

Difficulties of English Pronunciation that Facing Secondary School Students in Elrahad Locality

By

Abdel Rahim Omer Aldaw Ako¹, Dr Suleiman Mater Dalboon² Dr. Elzein Musa Jumaa Elimam³ Dr. Magzoub Alsiaid Ahmed Mohammed⁴

^{1,2,3,4}University of Kordofan Faculty of Education, Department of English Language.



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Abstract

The current study aims to investigate difficulties of English pronunciation that facing secondary school students in ElrRahad Locality during (2023-2024/55). The problem of this study is that many secondary school students struggle with pronunciation. The study aimed to enhance students' ability to communicate effectively by developing accurate pronunciation. It also aimed to develop students' awareness of the sound system of English, enabling them to learn new words and phrases more effectively. The study used descriptive and statistical analytical approach. The researcher used two tools for data collection, a questionnaire administrated for English teachers and a test administrated for secondary school students. Data were analyzed by using statistical package for social science (SPSS) programme version 16. The main findings of this study are (82%) of the sample pointed that mother tongue interference affect on student's pronunciation negatively (86%) of the participants agreed that the influence of spelling causes problems in pronunciation. (92%) of sample pointed that students mix up between short and long vowel sounds (86%) of participants agreed that the lack of trained teachers affect on student's pronunciation. According to the results the study has reached; the researcher recommends the following: Pronunciation and listening must be taught as part of the curriculum to enable students recognizing the sounds of words and the perception of sound, There should be a weekly lessons well prepared to tackle the pronunciation problems that the students commit, English teachers should be aware of students with low pronunciation in order to improve their pronunciation, Finally, Experts and education leaders should reschedule a permanent workshop for high school teachers to update and qualify them in the field of pronunciation.

Keywords: Difficulties- pronunciation – pronunciation – students - researcher – school - statistical

Introduction

Pronunciation is a vital aspect of language learning, playing a crucial role in enabling effective communication and conveying meaning accurately. Developing good pronunciation skills can significantly enhance one's ability to express themselves confidently and clearly in English, both in personal and professional settings. In today's globalized world, where English has become the lingua franca, the importance of pronunciation cannot be overstated. Effective communication is the primary goal of language learning, and pronunciation is a key component of this process. When learners develop good pronunciation skills, they can convey their intended message more accurately, avoiding misunderstandings and miscommunications that can arise from poor pronunciation. Moreover, good pronunciation skills

can boost learners' confidence in speaking English, enabling them to participate more actively in class discussions, presentations, and other language-based activities. The fundamentals of English pronunciation include the sound system, stress and intonation patterns, and practice techniques to improve pronunciation skills. Phonetics, the study of the sound system of English, is essential for learners to understand the correct production of vowels, consonants, and diphthongs. Stress and intonation patterns, which refer to the rhythm and melody of speech, are also critical components of pronunciation. By recognizing and applying these patterns, learners can convey meaning more effectively and communicate more confidently. Practice and application are also crucial components of learning pronunciation. Learners need opportunities to practice pronunciation through

repetition, drilling, and real-life conversations. This can involve activities such as role-plays, presentations, and group discussions, which provide learners with a chance to apply their pronunciation skills in a supportive and interactive environment.

Statement of the Problem:

Despite the importance of English language proficiency in today's globalized world, many secondary school students struggle with pronunciation, which can hinder their ability to communicate effectively and confidently in English. Pronunciation difficulties can lead to misunderstandings, miscommunications, and a lack of confidence in speaking English, ultimately affecting students academically and professionally.

Objectives of the Research:

The main objectives of this research are:

- 1- To enhance students' ability to communicate effectively in English, both in speaking and listening, by developing accurate pronunciation.
- 2- To develop students' awareness of the sound system of English, enabling them to learn new words and phrases more effectively.
- 3- To encourage students to speak English with confidence, reducing anxiety and hesitation related to pronunciation.
- 4- To recognize and apply stress and intonation patterns in English, including sentence stress, word stress, and rhythm.

Materials and Methods

The purpose of this section is to present the descriptive methodology that was employed to answer the research questions that guide this research. The descriptive method facilitates the access to get the necessary understanding of the topic to scrutinize. The researcher used the descriptive approach for data collection. However, this study depends on two aspects; theoretical Part which is based on phonetic and phonological studies and the practical part includes the pre-test, post-test and questionnaire. To collect the data of the study, the researcher has used two instruments. First, the pre-test and post-test were designed to measure the student's abilities in pronunciation. Second, the questionnaire which includes 20 items all of which aim to elicit the responses which are relevant to the topic of the research. A sample of 50 English language teachers has been chosen by the candidate as respondents for the questionnaire. The researcher has used the simple random sample for choosing these teachers.

Results and Discussion

Pre-test and Post-test Analysis

The following tables and figures show the results of the students in both tests being given to them before and after the treatment; in addition to the analysis of these results and the analysis of the different questions of the tests.

4.1.1. The Pre-test

The table below shows the students' results in the pre-test.

