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***INVESTIGATING LEARNERS' PRONUNCIATION OF ENGLISH:***

***The Case of Third Year EFL Students at Guelma University***

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***for the Magistère Degree in***  
***Applied Linguistics and the Teaching of English***

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## **DEDICATION**

*To my dear parents*

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## **ABSTRACT**

Acquiring the pronunciation of English as a foreign language is one of the most challenging tasks an individual can meet. The complex phonological system of English, in addition to the notoriously confusing nature of its spelling forms, raise difficult demands on all foreigners attempting to develop skill in pronouncing it. These facts, along with the constantly falling standards in the pronunciation achievements of the students of English at Guelma University, form the impetus for the present research work. In particular, the motivation is to explore the process of English foreign language pronunciation learning searching for enlightenments on how to improve the students' attainments.

Starting from the abovementioned goal, this dissertation reports a descriptive case study of twenty-three third year students of English from the University of Guelma. Three statistical procedures, namely quantitative analysis of teachers' questionnaire, Spearman's rank correlation coefficient rho and independent groups t-test between means are adopted to discern what learner characteristics are related to the ability to pronounce English intelligibly. Furthermore, an error analysis of a corpus of the research subjects' verbal performances in English is employed with the aim of discovering the sources of the learners' pronunciation weaknesses.

As hypothesized, the results significantly show that large amounts of practice, high levels of motivation, lots of self-confidence and low degrees of anxiety and inhibition are the traits of successful pronunciation learners of English. Similarly, the examination of the learners' oral performances proves the hypothesis that the causes of their pronunciation errors are mainly intralingual, i.e., resulting from the English phonological system itself, as well as from its intersections with other linguistic areas such as English orthography and lexis. Some interlingual sources of errors are also recognized in a number of negative manifestations of transfer from French and Arabic. Advanced analysis of the identified errors' causes, however, reveals the clue that nearly all the pronunciation problems the learners have stem from one single underlying source. That is the learners' lack of exposure to natively spoken English and their consequential reliance on inadequate inputs for their pronunciation learning and performances; such as the orthography of English, their teachers' pronouncing forms which may themselves deviate from the accepted norms or their individual assumptions about how unfamiliar English words can be pronounced. Ultimately, some suggestions on how to enhance the learners' levels of pronunciation achievement are offered in view of the research findings.

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND SYMBOLS

**CA:** Contrastive Analysis

**CAH:** Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis

**CA<sub>s</sub>:** Contrastive Analyses

**CPH:** Critical Period Hypothesis

**EA:** Error Analysis

**EA<sub>s</sub>:** Error Analyses

**EFL:** English as a Foreign Language

**EFL<sub>L</sub>:** English Foreign Language Learning

**FL:** Foreign Language

**FLL:** Foreign Language Learning

**IPA:** International Phonetic Alphabet

**L<sub>2</sub>:** Second Language

**L<sub>2</sub>L:** Second Language Learning

**MDH:** Markedness Differential Hypothesis

**N:** Number of subjects; sample size

**NL:** Native Language

**p:** Level of significance; Probability

**rho:** Spearman's Correlation Coefficient

**RP:** Received Pronunciation

**t:** t-value

**TESOL:** Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages

**TL:** Target Language

**\***: an erroneous structure following

**<:** is lesser than

**>:** is greater than

**≤:** is lesser or equal to

**≥:** is greater or equal to

# THE PHONETIC SYMBOLS USED

## 1 English Sounds

### 1.1 Vowels and Diphthongs

ɪ	as in “pit”	πɪτ	i÷	as in “key”	κi÷
ε	as in “pet”	πετ	ɔ÷	as in “car”	κɔ÷
ʌ	as in “pat”	πʌτ	ɔ÷	as in “bird”	βɔ÷δ
ɒ	as in “pot”	πɒτ	ɔ÷	as in “saw”	σɔ÷
ʊ	as in “put”	πʊτ	ʊ÷	as in “too”	τʊ÷
←	as in “cup”	κ←π	ɒ	as in “about”	κβαUτ
εɪ	as in “say”	σεɪ	αɪ	as in “buy”	βαɪ
ɔɪ	as in “boy”	βɔɪ	ʊɪ	as in “poor”	πʊɪ
ɪə	as in “near”	νɪə	εɪ	as in “hair”	ηεɪ
ɔʊ	as in “go”	κɔʊ	αʊ	as in “cow”	καʊ

