ and /θ/ segment and spelling of words and silent letters were investigated, and along with these issues, students' and teachers' attitudes towards English language pronunciation have been explored.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This chapter commences with the factors that affect EFL learners' second language acquisition, including the age factor and first-language interference. Moreover, empirical studies that have been conducted on the “pronunciation issues” of Kurdish EFL learners, as well as other learners explored. The effective theories of second language acquisition Critical Period Hypothesis (CPH) and Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis (CAH) reviewed and discussed briefly. In addition, the sound systems of the Kurdish language and the English language investigated.

Critical Period Hypothesis (CPH)

The notion of the Critical Period Hypothesis came to existence in the work of Penfield and Roberts (1959), was then identified by Lenneberg (1967), and was one of the most argued issues in psycholinguistics, (Moskovsky, 2001). Since they could not agree on whether (CPH) existed in second-language acquisition (SLA), or only applied to first-language acquisition, and at which age it starts. According to Balistoc and Hakuta (1999) the Critical Period Hypothesis (CPH) is the perception that child learners acquire a second language better than adult learners because their brains function actively.

Age factor. In the process of first and second language acquisition, age plays a crucial role, and pronunciation is one of the parts of language most influenced by the learners age; after puberty, the learner's capability of recognizing and differentiating the different phonemes in the target language is restricted (Zhang & Yin 2009). Major (as

cited in Varol, 2012) believed that adult learners are struggling more than children in acquiring the target language, and they face difficulties in their interactions with native speakers. Al-Saidat (2010) emphasized that “The role of age is more prominent in pronunciation than in other areas” (p.15). However, the age factor has been related to the Critical Period Hypothesis (CPH) which was proposed by Lenneberg (as cited in Gilakjani, 2011), who states that during this period which ends around age 12. Human beings experience biological and neurological changes, language in general and pronunciation in particular, is one of the features that are directly influenced during this period.

In contrast to this view, Avery and Ehrlich (as cited in Gilakjani, 2011) argued that the level of proficiency in pronunciation is different from person to person. In addition, Coiller (as cited in Khamkhein, 2010), in his study showed that adult learners acquire a second language more quickly than younger learners.

However, a great number of studies have been conducted on the age factor in second-language acquisition. For instance, Nilsson (2011) conducted a study on Swedish beginner English Language Learners, and concluded the children who start at an early age make fewer mistakes in pronunciation. Furthermore, Benzies (2013) recommended that pronunciation should be taught in the early stages of learning, because it would have more effect on helping the learners to master it. Macháčková (2012) conducted a study on the most difficult phonemes for Czech learners who were in secondary school. He found that age plays a significant role in learning target language pronunciation.

However, as mentioned in the previous studies, students who start to learn a second language at an early age, easily acquire target languages pronunciation features.

On the other hand, Mohammed and Taha (2014) conducted a study on Segmental & Suprasegmental Difficulties in English Pronunciation to English as a Foreign Students (EFS) of English Department at Koya University. They concluded that fossilization at an early age would be hard to control. Moreover, this view is supported by Nilsson (2011) who stated:

“In order to avoid the problems of “fossilized accents”, it is necessary to introduce pronunciation into the language learning situation from the first week of language instruction for L2 learners, offering them support and help to avoid errors in their oral language acquisition” (p.6).

Contrastive Analysis

The study of comparing and contrasting a learner’s mother language with the target language in a systematic way is called Contrastive Analysis. The main purpose behind investigating the two languages using this analytical method is to highlight and identify the learners’ errors, source of errors, and the rationale of the errors, Keshavarz (2014).

Historical background of (CAH). The emergence of the Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis theory of second language goes back to the 1950s in the field of linguistics. Lado (1957) in his great work “*Linguistics Across Cultures*” proposed this theory which was based on the Behaviorism theory developed by Skinner (1957). In Skinner’s theory, language was regarded as the mechanical habits of human beings in response to their daily needs within first-language acquisition. But after the emergence of Contrastive Analysis theory, it has involved comparing and contrasting languages and the possibility of transferring these habits from the learner’s mother language to the

target language (Major, 2001). According to Lado (as cited in Keshavarz, 2014),

“Individuals tend to transfer the forms and meanings, and the distribution of forms and meanings of their native language and culture to the foreign language and culture, both productively when attempting to speak the language and receptively when attempting to grasp and understand the language... as practiced by natives” (p. 4).

As a result of the importance of this theory in second language acquisition, it passed through three levels and criticized because of its practicality. As Keshavarz (2014) stated, “Contrastive Analysis has been a field of heated controversy as its proponents have not shared the same views with regard to the main tenets of this discipline” (p. 5).

Strong version. The first version of contrastive analysis, called the strong version, concentrated on the concept of interference that causes difficulties for second-language learners. Its source is the first language, and also it attempts to predict learners’ errors and their sources (Keshavarz, 2014). Lee (as cited in Keshavarz, 2014) clarified the assumptions of the strong version as follows:

1. ‘The prime cause, or even the sole cause, of difficulty and error in foreign–language learning is interference coming from the learners’ NL;
2. The difficulties are chiefly, or wholly, due to the differences between the two languages;

3. The greater these differences are, the more acute the learning difficulties will be;
4. The results of a comparison between the two languages are needed to predict the difficulties and errors which will occur in learning the foreign language;
5. What there is to teach can best be found by comparing the two languages and then subtracting what is common to them, so that what the student has to learn equals the sum of the differences established by the CA” (p.168).

The strong version of contrastive analysis was neglected by people who were involved in second language acquisition because of the accuracy of its anticipations. Varol (2012) believed that “later it was abandoned because not every learner made the errors that CAH predicted” (p.13).

Weak version. After the strong version was neglected, the weak version which was proposed by Wardhaugh (1970) came into the field of second language acquisition. This version tried to select the errors and then observes them. Wardhaugh (as cited in Keshaverz, 2014) pointed out that:

“It [the weak version] starts with the evidence provided by linguistic interference and uses such evidence to explain the similarities and differences between the two systems ... reference is made to the two systems only in order to explain actually observed interference phenomena”(p.6).

It was different from the previous version, as Keshavarz (2014) stated: “it differs from the strong version in that it claims that errors can be more profitably explained after they have been observed” (p. 6). According to Varol (2012), the importance of the weak version of contrastive analysis was that after finding the barriers that cause learners to make errors, then provided the evidences. This version has been criticized because of its incapability to find which parts of language are problematic for learners to acquire.

Moderate version. As a result of the arguments on the previous versions of contrastive analysis (strong and weak), the new version, called the moderate version, appeared. Oller and Ziahosseiny (as cited in Keshavarz, 2014) recommended this version, which focused on the similarities between learners’ first language and target language, such as the spelling problems of the EFL learners whose language was based on the same alphabet (Roman alphabet) as the English language alphabet; they make more mistakes than learners of different language alphabets (Varol, 2012). Keshavarz (2014) stated that:

Oller & Ziahosseiny’s data proved that this was not the case. “Thus, they rejected the strong and weak versions, as being too strong and too weak, respectively, in favor of their proposed version, which they called the Moderate Version. The authors claim that the moderate version has more explanatory power than the other two versions since it centers on the nature of human learning, and not just on the contrast between two languages” (p. 6).

However, the contrastive analysis hypothesis has been criticized more and it

witnessed more changes in its versions, but many researchers focused on this theory of second language, and also they relied on the different views of versions. Furthermore, a great body of literature has been written on the contrastive analysis hypothesis, especially in the studies on pronunciation issues. On the other hand, in teaching pronunciation, the contrastive analysis hypothesis has a more practical role; the teachers used it in contrasting different languages. Cook (as cited in Rahimpour and Dovaise, 2011) believed that contrastive analysis is “most successful in the area of pronunciation” (p. 73).

First language interference. The influence of the mother tongue on the learner’s second language has been integrated with the theory of second-language acquisition, which is the Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis (CAH). Ringbom (as cited in Dovaise and Rahimpour, 2011) believed that Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis (CAH) theory’s survival is due to its crucial role in exploring first-language interference on and making comparison between languages.

The learner’s native language has great influence on the process of second-language acquisition as a whole, and in particular on the pronunciation. Researchers have highlighted this factor and reviewed it in their studies. As Mohammadi (2014), who conducted a study on “A Survey of Kurdish Students’ Sound Segment & Syllabic Pattern Errors in the Course of Learning EFL,” found, the learners’ errors were due to first-language interference. Also, Varol (2012) concluded in his study that Turkish learners who participated in the study were influenced by the Turkish language, and they pronounced English words as they pronounce Turkish words. Moreover, Mohemmed and Taha (2014) stated that first-language interference has influenced Kurdish EFL learners so that they replaced English sounds with Kurdish phonemes, for instance /ð/ to

/z/ and /θ/ to /s/. Similar research conducted by Ali (2013) on the Sudanese ELL concluded that “Differences between L1 and L2 present part of the causes of the production problems of English by Sudanese university learners of English” (p. 504). On the other hand, the first language causes difficulties for the learners in every aspect of pronunciation of the second language. As Zhang and Yin (2009) stated that, “interference or interference from the first language is likely to cause errors in aspiration, stress, and intonation in the target language” (p. 6).

Kurdish Language Sound System

The Kurdish language is spoken approximately by forty million people living mainly in Turkey, Iran, Iraq and Syria. Kurdish is a member of the Indo-Iranian branch of the Indo-European languages (Rahimpour & Dovaie, 2011). Kurdish language is based on the Arabic alphabet. The number of phonemes is equal to its letters, excluding the /i/ sound (Mc Carus, 1992). This characteristic of the Kurdish language makes Kurdish learners have difficulties in learning other languages, especially English, because it is incompatible with the Kurdish language. Moreover, Kurdish people adapted the Arabic alphabet via the religion of Islam, like other nations in the area (Persian, Turkish, Afghan.... etc), but in a new form: even some Arabic phonemes are absent in Kurdish. Also there are some unique phonemes which are special to the Kurdish language. There are 37 phonemes which have been divided into two parts: 29 consonants (nebwzen), and 8 vowels (bzwen) (khosnaw (2013). Although, the Kurdish sound system has its own characteristics due to its absence in the Handbook of International Phonetic Association, it has not been highlighted and investigated by international

researchers. However, some Kurdish writers have worked in this field; for instance, Wais (1984) in his book “Phonetics” described the Kurdish sound system. In the following sections, the characteristics and features of the Kurdish language will be highlighted and covered.

Kurdish consonant sounds. The consonants of Kurdish language have been classified by Wais (1984) as shown in Table 1, and the place and the manner of articulation and examples for each consonant sound have been clarified (see Table 1).

Table 1

The Place and Manner of Articulation of Kurdish Consonant Sounds (Wais, 1984).

| <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;"> Manner of articulation ↓ </div> | Bilabial | | Dental | | Post Alveolar | | Velar | | Uvular | | Pharyngeal | |
|---|----------|----------|--------|----------|---------------|----------|--------|----------|--------|----------|------------|----------|
| | Voiced | unvoiced | Voiced | unvoiced | Voiced | unvoiced | Voiced | unvoiced | voiced | unvoiced | Voiced | unvoiced |
| Stop | B | P | D | T | dʒ | tʃ | G | K | | Q | | |
| Affricate, Fricative | V | F | Z | S | ʒ | ʃ | Γ | X | | | Ĥ | H |
| Nasal | M | | N | | | | | | | | | |
| Lateral | | | L | | Ĺ | | | | | | | |
| Retroflexes | | | r , ř | | | | | | | | | |
| Glides (semivowels) | W | | | | Y | | | | | | | |

As it was illustrated Table 1, Kurdish language embraces 9 stop consonants including /b, p, d, t, dʒ, tʃ, g, k, q/, and also they divided into two groups, (GIR) voiced and (KIP) unvoiced. The voiced stop consonants are /b, d, dʒ, g/, and the unvoiced stop consonants are /p, t, tʃ, k, q/. Moreover, as it has been observed in the above table, stop consonants are classified according to their place of articulations, /b, p/ are bilabial, /d, t/

are dental, /dʒ, tʃ/ are post alveolar, /g, k/ are velar, and the final stop consonant /q/ is uvular.