Table 4.1.0 Pre-test Results

No	Student's Score	Total Mark	Percentage
1	11	50	22%
2	19	50	38%
3	17	50	34%
4	9	50	18%
5	29	50	58%
6	24	50	48%
7	19	50	38%
8	22	50	44%
9	36	50	72%
10	16	50	32%
11	21	50	42%
12	35	50	70%
13	28	50	56%
14	25	50	50%
15	20	50	40%

This table shows the students' marks in the pre-test. The number of students is 15 whereas the full mark of the test is (50marks). As shown on the above table, no one has got over 40 in the pre-Test, whereas only 2 students have got over 30 and The remaining scores range from 29 to 9 marks. . Seven students (46.6%) have passed the pre-test, whereas eight students (53.3%) have failed the same exam. The scores shown in the table above indicate that the number students who fail the test are more than those who pass. The table below, together with the figure summarizes the results of the pre-test.

Table 4.2. Pre-test Success and Failure

Failure		Success	
Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
8	53.3%	7	46.6%

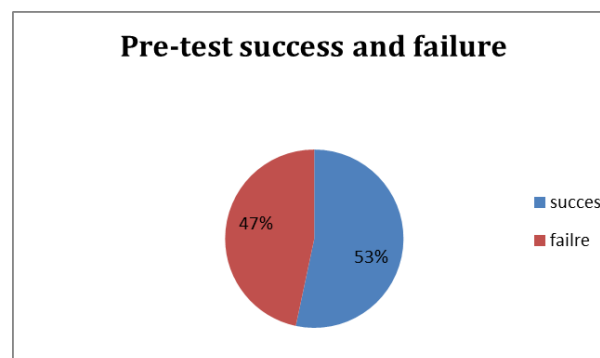


Figure 4.1. Pre-test Success and Failure

4.1.2.The Post-test

The table below shows the students' results in the post-test.

Table 4.1.2 Post-test Results

No	Student's Score	Total Mark	Percentage
1	33	50	66%
2	34	50	68%
3	37	50	72%
4	33	50	66%
5	50	50	100%
6	33	50	66%
7	45	50	90%
8	25	50	50%
9	37	50	72%
10	21	50	42%
11	40	50	80%
12	43	50	86%
13	35	50	70%
14	27	50	54%
15	36	50	72%

Table two proves the student's performance on the Post-test. The same students (15) who sat for the pre-test did the current test. The full mark of the test (50marks) is also the same. It was observed that 4 students have scored over 40 marks in the Post-Test; while 8 students have scored over 30 marks, and only one student has scored 21 who needed an improvement in her pronunciation skills. This indicates that the students have really benefited from the treatment. It is obvious from this point that there is remarkable improvement in the students' mastery of pronunciation skills.

Table 4.3 Post-test Success and Failure

Success		Failure	
Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
14	93%	1	7%

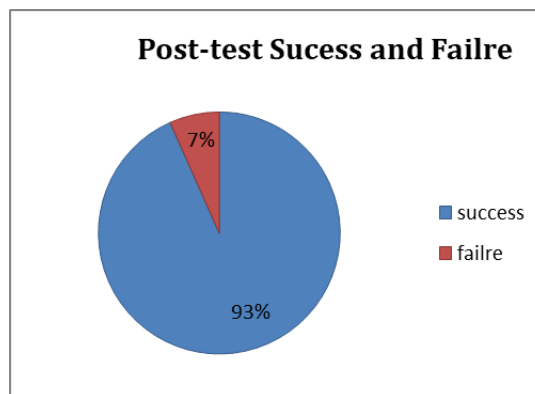


Figure 4.2. Post-test Success and Failure

Comparing this success and failure information to that of the post-test, only 1 students (7%) have failed the post-test while 14 students (93%) a great majority have passed the post-test. According to this result the researcher can justify that the result of the post-test was significantly higher than the pre-test.

Table (4.1) Students encounter pronunciation difficulties when they learn English language.

Option	frequency	Percentage
agree	46	92%
disagree	3	6%
not sure	1	2%
Total	50	100%

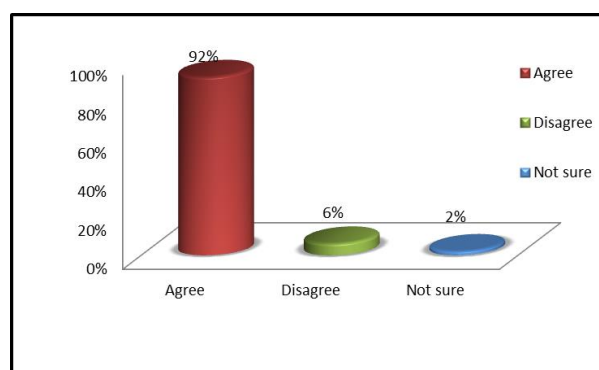


Figure (4.1) Students encounter pronunciation difficulties when they learn English language.

Table and Figure (4.1), Explain the item, Students encounter pronunciation difficulties when they learn English language. The majority of the respondents (92%) agreed while the minority (6%) disagreed and (2%) were not sure. This means that students who learn English as second language have problem in pronunciation.

Table (4.2) Mother tongue interference affects negatively on student's pronunciation.