### 1.2 Consonants

π	as in “pen”	πεν	β	as in “bad”	βɔδ
τ	as in “tea”	τι÷	δ	as in “did”	δɔδ
κ	as in “cat”	κɔτ	ɔ	as in “gap”	κɔπ
φ	as in “fat”	φɔτ	ɒ	as in “vat”	ɒɔτ
θ	as in “thin”	θɔν	ɔ	as in “this”	κɔσ
σ	as in “so”	σɔʊ	ζ	as in “zoo”	ζʊ÷
ʃ	as in “ship”	ʃɔπ	↓	as in “vision”	ɒ↓ν
η	as in “hat”	ηɔτ	δ↓	as in “jam”	δ↓κμ
τʃ	as in “chain”	τʃεκν	ν	as in “no”	νɔʊ
μ	as in “man”	μɔν			
ŋ	as in “sing”	σŋ			
l	as in “leg”	λεκ	ρ	as in “red”	ρεδ
φ	as in “yet”	φετ	ɒ	as in “wet”	ɒετ

## 2 Sounds from Arabic

- ɸ as in ɸʊρ which means “free” in English  
 ξ as in ξκμɔ÷ρ which means “veil” in English

### **3 Sounds from French**

**J** as in **vigne** /viJ/ which means “vine” in English

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## **1 Statement of the Problem**

After it had been neglected for many years (Celce-Murcia, Brinton and Goodwin, 1996: 2,) the importance of pronunciation in the fields of foreign language learning and teaching is widely recognized today. Indeed, language mastery and pronunciation proficiency are closely related. Foreign language learners with poor ability in the area of pronunciation may endure many painful experiences of being unable to deliver their messages comprehensibly, incapable of understanding what others are saying, mocked out or subject of bad prejudices, whenever they attempt to use the target language verbally, and especially with native speakers. Unfortunately, this is the case with the majority of foreign learners of English at Guelma University (cf. Chapter 6.)

After they reach an advanced level in their English course, and may manage to achieve fairly good results in their grammar and vocabulary learning, a large number of our students continue to produce serious pronunciation errors. They are not able to intelligibly express their thoughts in English, even with their classmates. What is more, they cannot understand even ordinary authentic speeches by English native speakers. We think that this situation necessitates rapid and careful attention, and this forms the motivation for the present study.

## **2 Aim of the Study**

In harmony with the majority of research on foreign language learning (Dulay, Burt and Krashen, 1982; Avery and Ehrlich, 1992; Khanna, 1998; Dembo, 2004; etc,) this study aims at increasing learners' possibilities for success in acquiring the target language. As it may have already been guessed by the reader, it is limited to the area of pronunciation learning. More specifically, it concerns the students of English at the University of Guelma, Algeria. In particular, the present research is intended to identify the factors contributing to success, as well as the sources of the learners' shortcomings in English foreign language pronunciation learning.

We hope that the results of the present study will help the teachers of English at the University of Guelma devise effective lessons and develop adequate materials and techniques to enhance their learners' pronunciation achievements. Students also would benefit by understanding the nature of the variables involved in their learning and the causes of their errors. Conclusively, it is hoped, they will be able to select the appropriate learning strategies, materials and activities to improve their proficiency in pronouncing English intelligibly. Some

of the teaching and learning practices that would support the acquisition of the pronunciation of English at the University of Guelma are suggested at the end of this dissertation.

### **3 Questions and Hypotheses**

The present research strives for finding answers to the following questions: Firstly, what are the variables that correlate with successful English foreign language pronunciation learning? Are there significant relationships between students' levels of English pronunciation achievement on the one hand and the age levels at which they have started learning English, their aptitude for sound discrimination and recognition, attitudes towards English and its native speakers, motivation to learn, personality characteristics, and amount of pronunciation practice on the other hand? Secondly, what are the sources of students' pronunciation problems which, we assume, will be reflected in performance errors? Are the causes of these errors intralingual? Or are they interlingual?

In view of these questions, the study at hand is set up to test the following hypotheses: Firstly, it is hypothesized that students' success in English pronunciation learning is significantly related to a battery of extra linguistic variables. In particular, it is hypothesized that the earlier students start to learn English, the better their ability in sound discrimination and recognition, the more positive their attitudes towards the English language and culture, the higher their learning motivation, the higher their self confidence and the more frequent their opportunities for practice are; the higher their level of pronunciation proficiency will be.