According to the manner of articulation, the second type of Kurdish consonants are called affricate, fricative. However, they listed in the same row or not separated in Table1. There are 10 affricates, fricative sounds, including /v, f, z, s, ʒ, ʃ, ɣ, x, ħ, h/, and five of them are (GIR) voiced: these are /v, z, ʒ, ɣ, ħ/. The others are (KIP) unvoiced, they are /f, s, ʃ, x, h/. After that, the place of articulation of the affricates, fricative consonants have been clarified and showed as follows: /v, f/, / are bilabial, /z, s/ are dental, /ʒ, ʃ/ are post alveolar, /ɣ, x/ are velar, and the two final consonants /ħ, h/ are pharyngeal.

The third kind of Kurdish consonants is called nasals; this type has two sound s /m, n/, as it has been observed in the Table 1 Table, both of them are (GIR) voiced, the differ in the place of articulation only.

The fourth distribution of Kurdish consonant is called lateral; however, in the Kurdish language they have been regarded as two independent phonemes, because they were separated by the Kurdish number eight symbol as (^), (ĵ). Two sounds are (GIR) voiced, but they are different in the place of articulation; /l / with no symbol is dental, whereas the marked one /ĵ/ is post alveolar. They will be clearer, if they were shown in “Minimal pairs like gul (leprosy) versus guĵ (flower) and čil (forty) versus čĵl (branch)” (Rahimpour& Dovaise, 2011).

The fifth type of Kurdish consonant is labeled as retroflexes. There are two retroflexes /r, ř / in Kurdish, and both of them are (GIR) voiced and dental according to the place of articulation. Rahimpour and Dovaise (2011) described these consonants as follows:

“They have alveolar and alveo - palatal articulation respectively and both are voiced. /r/ is flap (tap): it is produced by making a single tap of the tongue. /ř/ is trill (roll): it is produced by a series of taps by the tongue” (p.75-76).

Additionally, another kind of consonant exists in the Kurdish language, which is glides (semivowels) /w, y/. As has been illustrated in the above table, the two sounds are (GIR) voiced, but their place of articulation is different: /w/ is bilabial, /y/ is post alveolar. Mirzaei, Gowhary, Azizifar and Jamalinesari (2015) stated that “Phonetically, /w/ and /y/ are vowels, but phonologically they are consonants” (p. 309).

Although the sounds have been mentioned in the above table, there are some sounds which do not appear in the Table 1; but practically, they are in use in the Kurdish consonant system, for instance /ص/ is the allophone of /s/ sound as in the words ‘sag’ (dog) and ‘sad’ (hundred), and the second one is /ط/ is /t/ sound’s allophone; the differences would be clearer in these words: ‘salta’ (waistcoat) and ‘galta’ (joke). Also /ŋ/ is not present in the table, and it is not an independent phoneme in Kurdish, but is regarded as the allophone of /n/ sound: it is pronounced when /n/ phonemes come before the /g/ sound like in these words: ‘tang’ (narrow) and ‘jang’ (war). The reason for allophones’ coming into existence is mechanical, for instance in the Kurdish sound “lang” (lame), with lowering the soft palate the /n/ sound occurs; after that the soft palate goes up rapidly to make the /g/ sound; and this duration between the soft palate lowering and getting higher will produce the /ŋ/ sound, so the soft palate plays an important role in this process (Wais, 1984).

Kurdish vowel sounds. There are “8” vowels in Kurdish language, they include / î , e, i, a, â, û, u, ô/, as it has been clarified in the Kurdish consonant system. The Kurdish language sound system has not been investigated or analyzed, unlike other languages. As a result, the only existing academic book, which was written by Wais (1984), will be the main source for this study. Figure 2 shows the map of Kurdish vowel distribution (See Figure 1).

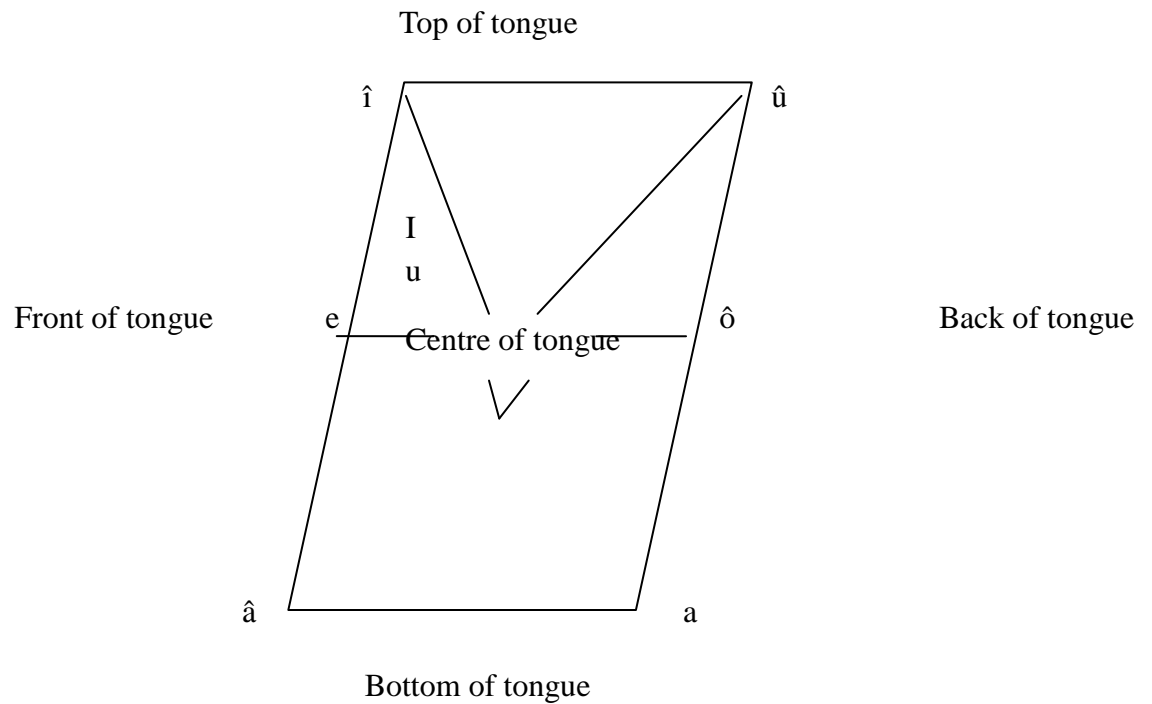


Figure 1. The map of Kurdish vowel sounds distribution (Wais, 1984).

Rahimpour and Dovaise (2011, p.77) put the Kurdish vowels in the words as follows:

- | | | |
|----------|-------|--------------|
| 1. / î / | as in | žîr (wise) |
| 2. / e / | as in | žer (under) |
| 3. / i / | as in | žin (woman) |
| 4. / a/ | as in | das (hand) |
| 5. / â/ | as in | dâs (sickle) |
| 6. / û / | as in | kûř (bent) |
| 7. / u / | as in | kuř (boy) |
| 8. / ô / | as in | kôř (forum) |

As shown in Figure1, the tongue's movement in the mouth produces vowels in the Kurdish language: the vowels /î, e, I, â/ are made with the front part of the tongue, and the vowels /a, û, u, ô/ are made with the back part of the tongue. Furthermore, the vowels / î, I, u, û/ are labeled as high vowels, the vowels/ a, â/ are called lower vowels, and the vowels / e, ô/ are named central vowels. However, the vowels in the Kurdish system does not cause any trouble, except for / I/, because its system is normal, and there are no diphthongs in the Kurdish language, with the exception of the / u/ and / î / vowels which are named semi vowels in some words, even though, several Kurdish linguistics have called the combination of these semi consonants “diphthongs” (Wais, 1984).

Khoshnaw (2013) states that all the Kurdish sounds have their separate phonemes except the / I/ vowel in the Arabic alphabet; but in the Latin alphabet it does appear, and in the occurrence of this vowel, for instance in the word “mIn” (I), the blockage of air in the sound /m/ is via closing the lips, but for the sound /n/ the air blockage is via touching the front tongue to the front palate; during this process some air comes out from the mouth, and it produces this vowel called “bzroka” (hidden).

English Language Sound System

The English language is a branch of the Indo- European family; and its alphabet relies on the Latin alphabet. English is not a phonetic language, because the letters do not represent phonemes, as Ladefoged and Johnson (2011) state: “.... because English pronunciation has changed over the centuries while the spelling has remained the same” (p.35). Like the other languages, English has two main types of sounds, which are consonants and vowels; there are 26 consonants and 12 vowels in the English language.

English consonant sounds. The International Phonetic Alphabet (1999) distributes the English consonants according to the place and manner of articulation, as shown below (see Table 2).

Table 2

The Place and Manner of Articulation of English Consonant Sounds (IPA, 1999).

| | Bilabial | Labio-dental | Dental | Alveolar | Post-alveolar | Palatal | Velar | Glottal |
|---------------------|----------|--------------|--------|----------|---------------|---------|-------|---------|
| Plosive | p b | | | t d | | | k g | |
| Affricate | | | | | tʃ dʒ | | | |
| Nasal | m | | | n | | | ŋ | |
| Fricative | | f v | θ ð | s z | ʃ ʒ | | | h |
| Approximant | | | | ɹ | | j | w | |
| Lateral Approximant | | | | l | | | | |

Underhill (2005) defined the consonant as follows: “consonant sounds are made by restricting and blocking the air flow in some physical way” (p.25). Also the above

classification of consonants in Table 2 is normally based on these characteristics. The first type of English consonants, called “plosives” according to their manner of articulations, include the /p, b, t, d, k, g/ sounds, but they are different regarding their places of articulation: /p, b/ are bilabial, /p/ is unvoiced, /b/ is voiced, /t, d/ are alveolar, /t/ is unvoiced, /d/ is voiced, /k, g/ are velar, /k/ is unvoiced, /g/ is voiced. As clarified in Table 2, the second type is named “affricates”. They include /dʒ, tʃ/. Both of them are post alveolar according to their place of articulations, /dʒ/ is voiced, /tʃ/ is unvoiced. The third group of consonants is labeled as “nasal”. It consists of /m, n, ŋ/ sounds, and they vary in their place of articulations, /m/ is bilabial, /n/ is alveolar, the final one /ŋ/ is velar; the first two sounds /m, n/ are unvoiced, but /ŋ/ is voiced. The fricatives are the biggest group among English consonants; they contain /f, v, θ, ð, s, z, ʃ, ʒ, h/, as illustrated for the other groups, and they are also different from each other in terms of places of articulation. For instance, /f, v/ are labiodentals, /f/ is unvoiced, /v/ is voiced; regarding /θ, ð/, these are dental, /θ/ is unvoiced, /ð/ is voiced, /s, z/ are alveolar, /s/ is unvoiced, /z/ is voiced, /ʃ, ʒ/ are post alveolar, /ʃ/ is unvoiced, /ʒ/ is voiced, /h/ is the final glottal and voiced. The /ɹ, j, w/ sounds listed in the same row in the above table, /r/ is alveolar, /j/ is palatal, /w/ is velar; all three sounds are voiced, but with some exceptions. The final consonant is /l/, and it is called the lateral approximant and voiced (O’Connor, 1998).