Option	frequency	Percentage
agree	41	82%
disagree	6	12%
not sure	3	6%
Total	50	100%

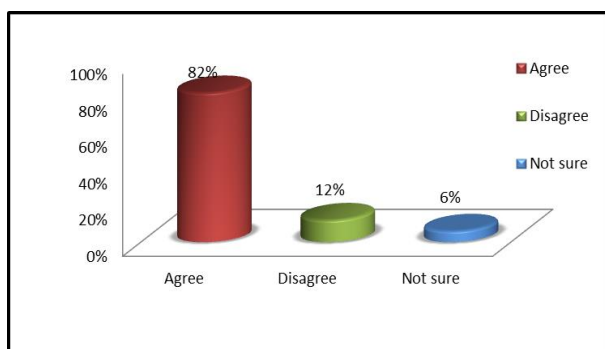
**Figure (4.2) Mother tongue interference affects negatively on student's pronunciation.**

Table and Figure (4.2), Explain the item, Mother tongue interference affects negatively on student's pronunciation., the majority of the respondents (82%) agreed while the minority (12%) disagreed and the least minority (6%) were not sure. This means that mother tongue interference affects on student's pronunciation.

Table (4.3) Students used to mix up between short and long vowel sounds such as sit/ site and mat/ mate.

Option	frequency	Percentage
agree	46	92%
disagree	3	6%
not sure	1	2%
Total	50	100%

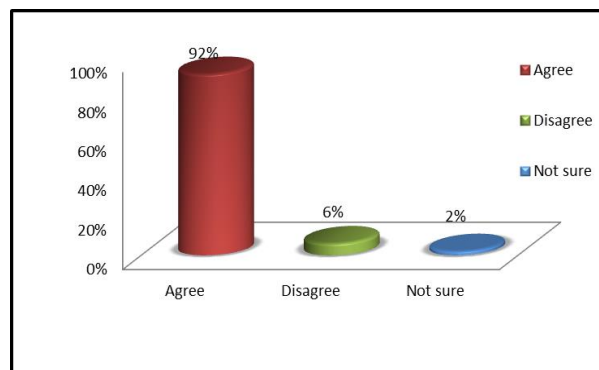
**Figure (4.3) Students used to mix up between short and long vowel sounds such as sit/ site and mat/ mate.**

Table and Figure (4.3), show the item, students used to mix up between short and long vowel sounds such as sit/ site and mat/ mate. The majority of the respondents (92%) agreed while the minority (6%) disagreed and (2%) were not sure. This indicates that students mix up between short and long vowel sounds.

Table (4.4) The influence of spelling causes a problem in English pronunciation.

Option	frequency	Percentage
agree	43	86%
disagree	3	6%
not sure	4	8%
Total	50	100%

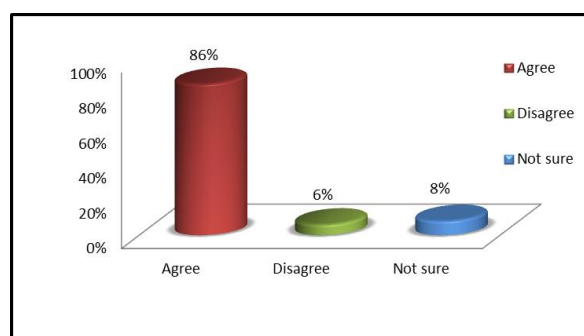
**Figure (4.4) The influence of spelling causes a problem in English pronunciation.**

Table and Figure (4.4), Explain the item, the influence of spelling causes a problem in English pronunciation. The majority of the respondent (86%) agreed while the less minority (6%) disagreed and the minority (8%) are not sure. This proves the idea that the influence of spelling causes a problem in English pronunciation.

5.1. Conclusion

In conclusion, pronunciation is a vital aspect of language learning, and its importance cannot be overstated. By

developing good pronunciation skills, learners can enhance their ability to communicate effectively and confidently in English, both in personal and professional settings. With the right instruction, practice, and support, learners can unlock the full potential of language learning and achieve their goals. Based on the findings of the research it can be concluded that many secondary level students encounter difficulties in pronunciation of some English sounds and that was proved from the result of the test and the questionnaire.

5.3 Recommendation

Based on the findings the study has reached the researcher recommend the following.

1. Teachers should focus on the needs of their learners on pronunciation rather than giving much attention to grammar and vocabulary.
2. Students should be responsible and aware of the importance of pronunciation in learning process and the need to master it accurately in order to help them in the upcoming stages.
3. English teachers should be aware of students with low pronunciation in order to improve their pronunciation.
4. Listening and pronunciation must be taught as part of the curriculum to enable students recognizing the sounds of words, perception of sound, accent, and

tonal variation to recognize the speech sounds of the words.

5. Teachers should focus on English letters which are difference from Arabic such as V /v/, ng /ŋ/, G /g/, R/r/, TH /θ/, TH /ð/, SH /ʃ/, CH /tʃ/, PH /f/.
6. Experts and education leaders should reschedule a permanent workshop for high school teachers to update and qualify them in the field of phonetics and phonology.

5.4 Bibliography

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