Secondly, it is hypothesized that the subject learners' segmental pronunciation errors will be mainly of the vowel type. Common difficulties with English consonants, such as with the fricative phonemes /θ/, /ð/ and /ʍ/ encountered by many foreign learners of English will be overcome in the present situation by positive transfer from Arabic and French. Nonetheless, we suppose that transfer from Arabic and French will be also negatively manifested in the production of performance errors. The majority of learners' errors, however, are hypothesized to result from intralingual causes.

### **4 Definitions of Terms**

In this dissertation, the terms "pronunciation proficiency" and "success in English foreign language pronunciation learning" are used to refer to the learners' abilities to pronounce English comprehensibly without violating the necessary direct connection that must exist between the meanings they want to express and the receivers' interpretations.

Accordingly, the subjects' levels of pronunciation intelligibility in meaningful reading and free oral performances are considered as measures of pronunciation proficiency. The pronunciation variety against which the learners' performances are tested is the one that is most often recommended for foreign learners studying British English and which is considered to be the official target for English pronunciation teaching at the University of Guelma. It is Received Pronunciation (RP.)

Two additional terms in need of clarification at this level are "language learning" and "language acquisition." Despite the frequent use of these terms in literature to distinguish between conscious and subconscious language learning, they are interchangeably used throughout this dissertation. The point is that the limitation of the scope of the present work, which is entirely interested in the process of English foreign language learning taking place in a formal school setting (Guelma University,) makes the illumination of this distinction unnecessary.

## **5 Tools of Investigation**

The present research work is a descriptive case study of twenty-three third-year students of English at the university of Guelma. Aiming at gathering the data required for the study, four elicitation techniques are employed. These consist of two questionnaires, one for teachers and another one for students, in addition to two tests, the first one is designed to examine the subjects' aptitude for pronunciation learning by testing their skills in sound discrimination and recognition, and the other one aims at detecting their levels of pronunciation intelligibility in reading and free verbal performance.

The teachers' questionnaire was handed to a number of teachers of English from the English departments at the universities of Guelma and Annaba. Particularly, eighteen copies of the questionnaire were returned from the University of Guelma and sixteen from that of Annaba. The questionnaire's results are analyzed quantitatively to arrive at an exact statement of the respondents' views about the true effects of the variables initially hypothesized to significantly correlate with students' levels of achievement in the area of pronunciation. The teachers' opinions are deemed reliable owing to their practical experience with many successive cohorts of university students of English including the subjects under study.

As a measure of increasing credibility, the students' questionnaire along with the aptitude and the pronunciation intelligibility tests are used to gather additional sorts of data to empirically retest the hypotheses in question. In particular, these three data collection

procedures are utilized to arrive at measures of the twenty-three subjects' extra linguistic variables under consideration (specifically, the age levels at which they have started learning English, their attitudes, motivation, personality traits and amount of practice, in addition to their phonetic coding abilities and their levels of pronunciation intelligibility.)

For the purpose of analyzing the results, two statistical procedures are adopted. Firstly, an independent groups t-test between means is employed to examine the effect of the age variable on the subjects' final attainments by considering whether the learners who have started learning English earlier significantly outperform the other subjects in the area of pronunciation. In addition, Spearman's correlation coefficient ( $\rho$ ) is used to compute the degrees of association between the students' rates for pronunciation intelligibility on the one hand and their measures for aptitude, attitudes, motivation, personality traits, and amount of practice on the other hand. The goal is to discover the nature and the strength of the relationships existing between these sets of variables and ultimately to identify which factors significantly contribute to success in English foreign language pronunciation learning.

One further method of data analysis employed in this study is Error Analysis. The students' oral performances gathered by means of the pronunciation intelligibility test are examined. Emphasis is put on the subjects' serious pronunciation idiosyncrasies; explicitly, those pronunciation errors which interfere with the comprehensibility of the messages, which significantly deviate from the norms of Received Pronunciation and consequently cause the speeches to sound strikingly foreign or which tend to recur in the performance samples of several learners. In view of that, the subjects' serious pronunciation errors are identified, described and analysed in an attempt to detect their major areas of difficulty and to discern the sources of their problems with the phonological system of English. Detailed discussion of the elicitation instruments and the analytical methods utilized in this study are provided later in the course of this dissertation.