English vowel sounds. The International Phonetic Alphabet (1999) classifies the English vowels according to the different mouth shapes and the position of the tongue (See Figure 2).

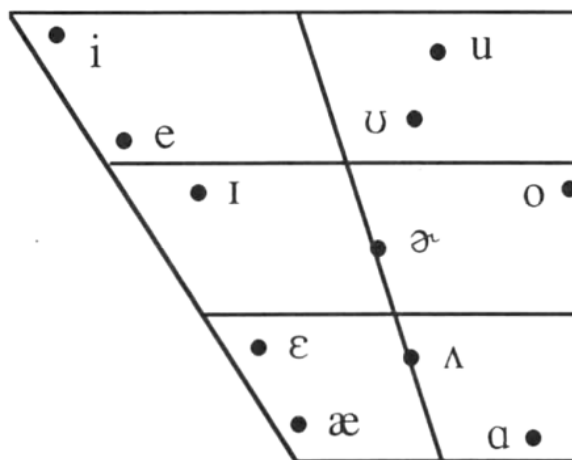


Figure 2. The map of English vowel sounds distribution (IPA, 1999).

As has been observed in the Figure 2, there are eleven vowels in the English language sound system, including the /i, e, u, o, ʌ, ə, ɪ, ε, ɒ, ʊ, æ/ sounds. The vowels of the English language could be differentiated according to the tongue's and lips' location in the mouth. As Underhill (2005) illustrated, the tongue's horizontal position determines (front–center–back) features of vowels; the vertical tongue's position shows (high–mid–low) characteristics, the lips' position reveals the (rounded–neutral–spread) features. Finally, the only feature which is different from the others is the duration of vowels (long–short), because it is not controlled by the tongue's and lips' position. As has been shown in Figure 2.4, /i, e, u, ʊ/ are high, /ɪ, o, ə/ are mid vowels, /ʌ, ε, ɒ, æ/ are low vowels, /u, o, ʊ/ are round sounds, while /i, e, u, o, ə, ɒ, ʊ/ are neutral and spread, /i, u, o, ε/ are long vowels, /e, ə, æ, ʌ, ɒ, ɪ, ʊ/ are short vowels.

Comparison of Kurdish and English Language Sound Systems

After descriptions of both Kurdish and English segmental units, Kurdish and English are different from their language family: Kurdish is a branch of the Indo-Iranian branch of the Indo-European family, whereas English is a branch of the Indo-European family of languages. The Kurdish language relies on the Arabic alphabet, while English is based on the Latin alphabet. Kurdish is a phonetic language where all the sounds represent the independent phonemes, and it is read as it is written; but in contrast, English is not a phonetic language, and is not pronounced as it is written. Mohamadi (2014) states that Kurdish learners face difficulties with the silent sound as in “lamb” /læm/; they pronounce it as /læmb/, and this will be investigated in this study.

Regarding the consonant sound, there are some sounds that do not exist in Kurdish, for instance the /θ, ð/ sounds. According to Mohammed and Taha (2014) as a result of the absence of these phonemes in the Kurdish language, Kurdish EFL learners replace them with some other sounds; for instance, they replace the /θ/ fricative consonant with /s/, as in the word “think”, and they pronounce it /sɪnk/. Also, they replace the /ð/ phoneme with /z/, as in the word ‘together’ they pronounce it as /təgeza/. These two sounds will also be examined in this study. Moreover, another consonant /ŋ/ is treated as independent in English, but in Kurdish is not regarded as separate consonant: this is the allophone of the /n/ and /g/ sound. In contrast, there are some consonants which do not appear in the consonant system of English: the /ɣ, ħ/ affricatives, as in the words “bayewan” (gardener) “ĥeywan” (animal); however, this should be investigated in Kurdish learners.

In contrast to consonant sounds, vowels of English language do not hamper Kurdish EFL learners in their articulation. However, the two systems are different from

each other in the number of vowels, since simple vowels in Kurdish consist of 8 vowels, whereas in English there are 11 vowels, according to the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA). The only problem facing Kurdish EFL learners while they pronounce English vowels is the / ə/ insertion, as corroborated by Mohammed and Taha (2014).

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

This study explored the issues of pronunciation faced by Kurdish university students in English language departments. In addition, it tried to show the segmental issues or mistakes encountered by the students, and explored the student's recommendations, difficulties and strategies. Therefore the teachers' strategies and methods of teaching pronunciation were also investigated.

The methodology used in the current study is illustrated in this chapter. It starts by elaborating the design of the research, then the information about the participants and the setting of the study is provided, and after that the study's instruments and the method of collecting data are covered. Finally, the rating process of the collected data is described.

Research Design

The study focuses on exploring the issues of pronunciation faced by Kurdish university students in English language departments. In addition, it tries to examine the teachers' strategies and methods of teaching English pronunciation, in order to improve language levels and familiarize the student with English language phonetics. The mixed-method approach is implemented in this study; this method is appropriate for this type of research because of its connection to human behaviors. As Ary, Jacobs, Sorensen and Walker (2013) states, the advantage of mixed method research is that the researcher explores in-depth information: this approach makes it easier for the researcher to identify the main difficulties which the students reveal when they read the list of 20

sentences, which contain consonant sounds, including / θ, ð / sounds, silent letters and the inconsistency between phonological form and the graphemic form of ‘flood’ ,‘was’ ,‘washed’ , ‘drug’ and ‘beard’ words.. And quantitative data collected from a questionnaire is given to students to find out about their difficulties, strategies and recommendations. Furthermore, the teachers’ strategies of teaching the English language are researched by distributing an open- ended questionnaire, which will make use of the qualitative method.

1-What are the attitudes of Kurdish university students studying in English language departments towards English language pronunciation?

2-What are the attitudes of teachers in English language department towards English language pronunciation?

3- How do Kurdish university students pronounce the most commonly mispronounced sounds and words?

Participants

The study was conducted with Kurdish university students who are currently studying in the English language department at Soran University. The number of participants was 40 students; they were 20 freshman and 20 second year students (14 males and 26 females). The age of the participants ranged from 19-25 years, and with an average age of 22. The participants had different birth places in Kurdistan – North of Iraq cities. 85% of students their birth place was Erbil, 15% was Sulaymaniyah, only 2% of the participants’ birth place was Duhock. The questionnaire contained a question about the participants travelling to the English speaking countries, for instance, the USA,

the UK, and Australia. None of the participants had travelled to the countries mentioned (see Table 3).

Table 3

Students' Demographic Profile

| Variable | | F | % | n |
|-------------|----------------------|----|------|----|
| Gender | Male | 14 | 35% | 40 |
| | Female | 26 | 65% | |
| Age | 19-25 | 40 | 100% | 40 |
| | 26-30 | - | | |
| | 31-36 | - | | |
| | 36-40 | - | | |
| Stage | 1 st Year | 20 | 50% | 40 |
| | 2 nd Year | 20 | 50% | |
| Birth place | Erbil | 32 | 85% | 40 |
| | Sulaymaniyah | 6 | 15% | |
| | Duhock | 2 | 2% | |

Another sample consisted of 6 teachers, who taught English language pronunciation or a phonology course at Soran University's Faculty of Arts, in the English language department. All of the teachers were MA degree holders in linguistics, and their experience of teaching a phonology course in this department ranged from 6 months to 5 years. Four teachers replied that they did not receive any training in teaching pronunciation. Only 1 teacher answered that he has given training for teaching phonetics. And he took part in the Cincinnati –SU conference (See Table 4).

Table 4*Teachers' Education and Experience*

| Participants | Qualification | Experience | % | Training |
|--------------|---------------|------------|--------|----------|
| Teacher 1 | MA | 6 months | 16.6% | No |
| Teacher 2, 3 | MA | 2 years | 33.3% | No |
| Teacher 4, 5 | MA | 4 years | 33.3% | No |
| Teacher 6 | MA | 5 years | 16.6 % | Yes |

Instruments

In the current study three instruments were employed: the first was the student questionnaire. The main purpose behind using the questionnaire was to identify and show students' demographic information, including age, proficiency level, place of birth; and they were asked whether they had travelled to English- speaking countries or not, and if they have been there, how long they had stayed. Furthermore, in order to highlight the student's attitude towards English language pronunciation, and also to find out the students strategies, recommendations, and difficulties, 18 statements were listed in the questionnaire.

The second instrument was the teacher questionnaire, which consisted of 25 questions. The questions were chosen to get information about their degree, courses taken, techniques, methods used, and recommendations for improvement of the phonology course.

The third instrument contained 20 sentences; they included 4 problematic areas of pronunciation for Kurdish learners. For each category 5 words were inserted in 5 sentences; the first group of the sentence contained words which include the fricative

consonant / θ/, “breath”, the second group of words had /ð/, “leather”, and the third group was 5 words which contained silent letters “debt”; the final group was 5 words (‘flood’, ‘was’, ‘washed’, ‘drug’ and ‘beard’) with have inconsistency between their phonological form and graphemic.

Reliability and Validity

In order to assure the reliability and validity of the instruments used in the study; the students’ attitude questionnaire was adapted from Ababakar (2014) thesis, it has been revised and examined by the supervisor carefully. Also the Cronbach’s Alpha scale in SPSS statistical package social science was employed to evaluate its reliability and it was scored .729 (See Table 5).

Table 5

Validity and Reliability of Students’ Attitude Questionnaire

| Cronbach’s | Number of Items |
|------------|-----------------|
| .729 | 18 |

For the teachers’ attitude questionnaire reliability and validity, it borrowed from Mourad (2010) thesis, after the approval obtained from their side because it had been used for the same purpose similar to the current study. Finally, the list of short sentences used as the third instrument, revised and examined by supervisor.

Data collection

After the letter of permission was shown to the Department of English Language at Soran University (see Appendix G), they gave permission for their first and second stage students to be used as a sample for the current research. The researcher started to collect data in three steps: Firstly, the student questionnaire (See Appendix B) was distributed to the students, and the clarification regarding the questionnaire's items presented to the students.

Secondly, the second part of the data collection instrument was the teachers' questionnaire (see Appendix C), adapted from Mourad's (2010) thesis and revised by the supervisor. The teacher questionnaire, in cooperation with the English language department, was distributed to the teachers who taught English pronunciation, they were informed about the purpose of the questionnaire, and they agreed to fill out the study's questionnaire. The questionnaire sheet was handed to three of them, and also sent to others via email; these replied within one week.

Finally, the students were requested to participate in the first instrument (see Appendix D). It prepared by the researcher and revised by the supervisor: this consisted of 20 sentences to read aloud. The student was informed that it was optional to take part in this instrument, because of the sensitivity of voice recording, then the sheet of written sentences was distributed to the students to have a look at it, and next the students were asked to read the sentences loudly and their voices were recorded. It took approximately 2 minutes for each student (see Table 6).