## **6 Structure of the Dissertation**

The present dissertation is organized in two parts with three chapters in each part. In Part 1, the theoretical part, relevant supporting literature about the factors related to success in foreign language pronunciation learning is reviewed. This part covers three chapters: Chapters 1, 2 and 3. Chapter 1 is intended to shed light on a number of nonlinguistic factors which the available foreign language learning research reports as being significantly related to final

achievements in the area of pronunciation. Specifically, it focuses on the effects of age, aptitude, attitude, motivation, personality traits as well as social and learner-external factors.

Chapter 2 traces writings on the effect of language transfer on the acquisition of a foreign language's pronunciation. It first reviews the behaviourist theory of transfer and, then, it is extended to describing the Contrastive Analysis method and the way it deals with this subject. The different criticisms the study of transfer has received, mainly because of its traditional association with behaviourism and Contrastive Analysis, are then explained. Finally, the new trends in this field of study are defined.

Chapter 3 examines the influence of cognitive processes on foreign language pronunciation learning. Furthermore, it describes the development of Error Analysis as a tool for investigating foreign learners' languages. Emphasis is mainly put on the fourth stage of this latter, where the intention is to explain learners' errors by identifying their sources. At this level, the main cognitive factors – namely, intralingual and interlingual wrong analogies – supposed to affect learners' pronunciation performances in a foreign language and to induce errors are discussed.

Part 2, the practical part, on the other hand, reports a descriptive case study. The research procedures and results are displayed throughout three chapters; these are Chapters 4, 5 and 6. The motivation is to discover what variables reliably correlate with success in the process of foreign language pronunciation learning by Guelma university students of English (Chapters 4 and 5,) as well as what areas of pronunciation are the most difficult for this group of learners and what sources cause their major problems in articulating the English sound system (Chapter 6.)

In particular, Chapter 4 reports a quantitative analysis of a questionnaire filled by thirty-four teachers of English. The focus is on the same six nonlinguistic factors that form the subject of Chapter 1; i.e., on learners' age, aptitude, attitudes, motivation, personality traits as well as some external factors. The goal is to know about the informants' viewpoints regarding the effects of these factors on English pronunciation learning.

In Chapter 5, three other data collection procedures are employed. They involve a questionnaire for students and two tests. The questionnaire aims at measuring the individual characteristics (namely, age, attitudes, motivation, personality traits and amounts of pronunciation practice) of twenty-three third year students of English at the university of Guelama. On the other hand, the two tests are used to measure these learners' aptitude for

pronunciation learning and their levels of pronunciation intelligibility. Ultimately, the questionnaire and the two tests are scored and the resulting measures are used to empirically identify which variables correlate significantly with attaining intelligible speech patterns of English by the subject learners.

Finally, Chapter 6 reports an Error Analysis of the English oral performances of the same subjects whose individual characteristics in relation to English pronunciation learning are investigated in Chapter 5. The serious segmental pronunciation errors the students are recorded to produce are analysed with the goal of detecting their causes and identifying the most problematic influences on the students' pronunciation performances. The findings of the three last practical chapters, Chapters 4, 5 and 6, are believed to bear insights into how to help the concerned learners improve their pronunciation of English.

PART ONE

**Factors Related to Achievement in Foreign  
Language Pronunciation Learning**

## CHAPTER ONE

### EXTRA LINGUISTIC FACTORS

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## Introduction

Foreign language learning “is not exclusively a linguistic matter” (Wong 1987; in Celce-Murcia, Brinton and Goodwin, 1996: 14.) Starting from this claim, this Chapter deals with a host of nonlinguistic factors that may influence ultimate achievement while learning a foreign language. They involve the effects of age, aptitude, attitude, motivation and personality. Each of these learner-based variables will be examined briefly, in an attempt to clarify how it figures in determining performance in foreign language learning. Finally, the effect that some social learner-external factors may have on this task will be discussed.

This list of extra linguistic factors is by no means exhaustive; only those variables which are supposed to significantly account for the varying degrees of success that individuals may have in learning a foreign language are treated here. As they represent the most immediately involved factor in the task, the greatest emphasis is put on the learners themselves (most of the involved factors are learner-based and only one element deals with the role of social effects.) In other words, because learners’ individual differences are the first thing one might think of as related to the ultimate levels of success they may achieve while learning a foreign language, they receive the greatest attention in this chapter.

### 1.1 Age

It is generally recognized, among linguists and lay people alike, that young children with adequate exposure to a foreign language (FL) can acquire a native like command of it with great ease. Adult FL learners, on the other hand, are often unable to overcome their foreign accents. Notably, it is common that children who immigrate to a foreign country can pick up the host community’s language in few months, whereas their parents struggle to achieve only limited degrees of success in a longer period of time.

This widely observed phenomenon has led to the development of the *critical period hypothesis (CPH)*. The proponents of this hypothesis argue that there is a period in our lives during which natural language learning can take place effortlessly, and beyond which it will not be possible to acquire an FL without accent. Penfield and Roberts (1959; in Ellis, 1994: 484) equate this period with the first ten years of life. On the other hand, Dulay, Burt and Krashen (1982) argue that this period extends from birth to puberty.

Children acquiring second languages in natural environments are more likely to eventually sound like native speakers than adults are. Adults may appear to make greater progress initially, but children nearly always surpass them. The turning point in language acquisition ability seems to occur at about puberty. Children under ten who experience enough natural communication in the target language nearly always succeed in attaining native-like proficiency, while those over fifteen rarely do...While some adults do achieve very high levels of proficiency in pronouncing a second language, they seem to be the exception rather than the rule.

(Dulay, Burt and Krashen, 1982: 78-79)

### 1.1.1 Explanations for Age Differences

To account for the observed child-adult differences in the acquisition of a foreign language, different types of explanations have been provided. *Biologically*, the argument is that the child's greater ability to learn an FL without accent is due to the greater plasticity of his brain. Lenneberg (1967,) the main advancer of this stance, argues that the development of *cerebral dominance* or the *lateralization* of the brain; i.e., the developmental change whereby "the two halves of the brain (the left and right hemispheres) become specialized for different functions" (Freeman and Long, 1991: 164); is complete; i.e., "firmly established"; around puberty. Therefore, the infant's brain is not firmly lateralized. Lenneberg attests his claims reporting that children below ten years old can perfectly recover from acquired aphasia. In other words, in case of damage to the left hemisphere during childhood, the right hemisphere is able to assume the language function. After puberty, however, the right hemisphere does not appear to be able to adopt the language function in case the left one is hurt because the lateralization of language to the left hemisphere is complete, Lenneberg argues.

The presence of some linguistic functions in the right hemisphere in children's brains is the factor responsible for their superior recovery from aphasia and their better achievements in foreign language learning. Thus, it is hypothesized that the end of the development of cerebral dominance corresponds to the closing stage of a "critical period" for language acquisition. Consequently, "foreign accents cannot be overcome easily after puberty" (Lenneberg 1967; in Krashen, 1981: 72.) Additionally, "automatic acquisition from mere exposure to a given language seems to disappear" (Lenneberg 1967; in Dulay et al., 1982: 87.)

Overtly, the argument is that a child learns better because his brain is more flexible and hence better predisposed for success in language acquisition. "Puberty is an important turning point in language acquisition" (Krashen, 1981: 73.) The initial plasticity or flexibility of the brain is found to decrease with age as the lateralization of the language function to the left hemisphere is being completed. In a word, "child-adult differences in second language acquisition are due to the completion of the development of cerebral dominance, hypothesized by Lenneberg to occur at around puberty" (Krashen, 1981: 8.)

Dulay, Burt and Krashen (1982: 87) correspondingly argue that "the ability of the organizer to subconsciously build up a new language system deteriorates after puberty, when the brain's left and right hemispheres have developed specialized functions." Scovel (1969) adds to this case claiming that after puberty languages have to be taught and learned through conscious and laboured efforts and foreign accents cannot be overcome easily. O'Connor

(1980,) although not openly adopting the biological argument, also advances this stand arguing,

Normal babies can hear and can imitate; they are wonderful imitators, and this gift of imitation, which gives us the gift of speech, lasts for a number of years. It is well known that a child of ten years old or less can learn *any* language perfectly, if it is brought up surrounded by that language, no matter where it was born or who its parents were. But after this age the ability to imitate perfectly becomes less, and we all know only too well that adults have great difficulty in mastering the pronunciation of foreign languages.

(O' Connor, 1980: 1)

The second explanation of age learning differences is the *cognitive argument* whose proponents claim that the onset of “formal operations,” in Piaget’s terms, marks the beginning of the end of the critical period. At the onset of formal operations, the learner develops the ability for abstract thinking processes by forming hypotheses and self-evaluating his linguistic knowledge about the target language (TL) he is learning. “The formal thinker also has a meta-awareness of his ideas and can use abstract *rules* to solve a whole class of problems at one time” (Krashen, 1981: 35.) In other words, “formal operations give the adult a greater ability to make conscious generalizations about language” (ibid.) Apparently, the cognitive superiority the adolescent has over the child would be supposed to enhance learning.