Table 6*List of short Sentences Used in Sound Recording*

-
- 1-Take a deep breath.
 - 2-It is my birthday on Sunday.
 - 3-Think twice before you do any action.
 - 4-I will take a bath today.
 - 5-She sat deep in thought.
 - 6-He was dressed in black leather.
 - 7- Either you pass or fail.
 - 8- We are going to travel together.
 - 9- A course of true love never did run smooth.
 - 10- This is her better life.
 - 11-She will stay for an hour.
 - 12-Oh,What a beautiful handkerchief.
 - 13-He paid off his debts.
 - 14-She sniffed and wrinkled her nose.
 - 15-Did you visit Erbil castle?
 - 16-Have you ever seen floods?
 - 17-She was a good student.
 - 18- I washed my dishes.
 - 19-Please take your drugs daily.
 - 20- He had a black beard.
-

Data Analysis

After the data collection process was completed, the data analysis procedures were selected and employed by the researcher. The first procedure was analyzing the questionnaires, and in this processes the SPSS program was used, so as to find out the percentage of the students' attitude toward English pronunciation in general and the difficulties, strategies, and recommendations in particular. Five scales were given to the

questionnaire's statements: (1=*Strongly Disagree*, 2= *Disagree*, 3=*Neutral*, 4=*Agree*, 5=*Strongly Agree*) statements' frequencies (F), percentages (%), number (n), mean (M) and standard deviation (SD) were identified for the questionnaire's items results the

After that, the third procedure of data collection, which was the teacher questionnaire, was analyzed qualitatively, since the nature of the questionnaire was similar to an interview. Moreover, the codes were given to the key answers from the teachers. And then the important codes were selected and highlighted according to the relativity of the questions' purpose. Furthermore, tabulating and categorizing was used to code them.

Finally, the recorded voice of the participants was rated into two raters, wrong and correct pronunciation, in comparison to native English language speakers. Next, the recorded sounds were separated into two parts: first year, and second year. After that, the recording was listened to by the researcher three times, in order to transcribe and select the mispronounced phonemes and syllable in an accurate manner, and also to highlight the replaced phonemes. In addition, to make sure of the reliability and validity of analyzed data, the recorded voice and transcriptions made by the researcher were sent to an English native speaker to check a sample of the recordings. Then, the Microsoft Excel program formula (Sum/number times 100) was used to determine the frequencies and percentages given to the transcribed data.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter showed the results obtained from the instruments, which were three instruments, the list of 20 short utterances, students' and teachers questionnaires' in order to obtain the answers for the following research questions:

- 1-What are the attitudes of Kurdish university students studying in English language departments towards English language pronunciation?
- 2-What are the attitudes of teachers in English language department towards English language pronunciation?
- 3- How do Kurdish university students pronounce the most commonly mispronounced sounds and words?

The findings from these data contributed to the answers for the study's research questions. Subsequently, findings obtained in this study were compared and contrasted to previous studies conducted in the field of Second language Learning and pronunciation in particular.

Students' Attitudes towards English Language Pronunciation

The obtained results for the students' attitudes towards different items in the questionnaire illustrated as follows. As shown in Table 13, the students' attitudes towards the item which stated 'I try hard to improve my English pronunciation'. 55 % of the students strongly agreed with, 37.5% agreed, 7.5% were neutral. [Number (n=40),

mean ($M=4.4750$) and standard deviation ($SD= .64001$) (see Table 13 Appendix A).

As shown in Table 12, the scores indicated that the majority of the students strongly agreed that they work hard to improve their pronunciation. The findings are corroborated by Kenworthy (1988), he stated that “...success in pronunciation will depend on how much effort the learner puts into it” (p.2).

The results obtained for the item which showed that ‘Pronunciation activities help students to be more fluent in speaking’, 67% strongly agreed, 20% agreed while only 12% selected neutral. [Number ($n=40$), mean ($M= 4.5500$) and standard deviation ($SD= .71432$)] (see Table 13 Appendix A).

As shown in Table 13, the obtained results for the item indicated that Kurdish university students see that pronunciation activities improve their fluency. The finding is supported by Underhill (2005) as well as Rwisto and Haryanto (2012) in their study, which put emphasis on drilling techniques, and they believed that it was very influential in teaching pronunciation.

The findings for the item which highlighted that ‘I focus on the pronunciation of new vocabularies firstly’, the result gained as bellow, 27.5% strongly agreed, 32% agreed, 35% neutral; only 5% of the participants disagreed with the item. [Number ($n=40$), mean ($M=3.8250$) and standard deviation ($SD= .90263$)] (see Table 12 Appendix A).

As illustrated in Table 13, the findings showed that the students put emphasis on the pronunciation of newly learnt vocabulary. The results are supported by Levis and Le Velle (2011) who pointed out that “pronunciation accuracy of key vocabulary is critical” (p.62).

The results gained for the item which clarified that ‘I hardly articulate some English language sounds and phonemes’. As can be seen in Table 13, 5% strongly agreed, 50% agreed, 32.5% were neutral and 12.5% of the participants disagreed with this item. [Number (n=40), mean (M=3.4750) and standard deviation (SD=.78406)] (see Table 13 Appendix A).

As can be seen in Table 12, however, some of the students agreed that they face difficulties in the articulations of some English language sounds, but the majority of students agreed that they face difficulties. The results are supported by Muhammed and Taha (2014) they concluded in their research that Kurdish university students face difficulties in pronouncing some English phonemes.

The results for the item which illustrated that ‘I interact with classmates to improve my pronunciation’, the results for this item showed, 22.5% strongly agreed, 33.5% agreed, while 27.5% of the participants answered neutral, 15% disagreed and 7.5% strongly disagreed. [Number (n=40), mean (M=3.5250) and standard deviation (SD=1.17642)] (see Table 13 Appendix A).

As shown in Table 13, the scores showed that the students agreed with the item; it indicated that they did focus on interaction with classmates to improve their pronunciation. Gilakjani (2012) pointed out that amount of interaction between learners would influence on their language acquisition.

The results for item which stated that ‘I prefer to have more pronunciation courses at university’, 47.5% of participants strongly agreed with the mentioned item, 32.5% agreed, 12.5% neutral, 5% disagreed, 2.5% strongly disagreed with item 6. [Number (n=40), mean (M= 4.1000) and standard deviation (SD=.98189)] (see Table 13 Appendix A).

As shown in Table 13, the results illustrated that they strongly agreed to have extra English language pronunciation courses. The findings of this item are in line with what Tergujeff (2013) who concluded in his study on learners' perspectives on English pronunciation teaching in an EFL context. The findings are also corroborated by Rahbar (2013).

The results for the item which showed that 'I haven't had enough opportunity to be familiar with English language pronunciation', as seen in Table 13, 15% strongly agreed, 37.5% of students agreed with the item, but 25% of participants had chosen neutral, 20% disagreed and 2.5% strongly disagreed with the item. [Number (n=40), mean (M=3.4250) and standard deviation (SD=1.05945)] (see Table 13 Appendix A).

According to the obtained scores for mean (M) and standard (SD) deviation in Table 13, Kurdish university students agreed that they haven't had the opportunity to be familiarised with English language pronunciation. The finding is supported by Hassan (2014) in his study on Sudanese university students. He concluded that they have not been familiarised with the English sound system.

The scores for the item which demonstrated that 'The variety of English language accents made me confused about my pronunciation improvements', illustrated, 20% strongly agreed, 40% agreed, 17.5% were neutral, while 20% disagreed and 2.5% strongly disagreed with the item. [Number (n=40), mean (M=3.5500) and standard deviation (SD=1.10824)] (see Table 13 Appendix A).

The results show that the students were confused about the variety and its effect on students' pronunciation improvement. As Kelly (2000) stated, there is the variety of English around the world, but the teacher must inform the students which variety they use more and the variety's context for where the students live in.

The findings for Item “I haven’t been familiarised with the English language sound system before coming to the university” showed that 20% of the students strongly agreed, 25% agreed, 37.5% were neutral, 15% disagreed, but 12.5% of the participants strongly disagreed with the item. [Number (n=40), mean (M=3.2500) and standard deviation (SD=1.29595)] (see Table 13 Appendix A).

According to the mean score, the students’ agree selection was dominant; it means that they agreed with the item. They have not been familiarized with English language sound system before coming to university. As are in line with Benzies (2013) conclusions.

The findings for the item which included that ‘I feel comfortable when I interact with native speaker’, 42.5% of the participants strongly agreed with the item, 27.5% agreed, 20% were neutral while 2.5% disagreed and 7.5% strongly disagreed with the item. [Number (n=40), mean (M=3.9500) and standard deviation (SD=1.19722)] (see Table 13 Appendix A).

As shown in Table 13, the mean and standard deviation scores indicated that the students felt comfortable when they interacted with the native speakers. The finding is confirmed by Kolokdaragh (2009), he stated that EFL learners have a tendency to interact and ask native speakers for clarification regarding their pronunciation needs.

The finding for the item which stated that ‘I can’t differentiate between stressed and unstressed word syllables’, 17% of the students strongly agreed, 30% agreed while 35% of the students were neutral, 12.5% disagreed and 5% strongly disagreed. [Number (n=40) mean (M=3.4250) and standard deviation (SD=1.08338)] (see Table 13 Appendix A).

According to the scores obtained for the item in Table 13, the students agreed about the item; they did not agree and disagree fully. It means that it could not be realized that they would not be able to differentiate, and do not differentiate between stressed and unstressed word syllables. Ahmed (2010) related this to the difference between Kurdish and English Language in terms of stress, in his study he concluded that the Kurdish language is syllable-timed while in the English language is stress -timed.

The obtained results for the item which highlighted that ‘I prefer to listen to the watch films and listen to songs to enhance my pronunciation’, 57.5% of the participants strongly agreed, 35% agreed, 5% were neutral, but only 7.5% disagreed and 5% strongly disagreed with the item. [Number (n=40) mean (M=4.2250) and standard deviation (SD=1.16548)] (see Table 13 Appendix A).

According to the mean and standard deviation scores; the students strongly agreed to watch films and listen to songs in order to improve their pronunciation. Also, this strategy is asserted by Kolokdaragh (2009).

The finding for the item which included that ‘I am not familiar with English language sentence intonation’, 12.5% of the students strongly agreed, 30% agreed, while 37.5% of the participants were neutral about the item, 15% disagreed and only 5% strongly disagreed. [Number (n=40) mean (M=3.3500) and standard deviation (SD=1.02657)] (see Table 13 Appendix A).

According to the scores obtained for the mean and standard deviation, the students agreed with the item, they were not familiar with English language sentence intonation. As Rawand (2010) stated that acquiring English language stress features is difficult for Kurdish EFL learners.

The results for the item which demonstrated that ‘I would like to get corrective feedback about pronunciation after class times’, 37.5% of the respondents strongly agreed, 45% agreed, 15% were neutral, but only 2.5% of the students disagreed with the item. [Number (n=40), mean (M= 4.1750) and standard deviation (SD=.78078)] (see Table 13 Appendix A).

The scores obtained in Table 13 showed that all the students strongly agreed with the item. The finding is in line with Keshavarz (2014) who pointed out that:

“students’ oral errors are either dealt with immediately after they occur or the provision of the correct TL form is delayed until the end of a classroom activity” (p.7).

The findings for the item which stated that ‘I am motivated when my pronunciation mistakes are corrected’, 47.5% of the students strongly agreed with this item, 25% agreed, 15% were neutral, 10% disagreed while only 2.5% of the participants strongly disagreed with the item. [Number (n=40) mean (M= 4.0500) and standard deviation (SD=1.13114)] (see Table 13 Appendix A).