The adolescent’s more mature cognitive system, with its capacity to abstract, classify, and generalize, may be better suited for the complex task of second language learning than the unconscious, automatic kind of learning which is thought to be characteristic of young children.

(Genesee 1977; in Dulay, Burt and Krashen, 1982: 91)

Empirical evidence, however, suggests that these newly acquired cognitive abilities block the process of natural language acquisition and launch an artificial laborious undertaking instead. In Krashen’s terms, despite the apparent usefulness of adults’ mental capabilities to foreign language learning (FLL,) “subconscious language acquisition is nevertheless the central means by which adults internalize second languages, a position supported not only by research but also by the practice of successful language teachers who emphasize communicative activities in the classroom” (Krashen, 1981 : 77.) In other words, “the adult’s tendency to analyze and apply conscious thought to the learning experience may obstruct some of the natural processing mechanisms through which the new language is internalized” (Littlewood, 1984: 66.) Explicitly, the adult’s “general learning abilities are not as successful for language learning as the more specific, innate, capacities which are available to the young child” (Lightbown and Spada, 1999: 60.) Conclusively, “subconscious acquisition appears to be far more important” (Krashen, 1981: 1) to language learning

because “conscious learning makes only a small contribution to communicative ability” (ibid: 5.)

In addition to the biological and cognitive arguments, Schumann (1975; in Dulay, Burt and Krashen, 1982: 92) suggests that *affective factors* are also responsible for the relative ease with which young children learn foreign languages. After puberty, adolescents become more self-conscious and less able to achieve the affective mental state desirable in FLL. They also begin to develop different attitudes towards the TL and its native speakers (cf. Sections 1.3 and 1.5.) Consequently, they will approach the process of FLL with a high *socio-affective filter*, which prevents them from receiving all the TL material presented to them and from taking the risks of experiencing their newly acquired knowledge about the TL. In other words, “performers with high or strong filters will acquire less of the language directed at them, as less input is “allowed in” to the language-acquisition device” (Krashen, 1981: 22.) However, this is not the case with young children. Explicitly,

inhibition is a very severe handicap to language learning. The primary age child usually lacks all the self-consciousness of the older learner and is altogether more prepared to submit to the norms of a new language and to perform in it without feeling at risk of making a fool of himself.

(Wilkins, 1972: 187)

Dulay, Burt and Krashen (1982,) also, adopt this stand arguing that:

Adolescents who have passed through formal operations gain a greater ability to imagine what other people are thinking about. This ability however, may lead them to believe that others are thinking about the same thing they are most concerned with, namely, their own appearance and behaviour. This state of mind leads to the increased self-consciousness, feelings of vulnerability, and lowered self-image that are associated with age and that contribute to an increase in strength of the filter.

(Dulay, Burt and Krashen, 1982:93)

Such feeling may generate positions unfavourable for successful acquisition of a foreign language, and may discourage learners from fully interacting with and accepting the linguistic data they receive.

### **1.1.2 Empirical Evidence**

A lot of research has been conducted to test the claims made for the CPH. The majority of studies, however, investigate the role of learners’ age in natural acquisition environments. Obviously, language learning in such a setting would be very different from the kind of formal, guided, learning that takes place in classrooms (Section 1.6.) For this reason, no reference is made to these works and only few are cited below.

In the first of these, Burstall (1975) compares the linguistic performance of two groups of French FL learners with five years of instruction in England and Wales. The first group started English FLL at the age of eight, whereas the other at eleven years old. The

results reveal that the older learners perform better in the four language skills. When both groups are compared at the age of sixteen, the older learners, again, outperform the younger ones on all tests except on a test of listening comprehension (Burstall 1975; in Ellis, 1994: 489.)

In another study, Neufeld (1978,) twenty adult native speakers of English have received eighteen hours of intensive instruction to learn the pronunciation of Chinese and Japanese. To test the accuracy of their pronunciations, the students are given an imitation test. Two groups of native speakers of the two languages rank the learners performances on a five-point scale (from “unmistakably native” to “heavily accented”.) Nine and eight subjects are found to have a native like pronunciation of Japanese and Chinese, respectively, rising a question about the legitimacy of the CPH (Neufeld 1978; in Ellis, 1994: 486.)