The results illustrated that the students were motivated when their pronunciation mistakes corrected. The result is supported by Kenworthy (1988) and also Azara and Molavib (2012) in their study on Iranian EFL learners’ attitudes toward correction of oral errors; they found that the learners strongly agreed with error correction.

The scores obtained for the item which showed that ‘I would like to fully participate in the class discussions but my pronunciation problems discourage me’, 17.5% of the participants strongly agreed with this item, 30% agreed, 15% were neutral, 35% disagreed, 2.5% strongly disagreed with the item, [Number (n=40), mean (M=3.2500) and standard deviation (SD=1.14774)] (see Table 13 Appendix A).

The results in Table 13 showed that the students' responses for the item were agreed, which means that students agreed that pronunciation difficulties have an influence on their class participation.

The findings for the item which demonstrated that 'The course books at university gave me enough chance to correct my pronunciation mistakes', 10% of the participants selected the strongly agree statement; 25% agree, 20% neutral, 20% disagreed and 12.5% strongly disagreed with the item. [Number (n=40), mean (M=2.8750) and standard deviation (SD=1.21000)] (see Table 13 Appendix A).

As observed from the scores in Table 13, the students' responses were neutral for this item, it indicates that students did neither agree nor disagree with that university course books gave the students chance to improve their pronunciation.

The findings for the item which showed that 'I prefer to have corrective feedback from the students rather than the teachers for mistakes', 22.5% of the university students strongly agreed with the item, 20% agreed, 32.5% selected neutral statement, 15% disagreed, but only 7.5% strongly disagreed with the item's consideration. [Number (n=40), mean (M=3.3750) and standard deviation (SD=1.21291)] (see Table 13 Appendix A).

The mean score in Table 13 showed that students agreed with the item, they prefer to get corrective feedback from the students rather than from the teachers for pronunciation mistakes. Sato and Lyster (2012) concluded that peer corrective feedback is more effective in the process of learning.

As shown in Table 7, the items of the students' attitude questionnaire were divided into three parts: students' strategies, difficulties and recommendations. For each domain six items included. Firstly, the result of the employed domains showed that the

strategy results scored were [Number of respondents (n=40), the mean (M=3.8958), standard and deviations (SD=.53881)]. The obtained results indicate students were agreed with the strategy has been mentioned in the questionnaire items. Secondly, the scores for the students difficulties showed that [(n= 40), (M=3.4125) and (SD=.568107)], which means that the students agreed with the difficulties pointed out in the questionnaire. Finally, the scores for the third domain demonstrated that, [(n=40), (M=3.8333) and (SD=.48001)], which means that the students agreed with the recommendations proposed in the items under the present domain (See Table 7).

Table 7

Students' Strategies, Difficulties and Suggestion Dimensions

| Domains | Item n | n | M | SD |
|------------------------|--------------------|----|--------|--------|
| Students' Strategies | 6(1,3.5,10,12,18) | 40 | 3.8958 | .53881 |
| Students' Difficulties | 6(4,7,8,9,11, 13) | 40 | 3.4125 | .55828 |
| Students' Suggestions | 6(2,6,14,15,16,17) | 40 | 3.8333 | .48001 |

Teachers' Attitudes towards English Language Pronunciation

The second instrument for collecting data was the teacher's attitude questionnaire. The main purpose behind employing this method of data collection was to obtain information about teachers' strategies and managements in teaching English language phonetics. Furthermore, the results of this data collection would assist the researcher to explore to what extent the teachers' methods improved the students' pronunciation. In other words, the teachers' strategies accepted by students' or vice

versa. In addition, there were six teachers in the English department who were involved in teaching pronunciation; this is the only reason the sample is restricted.

All six teachers believed that the students are motivated to improve their pronunciation. On the other hand, some teachers did not agree and they assume that students are unmotivated while they take part in phonetic classes. According to Gilakjani (2012), learners' motivation is crucial and it determines the learners' target language pronunciation. Furthermore, the majority of teachers showed that they tolerate students' errors, but some of them and they did not bear students errors. However, the teachers who believed that students are unmotivated in phonetic classes did not have tolerance about students' errors. In addition, the teachers who thought that students are motivated in the classes of pronunciation were more tolerant than the others. And the teachers who answered they did not tolerate pronunciation errors; they attempt to give corrective feedback instantaneously. On the other hand, the teachers who tolerated pronunciation errors delayed corrective feedback. The findings are supported by Kenworthy (1988), he stated that it's a part of teachers' role to offer students feedbacks and direct them how to master pronunciation. Also, Ellias (2012) emphasized that delaying corrective is more useful, because it does not affect students' motivation.

In addition, all the participants stated that they did research and explore the pronunciation errors. Also the teachers had given different ordered reasons for pronunciation errors. The interference of the students' first language was the leading reason at 50%. The course density was the first reason according to 33.3%, and the lack of learning attention had the lowest percentage at 16.7%. The secondary reason for errors was distributed as course density 50%, the interference of the first language

33.3%, lack of learning attention 16.7%. Finally, the category for third reason ordered as the lack of learning attention had the highest percentage, 66.6%, course density and the interference of the first language had equal percentages 16.7% for both reasons (see Table 8).

Table 8

Teachers' Perceptions Regarding Reasons for Pronunciation Errors

| The reasons | First reason% | Second reason% | Third reason% |
|------------------------------------|---------------|----------------|---------------|
| Lack of learning attention | 16.7% | 33.3% | 50% |
| Course density | 16.6% | 50% | 33.3% |
| The interference of first language | 66% | 16.7% | 16.7% |

As illustrated in Table 8, the overall results indicated that the teachers attributed the interference of the students' first language as the main reason for errors followed by course density. Then the lack of learning attention is ordered as the third reason. The findings are corroborated by Keshavarz (2014) and Mohammadi (2014). They believed that first language interference is the main source of learners' errors in second language acquisition.

Teachers' strategies for teaching pronunciation. The majority of teachers did not follow any specific program in teaching pronunciation while only one teacher followed a specific program. Also, they contributed that daily practice, a sound lab, an advanced curriculum, and native speaker staff, were the most important points for improving students' pronunciation. The teachers stated that they need to use many types of equipment to enhance the students' level of pronunciation such as a sound laboratory; smart boards, data shows, video clips, Smartphone applications and audio machines, and

the majority of them stated that they used all the materials. As Yates and Zielinski (2009) illustrated that:

“It is therefore important that teachers have ways of demonstrating the different features of pronunciation, and providing feedback to learners using not only techniques that rely on the ability to listen carefully, that is, techniques that tap into the *auditory* mode, but also techniques that tap into the *visual* and *kinesthetic* modes as well” (p.78).

Teachers’ suggestions and recommendations. Most of the teachers believe that the allocated time for the course was not adequate and they could not cover all the syllabus or materials and the time was not sufficient to obtain the main objectives of the course employed learners’ practice in the classroom style of teaching. Also they added extra practice sessions to remedy some pronunciation errors. According to the teachers, adding extra hours will make the students interact more and they would pronounce more. Also showing them video tapes will affect the students’ pronunciation because they would hear the target language’s sounds and phonemes and imitate them more practically. As Kelly (2001) stated that “A lot of pronunciation teaching tends to be done in response to errors which students make in the classroom” (p.13). On the other hand, two of the participants identified that the granted time for the pronunciation course was sufficient and during this timeframe they achieved the main objectives of the mentioned course and they did not offer the students more time. According to Gilbert (2008), one of the difficulties faces teaching pronunciation is insufficient time for the course. 50% of the participants preferred oral explanations and writing on the board strategy, which is equal to the results for learners’ practice in the classroom strategy 50%, while none of them chosen ‘Just oral explanation’ (see Table 9).

Table 9*Teachers' Preferred Strategy for Teaching Pronunciation*

| Strategies | Preferred% |
|---|------------|
| Just oral explanation | -- |
| Oral explanation and writing on the board | 50% |
| Learners' practice in the classroom | 50% |

As illustrated in Table 9, the findings showed that these two strategies were ideal by the teachers. In addition, the oral explanation strategy was not admired by teachers and they did not use it. The findings are corroborated by Underhill (2005).

Also, most of the teachers thought that better pronunciation depends on intensive practice. While, only one teacher replied not really, it means that he/ she believed that better pronunciation depends on other principles. However, half of the participants focused on both kinds of exercises, written exercises (transcription) and oral exercises (oral performance). Which the other half of the teachers focused on oral exercises (oral performance) only. The findings showed that the teachers focused on oral exercises (oral performance) more. As Jalal and Muhiburrahman (2013) found that oral exercises are useful in enhancing learners' pronunciation

The teachers who have chosen both types of exercises stated that it is important for the students to be familiar with the written form or symbols and after that for practicing they need to do oral exercises because they related it to the nature of English language which is not a phonetic language. However, the teachers who preferred oral exercises believed that pronunciation has strong relation with speaking skill, and it is important to use the interaction exercises. The findings are corroborated by Gilakjani (2011).

Finally, the participants provided logical and helpful recommendations for the sake of improving students' pronunciation. The teachers suggested several points. Firstly, they recommended that the English language departments need a temporary sound laboratory and good quality classrooms for teaching phonetic courses. Secondly, they proposed that the teacher who teaches phonetics should be trained, and work with better curriculum. They also suggested recruiting native speaker teachers for teaching pronunciation courses. Thirdly, they expressed the need for students to start pronunciation courses at the early stages of their language learning journey and they should study phonetics in all four stages at university in order to be familiar with the two essential parts of phonetic which are acoustic and auditory parts. Finally, they proposed the audio-visual method of teaching, because it makes students more motivated in studying pronunciation.

Students' Mistakes of Most Commonly Mispronounced Sounds and Words

Students' mistakes of most commonly mispronounced sounds; fricative /ð/.

The most problematic consonant for Kurdish learners of English was /ð/. The majority of the participants faced difficulties in articulating the /ð/ phoneme, as has been shown in Table 9. 79% of the participants mispronounced that particular phoneme. While they were trying to articulate /ð/ phoneme, in the words 'leather' 'either' 'together' 'smooth' and 'this', they replaced it with other phonemes, as illustrated in Table 10. 45% of the participants replaced it with /z/ sound, 15% pronounced it as /d/ s, 12% of the students replaced it with /θ/, because they didn't differentiate between /ð/ and /θ/ phonemes. %6.5 pronounced it as /s/ because they realized that it was /θ/ and the final sound it has got less frequency is the 0.5 % of the participants replaced with /t/ sound. Only 21% of the

students didn't have problems in pronouncing /ð/ phoneme (see Table 10)

Table 10

The mispronunciation Percentages of Fricative /ð/

| Problematic Area | Replaced sounds | % |
|------------------------|-----------------|-------|
| Fricative consonant/ð/ | /z/ | 45.5% |
| | /d/ | 15% |
| | /θ/ | 12% |
| | /s/ | 6.5% |
| | /t/ | 0.5% |
| | Total | 79% |

The reason behind mispronouncing this phoneme is the absence of this particular phoneme in Kurdish phonological inventory as has been clarified in Chapter 2. Furthermore, the findings obtained in the current study corroborated by other empirical research in the field of pronunciation studies. For instance, Mohammed and Taha (2014) conducted a study on segmental and suprasegmental difficulties in English pronunciation, among Kurdish students, and they concluded that /ð/ phoneme is one of the most problematic phonemes for students.

Students' mistakes of most commonly mispronounced sounds; fricative

/θ/. The second consonant caused problem for students was /θ/, as shown in Table 11. 64% of the participants mispronounced this sound while they read these words 'breath' 'birthday' 'think' 'bath' and 'thought'. They replaced it with other phonemes because this phoneme also is not present in Kurdish phonological inventory. The frequency of

replacements is distributed as follows: 31.5% replaced it with /s/, 12.5% of the participants pronounced it as /t/, 11.5% articulated it as /ð/ because they did not differentiate with /ð/, 8.5% replaced it with /z/, because they realized it was /ð/ phoneme and they failed in pronouncing it correctly. The final substitution was with /d/ which is 0.5%. It is worth to mentioning that only 36% of the participants pronounced / θ/ phoneme correctly (see Table 11).

Table 11

The mispronunciation Percentages of Fricative /θ/

| Problematic Area | Replaced sounds | % |
|------------------------|-----------------|-------|
| Fricative consonant/θ/ | /s/ | 31.5% |
| | /t/ | 12.5% |
| | /ð/ | 11% |
| | /z/ | 8.5% |
| | /d/ | 0.5% |
| | Total | 64% |

The findings are supported by the results of study conducted by Mohammed and Taha (2014).

Students' mistakes of most commonly mispronounced words; spelling-induced mispronunciation. The next pronunciation issue investigated in the current study was the spelling pronunciation of words, as has been demonstrated in Table 12, below. 59.5% of the participants mispronounced the sound of these words 'flood', 'was', 'washed', 'drug' and 'beard'. The cause of this error made by participants is that the Kurdish language is phonetic language, it pronounces as it's written unlike the English language which is not a phonetic language, it is not pronounced as it's written. The 40.5 % of the participants pronounced these words correctly.

Students' mistakes of most commonly mispronounced words; silent letters.

The final pronunciation issues which face Kurdish students are silent letters. As shown in Table 12. 51.5% of the students mispronounced or pronounced the silent letters in the words 'hour', 'handkerchief', 'debt', 'wrinkled' and 'castle'. The main reason behind these errors is the difference between the Kurdish and English languages, because there are no silent letters in the learner's first language, as a result they tend to pronounce every letter in these words. 48.5% of the participants did not pronounce silent letters in the words marked above (see Table12).

Table 12

The mispronunciation Percentages of Spelling-induced Mispronunciation and Silent Letters

| Problematic Area | % |
|-----------------------------------|-------|
| Spelling-induced mispronunciation | 59.5% |
| Silent letters | 51.5% |

The findings of the last two issues corroborate the results of the study by Mohamadi (2014) on "a survey of Kurdish students' sound segments and syllabic pattern errors in the course of learning EFL". He concluded that these two issues are the main difficulties facing Kurdish learners' in English pronunciation.

The results in Figure 3, showed the percentage of errors and mistakes made by Kurdish university students while they read the 20 sentence contained the marked

problematic areas, as illustrated in the chart, /ð/ fricative has the highest rate of errors at 79%, and the second highest at 64% is for /θ/ fricative consonant errors. The third highest at 59.5% is the spelling-induced mispronunciation of words. Finally, the percentage of which is 51% the lowest percentage in the bar chart and describes the silent letters errors and mistakes made by the participants (See Figure 3).

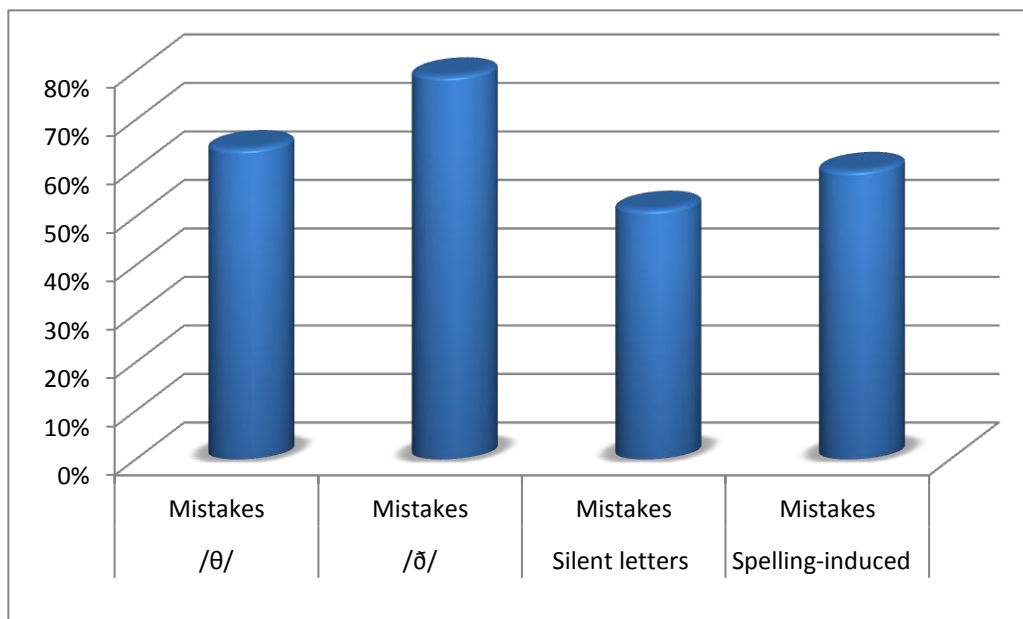


Figure 3. The percentages variation of /ð/, /θ/, silent letters and spelling-induced mispronunciation mistakes.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION AND RECOMENDATIONS

This chapter contains the summary of the findings from the recorded sounds for the problematic consonants, silent sounds and different spellings of English words. Then, the chapter discusses the results of the students and teachers' attitude questionnaires towards English pronunciation. Furthermore, it proposed recommendations and suggestions for further research in the pronunciation field.

Conclusion

Students' attitudes towards English language pronunciation. Overall, the results indicated that the students agreed with the items listed under students' strategy construction. It means that students try hard to improve their pronunciation. They interact with classmates, and they feel comfortable when they interact with native speakers, they prefer to watch films and listen to songs and they prefer corrective feedback from the students rather than the teachers for mistakes.

The findings for the items constructed under students' difficulties, demonstrated that students agreed with the items, for instance, the students agreed that they hardly articulate some English language sounds and phonemes, also they agreed that they haven't had enough opportunity to be familiar with English language pronunciation. Generally, students believed that the variety of English language accents confused their pronunciation improvements. In addition, the students' agreed that they were not familiarized with the English language sound system before coming to the university. Because of this lack of exposure, they could not differentiate between stressed and unstressed word syllables, and familiar with English language sentence intonation.

The obtained scores revealed that participants agreed with the proposed recommendation items. Also, it showed that they suggested pronunciation activities, and students preferred to have more pronunciation courses, and would like to get corrective feedback after class times. Overall, they would like to fully participate in the class discussions, but were discouraged by their pronunciation problems. In addition, participants' attitude was neutral to propose course books at university would give students a good chance to improve pronunciation.

Teachers' attitudes towards English language pronunciation. The results achieved from the teachers' attitude questionnaire showed that the teachers' experience was not satisfactory. Firstly, their awarded degree was Masters. Secondly, the years which they taught pronunciation was ranged from 6 months to five years, as a result of the short time of teaching, they did not experience more in teaching phonetics. Thirdly, they did not get any kind of training in the field of phonetics teaching, because pronunciation is more related to practical activities and physical actions. These findings are supported by Kelly (2001), who demonstrated that because of the physiology of pronunciation, the teachers need to learn how to use the sound and practice them before transferring to the learners.

In contrast to the results gained from the teachers' experience, the findings regarding the teachers' methods of teaching demonstrated that almost all of the teachers believed that the students are motivated in the pronunciation classes and they try to improve their pronunciation. Alternatively, the teachers tolerated the students' errors and mistakes, initially disregarding them, and then offered corrective feedback. This finding

supported by Ellias (2012), who believed that corrective feedback should be delayed, so as not to demotivate students.

Furthermore, teachers looked for the causes of students' errors and mistakes; claimed that first language interference is the main reason. The results are supported by Tergujeff (2013), Ali (2013) and Zhang and Yin (2009).

The majority of the teachers did not follow a specific strategy in teaching pronunciation. Also, they preferred to use oral exercises in the phonetic classes. Although, they stated that allocated time for pronunciation course was not sufficient, but they did not add extra time to teach and train students more on English pronunciation. As Morely (1991) stated the role of the teacher should play as a coach in teaching both inside class and outside of the classroom, because it improves students' pronunciation, and it's important to add extra activities and sessions.

Finally, the teachers had some recommendations; the main suggestion was installing a sound laboratory for the English language department. Many also proposed to recruit native speaker teachers to teach pronunciation courses. In addition, they suggested that students need to be instructed in English language pronunciation even before studying at university as Benzies (2013) reiterated. It is also necessary to add the pronunciation courses in all four stages, because it cannot be mastered in two years, the suggestion supported by Derwing & Munro (2005).

Students' mistakes of most commonly mispronounced sounds. The results obtained from the recorded sounds of problematic consonants showed that Kurdish university students faced difficulties or made errors and mistakes while articulating some English language fricative consonants, especially /ð/and/θ/. In chapter II the

contrastive analysis hypothesis (CAH) has been discussed in detail because it deals with the differences between the two languages to help explain this occurrence. Hence, the Kurdish language and the English language sound systems are compared and contrasted.

The results revealed that /ð/and/θ/ consonants are not present in the Kurdish language. As a result, of the absence of these consonants in the Kurdish language, the students mispronounced /ð/and /θ/and articulated them hardly. These results are in line with the research findings of Mohammed and Taha (2014). However, the unique finding for the present study is that students did not differentiate between /ð/ and /θ/ fricatives while they read the mentioned words.

Students' mistakes of most commonly mispronounced of words. The third and fourth areas which investigated through the sound recordings were silent letters and spelling-induced mispronunciation of words. Results indicated that the students had difficulties in pronouncing the silent letters and the spelling-induced mispronunciation of words. These areas were problematic for Kurdish students because Kurdish is a phonetic language, unlike English. The findings for these problematic areas of pronunciation are confirmed by Mohamadi (2014).

Recommendations

Since the majority of students mentioned that they did not receive enough opportunities to be familiarized with English pronunciation, and the teachers responded positively to have more time for teaching phonetic courses, it is essential the pronunciation courses should be inserted in all four stages in the English language department's curriculum.

The students had the tendency to interact with native speakers in order to improve their pronunciation. Also, the teachers had the recommendation to have native speakers for phonetic courses; it's a good idea to have native and experienced teachers for English language phonetic course in the mentioned departments.

Students difficulties in articulating some English-language phonemes and sounds, and the teachers suggestions to install a sound laboratory for the English language departments in order to familiarize and instruct students practically with English language sound system, and also it's significant to integrate more class activities and drilling techniques as preferred by both students and teachers.

The teachers emphasized that they offered corrective feedback to the students, but it's important to instruct the students to get phonological corrective feedback from their classmates because they would have positive results on students' pronunciation. Furthermore, the timing of corrective feedback needs to be considered, because it may have a negative impact on the students' engagements in learning or improving their speaking skills.

The teachers need to update themselves with new methods of teaching pronunciation and also the pronunciation curriculum must be improved and modernized. The course materials need to be designed according to the students' requirements and needs. Other methods such as playing videos and sounds ought to be integrated into pronunciation classes.

Suggestions for Further Research

The current study focused on students' evaluation of the consonant variations

between the Kurdish and English language. For further research, it would be significant to investigate English language vowels in order to find out to what extent the students face difficulties while articulating English language vowels in words.