This last study, however, is sharply criticized by the proponents of the CPH, mainly because of the employed imitation test which is not accepted as a reliable measurement of pronunciation accuracy. Nonetheless, this research work can be used to argue that “under the right conditions adults can achieve native ability in pronunciation – the area of language generally considered to be the most difficult for adults to acquire” (Ellis, 1994: 486.)

On the other hand, the arguments made for the CPH, especially the biological argument, are from a speculative nature. Krashen reports many studies (Molfese, 1976; Gardiner and Walter, 1976; Caplan and Kinsbourne, 1976) attesting that “much of the development of cerebral dominance may be complete much earlier [than puberty] and may have little or nothing to do with the critical period” (Krashen, 1981: 77.) Explicitly, Krashen states that “there is little doubt that children show left hemisphere dominance for much of the language function well before puberty. There is also no necessary relationship between cerebral dominance and second language acquisition ability” (ibid: 76.)

What is more, as Lenneberg recognizes, adults are proved to be better predisposed for language learning than are children in some aspects. In Lenneberg words,

In some ways adults are better prepared for language learning than children. Adults have better memories, a larger store of abstract concepts that can be used in learning, and a greater ability to form new concepts. Children however are better imitators of speech sounds.

(Lenneberg 1967; in Richards, 1974: 9-10)

In view of the just mentioned findings, many researchers sought another, more adequate, explanation for the apparent superiority children have over adults in the task of new language learning, especially in second language learning contexts. The result is *the input argument* for the child-adult learning differences. The claim is that,

The speech which people address to children usually differs from that which they address to adults. For example, it is typically simpler in structure and more limited in vocabulary, contains more repetition, and is more closely related to the immediate situation. The language is therefore easier to understand and the child has more opportunity to organise it and remember it. Many researchers believe that these features play an important role in helping... language acquisition to take place.

(Littlewood, 1984: 59)

To be exact, the point is that children are better learners because they receive much more *comprehensible input*, to use Krashen's terminology. Krashen demonstrates that child-adult differences in language learning attainment are not indeed caused by age distinctions but rather by the different kinds of inputs each group receives. Children generally get "simple input" that is related to the "here and now" and contains a "limited body of graded language data" (Krashen, 1981: 119.)

That is to say, infants commonly have more favourable learning conditions. They are usually given more attention, and much more comprehensible input; i.e., simpler language data that are easier to be processed and understood, which are relevant to their learning interests and levels, not too complex and more related to concrete matters. They, additionally, have "more time to devote to learning language. They [also] often have more opportunities to hear and use the language in environments where they do not experience strong pressure to speak fluently and accurately from the beginning" (Lightbown and Spada, 1999: 60.) On the contrary,

Children are usually allowed to go through a "silent period", during which they build up acquired competence through active listening. Several scholars have suggested that providing such a silent period for all performers in second language acquisition would be beneficial.

(Krashen, 1981: 8)

Actually, however, adults are generally exposed to, and asked to perform, linguistic performances that are "quite complex, involving topics displaced in time and space and often using advanced syntactical constructions" (Krashen, 1981: 119.) That is to say, they are required to understand and to produce more complex and less concrete language uses and much more complicated ideas. That is why they appear to arrive at only limited achievements in learning foreign languages in natural contexts.

In formal learning contexts, by contrast, infants are found to be less successful. Explicitly, the CPH does not have supportive findings in the areas of formal FLL that takes place in classrooms.

The results from... school-based studies are not supportive of the claim that children's level of attainment is greater than that of adolescents /adults. One possible explanation of this is that formal learning environments do not provide learners with the amount of exposure needed for the age advantage of young learners to emerge...adult learners may be able to acquire a native accent with the assistance of instruction.

(Ellis, 1994: 489, 492)

This same idea, that “the age advantage of young learners” can only emerge in natural learning environments, is also evident in O’Connor (1980: 1) “...if it [the child] is brought up surrounded by that language” and in Dulay, Burt and Krashen (1982: 78) “Children acquiring second languages in natural environments...” (Section 1.1.1.)

To sum up, the CPH is proved to have some support in naturalistic learning situations only. Nevertheless, the results are far from being conclusive. To settle this argument, most researchers have adopted another stance, arguing that there is a “sensitive” rather than a “critical” period for language learning. The difference between the two claims is that the latter holds that successful FLL can take place only during a limited period of time; whereas, the former suggests that it will be, only, easier during this period. Conclusively, “fewer people now believe that children are intrinsically superior to adults” (Littlewood, 1984: 66) in the task of FLL.