The areas of research should be expanded by conducting an experimental study in this field, by hiring control group from English language native speakers so as to find out a correlation between them regarding pronunciation performances.

For further studies in the pronunciation field, the research should be conducted in different settings and with different sample levels. Since the present study's participants were first and second stages at the university level, but their proficiency levels and ages were similar, in order to obtain clear results and different levels among the participants.

REFERENCES

- Abubakar, M. KH. (2014). Pronunciation problems of Hausa speakers of English: The case of Nigerian students in North Cyprus (Unpublished master's thesis). Near East University, Nicosia, North Cyprus.
- Ahmad, J. (2011). Pronunciation problems among Saudi learners: A case study at the preparatory year program, Najran University Saudi Arabia. *Language In India*, 11, 22-36.
- Ahmed, R. S. (2010) A contrastive analysis of stress in Kurdish and English (Unpublished master's thesis). Suliamani University, Sulaimani, Kurdistan Region-Iraq. Retrieved from <http://kurdipedia.info/documents/88097/0001.PDF>
- Al-Saidat, E. M. (2010). Phonological analysis of English phonetics: A case study of Arab learners of English. *Anglogermanica Online* 14-25.
- Ali, E. M.T. (2013). Pronunciation problems: Acoustic analysis of the English vowels produced by Sudanese learners of English. *International Journal of English and Literature*, 4(10), 495-507.
- Ary, D., Jacobs, L., Sorensen, C., & Walker, D. (2013). *Introduction to research in education*. Cengage Learning.
- Azara, A. S. & Molavib, S. (2012). Iranian EFL learners' attitudes toward correction of oral errors. *The European Journal of Social & Behavioral Sciences*, 801-818.
- Bada, E. (2001). Native language influence of the production of English sounds by Japanese learners. *The Reading Matrix* 1 (2). Retrieved from <http://www.readingmatrix.com/articles/bada/article.pdf>

- Benzies, Y., J., C. (2013). Advanced Spanish university students' problems with the pronunciation of English vowels. Identification, analysis and technical implication. Retrieved from http://www.ual.es/odisea/Odisea14_Calvo.pdf
- Bialystok, E. & Hakuta, K. (1999) Confounded age: Linguistic and cognitive factors in age differences for second language acquisition. In Birdsong, D. (ed.). *Second language acquisition and the critical period hypothesis*. Mahwah, N.J.: Erlbaum.
- Brown, H. D. (2000). *Principles of language learning and teaching* (4th ed.). White Plains, NY: Longman.
- Derwing, T. M. & Munro, M. J. (2005). Second language accent and pronunciation teaching: A research based – approach. *TESOL Quarterly*, 39(3), 379-397.
- Ellis, R. (2012). *Language teaching research and language pedagogy*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Gilakjani, A. P. (2011). A study on the situation of pronunciation instruction ESL/EFL classrooms. *Journal of Studies in Education*, 1(1), 2162-6952.
- Gilakjani, A. P. (2012). A study of factors affecting EFL learners' English pronunciation learning and the strategies for instruction. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, 2(11), 119-128.
- Gilbert, J. B. (2008). *Teaching pronunciation: Using the prosody pyramid*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Graddol, D., Leith, D., Swan, J., Rhys, M. & Gillen. J. (2007). *Changing English*. Abingdon: Routledge.

- Hassan, E. (2014). Pronunciation problems: A case study of English language students at Sudan university of science and technology. *English Language and Literature Studies* 4(4), 31-44. <http://dx.doi.org/10.5539/ells.v4n4p31>
- International Phonetic Association. (1999). *Handbook of the International phonetic association: A guide to the use of the International Phonetic Alphabet*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Kelly, G. (2000). *How to teach pronunciation*. In Harmer, J. (Ed.). Harlow: Longman.
- Keshavarz, M. H. (2014). *Contrastive analysis and error analysis*. Tehran: Rahnama Press.
- Keshavarz, M. H. (Eds.). (2014). The role of corrective feedback in second language acquisition (1): *The 3rd Interdisciplinary Conference on English Studies*. NEU, Nicosia, North Cyprus.
- Khamkhien, A. (2010). Thai learners' English pronunciation competence: Lesson learned from word stress assignment. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, 1(6), 757-764. doi:10.4304/jltr.1.6.757-764
- Koshnaw, N. A. (2013). *Phonetics*. (In Kurdish). Erbil: Awer Library Press.
- Kulich, L., S. (2009) The English reading development of Karen children using the fluency development lesson in an intensive English language program: Three descriptive case studies (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). University of Akron, Akron, Ohio, USA. Retrieved from https://etd.ohiolink.edu/!etd.send_file?accession=akron1258493882&disposition=inline
- Ladefoged, P., & Johnson, K. (2011). *A course in phonetics*. Boston, MA: Wadsworth/ Cengage Learning.

- Levis, J. & LeVelle, K. (2011). Pronunciation and intelligibility: An overview of the conference. *Proceedings of the 2nd Pronunciation in Second Language Learning and Teaching Conference*. Iowa State University, Ames, IA.
- Macháčková, E. (2012). Teaching English pronunciation to secondary school students with focus on “th” consonants (Unpublished master’s thesis). Masaryk University Brno, Brno, Czech Republic. Retrieved from http://is.muni.cz/th/183878/pedf_m/the_final_thesis.pdf
- Major, R. C. (2001). *Foreign accent: The ontogeny and phylogeny of second language phonology*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Mc Carus, E. N. (1992). Kurdish. In Bright, W. (Ed.), *International encyclopedia of linguistics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Mirzaei, K., Gowhary, H., Azizifar, A. & Jamalinesari, A. (2015). Investigating the phonological performance of Kurdish and Persian EFL learners in pronunciation of English consonants. *Journal of Social Issues & Humanities*, 3 (8), 307-315.
- Mohammadi, J. (2014). A survey of Kurdish students’ sound segment & syllabic pattern errors in the course of learning EFL. *Advances in Language and Literary Studies*, 5(3) 18-21.
- Morley, J. (1991). The pronunciation component in teaching English to speakers of other languages. *TESOL Quarterly*, 25 (2), 481-520.
- Moskovsky, C. (2001). The critical period hypothesis revisited. In *Proceedings of the 2001 Conference of the Australian Linguistic Society*. Burgmann College, ANU.

- Mourad, S. (2010) Pronunciation practice and students' oral performances: A case study of second year English students at the University of Constantine ((Unpublished master's thesis). University of Mentouri, Constantine, Algeria. Retrieved from <http://www.umc.edu.dz/buc/theses/anglais/MOU1149.pdf>
- Muhammed, A. A. & Taha. J. A. (2014). Segmental & Suprasegmental difficulties in English pronunciation to English as a foreign students (EFS) of English department at Koya University. Retrieved from <http://s3.amazonaws.com/academia.edu.documents/36312141/Europass-CV-20150118 Muhammed>
- Nilson, M. W. (2011). The use of Edward Lear's nonsense ABC as a didactical tool in the development of pronunciation skills in young learners of English. Retrieved from <http://www.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:440013/fulltext02>
- Noorman, I. (2008) ENL, ESL, EFL, EIL or ELF? On the idea of teaching the Lingua Franca core at Dutch secondary schools (Unpublished master's thesis). Utrecht University, Utrecht, The Netherlands. Retrieved from file:///C:/Users/muxls/Downloads/Thesis_ELF.pdf
- O' Connor, J. D. (2000). *Better English pronunciation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Rahimpour, M. & Dovaise, M. S. (2011). A phonological contrastive analysis of Kurdish and English. *International Journal of English Linguistics*, 1(2), 73-82.
doi:10.5539/ijel.v1n2p
- Rahbar, S (2013). Bidialectalism and English word pronunciation: Evidence from Iranian EFL learners. *Asian Journal Social Sciences & Humanities*, 2(1) 147-15

- Richards. J. C. & Schmidt, P. (2010). *Longman dictionary of language teaching and applied linguistics*. Pearson Education Limited
- Riswanto & Haryanto, E. (2012). Improving students' pronunciation through communicative drilling technique at senior high school (SMA) 07 South Bengkulu, Indonesia. *International journal of humanities and social science*, 2(21), 82-87.
- Sato, M., & Lyster, R. (2012). Peer interaction and corrective feedback for accuracy and fluency development. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 34(04), 591-626.
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/s0272263112000356>
- Tergujeff, E. (2013). English pronunciation teaching in Finland (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). University of Jyväskylä, Jyväskylä, Finland). Retrieved from
https://jyx.jyu.fi/dspace/.../978-951-39-5322-5_vaitos03082013.pdf?...1
- Tergujeff, E. (2013). Learner Perspective on English Pronunciation Teaching in an EFL Context. *Research In Language*, 11(1), 94-8. <http://dx.doi.org/10.2478/v10015-012-0010-z>
- Underhill, A. (2005). *Sound foundations*. Oxford: Macmillan.
- Varol, M. (2012). The influence of Turkish sounds system on English pronunciation (Unpublished master's thesis). The Florida State University, Florida, USA). Retrieved from
www.Search.proquest.com.ezpprod1.hul.harvard.edu/pqdtft/results
- Wais, GH.F. (1984). *Phonetics*. (In Kurdish). Baghdad: Al-Adib Press.
- Wardhaugh, R. (1970). The contrastive analysis hypothesis. *TESOL Quarterly*, 4, 120-130.

- Yates, L., & Zielinski, B. (2009). *Give it a go: Teaching pronunciation to adults*. North Ryde, N.S.W.: Macquarie University.
- Yarmohammadi, L. (1996). *A contrastive analysis of Persian and English*. Tehran: Payame Noor University Press
- Zhang, F. & Yin, P. (2009). A study of pronunciation problems of English learners in China. *Asian Social Sciences*, 5(6), 141-146.

Appendix A

Table 13

The Percentages of Students' Attitudes towards English Language Pronunciation

| Item n | Items | n | Options | % | M | SD |
|--------|---|----|---------|-------|--------|---------|
| 1 | I try hard to improve my English pronunciation. | 40 | SA | 55% | 4.4750 | .64001 |
| | | | A | 37.5% | | |
| | | | NE | 7.5% | | |
| 2 | Pronunciation activities help students to be more fluent in speaking. | 40 | SA | 67% | 4.5500 | .71432 |
| | | | A | 20% | | |
| | | | NE | 12% | | |
| 3 | I focus on the pronunciation of new vocabularies firstly. | 40 | SA | 27.5% | 3.8250 | .90263 |
| | | | A | 32% | | |
| | | | NE | 35.5% | | |
| | | | D | 5% | | |
| 4 | I hardly articulate some English language sounds and phonemes. | 40 | SA | 5% | 3.4750 | .78406 |
| | | | A | 50% | | |
| | | | NE | 32.5% | | |
| | | | D | 12.5% | | |
| 5 | I interact with classmates to improve my pronunciation. | 40 | SA | 22.5% | 3.5250 | 1.17642 |
| | | | A | 32.5% | | |
| | | | NE | 27.5% | | |
| | | | D | 15% | | |
| | | | STD | 7.5% | | |
| 6 | I prefer to have more pronunciation courses at university. | 40 | SA | 42.5% | 4.1000 | .98189 |
| | | | A | 35% | | |
| | | | NE | 12.5% | | |
| | | | D | 10% | | |
| 7 | I haven't had enough opportunity to be familiar with English language pronunciation. | 40 | SA | 15% | 3.4250 | 1.05945 |
| | | | A | 37.5% | | |
| | | | NE | 25% | | |
| | | | D | 20% | | |
| | | | STD | 2.5% | | |
| 8 | The variety of English language accents made me confused about my pronunciation improvements. | 40 | SA | 20% | 3.5500 | 1.10824 |
| | | | A | 40% | | |
| | | | NE | 17.5% | | |
| | | | D | 20% | | |
| | | | STD | 2.5% | | |

| | | | | | | |
|----|---|----|---------------------------|--|--------|---------|
| 9 | I haven't been familiarised with the English language sound system before coming to the university. | 40 | SA A NE D STD | 20% 25% 37.5% 15% 12.5% | 3.2500 | 1.29595 |
| 10 | I feel comfortable when I interact with native speaker. | 40 | SA A NE D STD | 42.5% 27.5% 20% 2.5% 7.5% | 3.9500 | 1.19722 |
| 11 | I can't differentiate between stressed and unstressed word syllables. | 40 | SA A NE D STD | 42.5% 27.5% 20% 2.5% 7.5% | 3.9500 | 1.19722 |
| 12 | I prefer to listen to the films and songs to enhance my pronunciation | 40 | SA A NE D STD | 57.5% 35% 5% 7.5% 5% | 4.2250 | 1.16548 |
| 13 | I am not familiar with English language sentence intonation. | 40 | SA A NE D STD | 12.5% 32.5% 37.5% 12.5% 5% | 3.3500 | 1.02657 |
| 14 | I would like to get corrective feedback about pronunciation after class times. | 40 | SA A NE D | 37.5% 45% 15% 2.5% | 4.1750 | .78078 |
| 15 | I am motivated when my pronunciation mistakes are corrected. | 40 | SA A NE D STD | 47.5% 25% 15% 10% 2.5 | 4.0500 | 1.13114 |
| 16 | I would like to fully participate in the class discussions but my pronunciation problems discourage me. | | SA A NE D STD | 17.5% 30% 15% 35% 2.5% | 3.2500 | 1.19293 |
| 17 | The course books at university gave me enough chance to correct my pronunciation mistakes. | | SA A NE D STD | 10% 25% 20% 32% 12% | 2.8750 | 1.22344 |

| | | | | | |
|----|--|-----|-------|--------|---------|
| 18 | I prefer to have corrective feedback from the students rather than the teachers for mistakes | SA | 22.5% | 3.3750 | 1.21291 |
| | | A | 22.5% | | |
| | | NE | 32.5% | | |
| | | D | 15% | | |
| | | STD | 7.5% | | |

Appendix B

Students' Attitude Questionnaire

The aim of this research is to collect data about your opinions concerning the pronunciation issues that are faced by Kurdish university students at English language departments. Your participation is important for this research and will help to improve teaching and learning of English pronunciation in English language departments. Filling out this questionnaire is optional and your answers will be kept confidential and they will only be used for the purpose of this research. Please tick in the brackets as appropriate (✓) and state your sincere statements. Thank you very much for your time!

Gender: Male () Female ()

Age: 19 - 25 () 25 - 30 () 31 - 35 () 36 - 40 ()

Stage:

Place of Birth:

Have you ever been to English- speaking countries such as England and the United States of America?

a) Yes ()

b) No ()

If yes, how long did you stay there?

Please tick ONE option

| Items Statements | Strongly Agree | Agree | Neutral | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|---|-------------------|-------|---------|----------|----------------------|
| 1-I try hard to improve my English pronunciation. | | | | | |
| 2. Pronunciation activities help students to be more fluent in speaking. | | | | | |
| 3- I focus on the pronunciation of new vocabularies firstly. | | | | | |
| 4- I hardly articulate some English language sounds and phonemes | | | | | |
| 5- I interact with classmates to improve my pronunciation. | | | | | |
| 6. I prefer to have more pronunciation courses at university. | | | | | |
| 7- I haven't had enough opportunity to be familiar with English language pronunciation. | | | | | |
| 8- The variety of English language accents made me confused about my pronunciation improvements. | | | | | |
| 9- I haven't been familiarized with the English language sound system before coming to the university. | | | | | |
| 10- I feel comfortable when I interact with native speaker. | | | | | |
| 11- I can't differentiate between stressed and unstressed word syllables. | | | | | |
| 12- I prefer to listen to the films and songs to enhance my pronunciation. | | | | | |
| 13- I am not familiar with English language sentence intonation. | | | | | |
| 14. I would like to get corrective feedback about pronunciation after class times. | | | | | |
| 15. I am motivated when my pronunciation mistakes are corrected. | | | | | |
| 16. I would like to fully participate in the class discussions but my pronunciation problems discourage me. | | | | | |
| 17- The course books at university gave me enough chance to correct my pronunciation mistakes. | | | | | |
| 18. I prefer to corrective feedback from the students rather than the teachers for mistakes. | | | | | |

Thank you so much for your collaboration!

Appendix C

Teachers' Attitude Questionnaire

Dear teachers,

This questionnaire is a tool for investigating the teachers' strategies for improving the students' pronunciation mistakes and errors, which is a Master's thesis research work. I would be very grateful if you provide me with full answers or tick (✓) the appropriate answer among the provided ones. Your answers will be kept anonymous and will only be used for the research purpose. Filling out this questionnaire is optional.

1-What is your highest qualification or degree?

A-BA ()

B-MA ()

C-PhD ()

2. How long have you been teaching English language phonetics/pronunciation?

3. Did you receive any training about how to teach phonetics/pronunciation?

Yes ()

No ()

4. If yes, state what kind of training it was _____

5. Do you think that your students are motivated to learn pronunciation during phonetics class?

Yes ()

No ()

6. Do you tolerate pronunciation errors?

Yes ()

No ()

7. If no, do you correct them immediately?

Yes ()

No ()

8. Do you look for reasons behind pronunciation errors?

Yes ()

No ()

9. If yes, do you attribute the reasons to: (Give an order of importance from A to C)

A- Lack of learning attention.

B- Course density.

C- The interference of first language.

10. Do you follow any specific program in teaching phonetics?

Yes ()

No ()

11. If yes, what are the most important points for improving students' pronunciation?

12. What kinds of material do you need to use in order to enhance students' level of pronunciation?

13. Do you use these materials during the class of Phonetics?

Yes ()

No ()

14. If no, state why?

15. Do you find the allocated course time sufficient to achieve the main course objectives?

Yes ()

No ()

16. If no, what do you have to dispense with?

The use of materials ()

Learners' practice in the classroom ()

17. Have you ever added extra practice sessions remedy to some pronunciation errors?

Yes ()

No ()

18. If yes, have you achieved good results?

Yes ()

No ()

19. Explain

20. In teaching, which strategies do you prefer the most?

A- Just oral explanation ()

B- Oral explanation and writing on the board ()

C- Learners' practice in the classroom ()

21. Do you think that better pronunciation depends on intensive practice?

Yes ()

Not really ()

22. What kind of exercises do you focus on in the class of phonetics?

a- Written exercises (transcription) ()

b- Oral exercises (oral performance) ()

23. Please state the reasons for your choice.

24. Do you have any suggestions for the improvement for pronunciation teaching?

Yes ()

No ()

25. If yes, please state them.

Thank you so much for your collaboration

Appendix D

The List of Short Sentences Used in Sound Recordings

- 1-Take a deep breath.
- 2-It is my birthday on Sunday.
- 3-Think twice before you do any action.
- 4-I will take a bath today.
- 5-She sat deep in thought.
- 6-He was dressed in black leather.
- 7- Either you pass or fail.
- 8- We are going to travel together.
- 9- A course of true love never did run smooth.
- 10- This is her better life.
- 11-She will stay for an hour.
- 12-Oh,What a beautiful handkerchief.
- 13-He paid off his debts.
- 14-She sniffed and wrinkled her nose.
- 15-Did you visit Erbil castle?
- 16-Have you ever seen floods?
- 17-She was a good student.
- 18- I washed my dishes.
- 19-Please take your drugs daily.
- 20- He had a black beard.

Appendix E

Permission Request for Using Teachers Questionnaire

from: Mokhles Ibrahim <mokhles.ibrahim@soran.edu.iq

to: Hamada Hacene <hacene.hamada@yahoo.fr

date: On 13 December 2015 at 15:20

Dear Prof. Dr. Hecene,

I am a graduate student at Near East University in Northern- Cyprus conducting a study on the issues of pronunciation faced by university students. I would prefer to use one of the questionnaires used in MOURAD Sara's thesis.

Best Regards

Mokhles

from: Hamada Hacene <hacene.hamada@yahoo.fr

to: Mokhles Ibrahim <mokhles.ibrahim@soran.edu.iq

date: On 14 December 2015 at 15:20

Dear Mokhles Salah Ibrahim,

As the supevisor of Mourad Sara's study, I thank you for the interest you take in her work. Of course you can use the questionnaire, either completely or adapt it partly to your study, with the obligation of referencing (citing in Bibliography);

Best regards

Prof. Hacene Hamada

Appendix F

Approval Letter of SU English Language Department

| | | |
|--|--|--|
| إقليم كوردستان - العراق رئاسة مجلس الوزراء وزارة التعليم العالي والبحث العلمي رئاسة جامعة السوران |  زانکۆی سوران SORAN UNIVERSITY | هەرێمی کوردستان - عێراق سەرۆکایەتی ئەنجومەنی وەزیران وەزارەتی خوێندنی باڵا و توێژینه‌وهی زانستی سەرۆکایەتی زانکۆی سوران |
| Kurdistan Regional Government - Iraq | Ministry of Higher Education & Scientific Research | Presidency of Soran University |

14 December 2015

To whom it may concern

Please accept this letter as confirmation that, Mr Mokhles Ibrahim, one of your MA students, has received permission from the department to work within our department for his research. We confirm that he can work with our first and second year students as participants in his study.

Mr Ibrahim has also collected data from teachers within the English department, with permission. He used questionnaires and recording equipment and all teachers were advised of the purposes and were given the option to opt out if they desired.

If you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,



Dr Muli Amaye
 Head of English Department
 Soran University
 Email: muli.amaye@soran.edu.iq
 Tel: +964 (0)7508 134 323

Appendix G

Letter from the NEU English Department

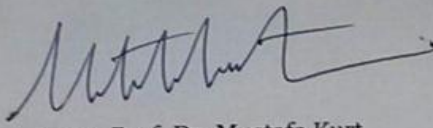
YAKIN DOĞU ÜNİVERSİTESİ
İNGİLİZCE BÖLÜMÜ
İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı & İngilizce Öğretmenliği &
Müfessirlik ve Tercümanlık

NEAR EAST UNIVERSITY
ENGLISH DEPARTMENT
English Language and Literature & English Language Teaching &
Translation and Interpretation

To Whom It May Concern

This letter is to confirm that Mokhles Saleh Ibrahim (Student Number:20135279) has successfully completed the taught module (8 courses) of the MA in English Language Teaching programme at our department. Mr.Ibrahim is now working on his thesis with Asst. Prof. Dr. Nurdan Atamtürk as his supervisor and he will be carrying out his research in Northern Iraq.

Yours faithfully


Assoc. Prof. Dr. Mustafa Kurt
Chairperson
Department of English Language

January 08, 2015

LEFKOŞA, MERSİN 10 TURKEY, KATC - Tel: +90 392 680 20 00 / 261 - Faks: +90 680 20 00 - web: english.neu.edu.tr - e-mail: english@neu.edu.tr