## 1.2 Language Aptitude

Naturally, people vary in their abilities to learn foreign languages. In addition, it is not a surprise to find a pupil whose marks in foreign languages’ exams do not show any kind of resemblance to those in other subjects. Skehan (1998) accounts for this phenomenon writing that:

A talent exists which is specific to language learning. A strong contrasting viewpoint would be that abilities which facilitate language learning are the same as those important in any learning and simply operate on different material...people [however] have strengths and weaknesses...these strengths and weaknesses equip individuals better for some areas than others...a talent for languages is specific and so different from any general mix of cognitive abilities. The claim, in other words, is that language has qualitative differences from other areas, and may represent an altogether different knowledge system.

(Skehan, 1998: 187)

So, learners who perform well in their language classes are, generally, considered as having a talent or a gift for foreign languages. The technical label of this gift is *language aptitude*. Carroll defines general aptitude as “a capability of learning a task” (Carroll 1981; in Ellis, 1994: 494.) He further argues that it is a stable permanent ability; which is separate from achievement, general intelligence and motivation. Skehan (1998,) also, sees aptitude as an innate stable ability, which is not subject to environmental influences.

A language aptitude is stable in nature. [It] is not susceptible to easy training or modification, and is not environmentally influenced, to any significant degree, at least after the early years...language aptitude is something we are endowed with as a set of cognitive abilities. Of course, it is not disputed that the environment can have some impact on one’s language learning ability...But the central issue is that, although previous language learning is likely to bring into play beneficial changes for future language learning, there is still an underlying endowment which has not changed, and which acts as a constraint on what is possible in terms of the speed of future learning.

(Skehan, 1998: 187-188)

Carroll additionally clarifies that aptitude “is presumed to depend on some combination of more or less enduring characteristics of the individual” (Carroll 1981; in Freeman and Long, 1991: 167.) In particular, Carroll argues, these characteristics correspond to four components constituting language aptitude. These are *phonetic coding ability*, *grammatical sensitivity*, *inductive language learning ability*, and *rote learning ability* (i.e., the ability to memorise.)

Firstly, phonetic coding ability is the ability to distinguish and to store new sounds, to form associations between them and their written symbols and to retain these associations. In other words, it is the “ability to go from heard sound to printed symbol, and from symbol to sound” (Ingram, 1975: 277.)

Apparently, success in...[the] learning task depends on success in remembering the identities of the sounds. It seems obvious that phonetic coding ability is demanded in the learning of a foreign language, because the individual must not only learn the identities of the new phonemes of that language, but must also recognize and remember the phonetic sequences represented by the morphemes, words, and intonation contours of that language.

(Carroll 1971; in Ingram, 1975: 277)

Secondly, grammatical sensitivity is the ability to recognize different linguistic units and to understand how they function in the production of meaning in sentence structures. It refers to “the individual’s ability to demonstrate his awareness of the syntactical patterning of sentences in a language” (Carroll 1973; in Krashen, 1981: 19.) Obviously, this skill is also related to success in learning foreign languages. As Carroll puts it,

there are large individual differences in this ability, and these individual differences are related to success in learning foreign languages, apparently because this ability is called upon when the student tries to learn grammatical rules and apply them in constructing or comprehending new sentences in that language.

(Carroll 1971; in Ingram, 1975: 277)

Thirdly, inductive language learning ability is the ability to learn a language from mere exposure. It refers to the learner’s “ability to examine language material (in either auditory or printed form) and from this to notice and identify patterns of correspondence and relationships involving either meaning or grammatical form” (Carroll 1971; in Ingram, 1975: 278.) That is to say, inductive language learning ability involves learners’ attempts to induce or to infer the structural properties of a language given samples of materials of it and without support of formal instruction. Carroll asserts,

Such an ability might well be called upon in the learning of an actual foreign language, because even in a form of teaching that emphasizes the formal presentation of rules, the learner must inevitably work out the application of the rules for himself.

(Carroll 1971; in Ingram, 1975: 278)

Finally, rote learning ability (or associative memory) is the capability to learn and recall new linguistic items by developing the skill of forming associations between sounds and meanings, and between sounds and symbols rapidly and efficiently.

As Ingram strengthens, the establishment of these four constituents of language aptitude was not the outcome of “intuitive guesswork”, but rather of empirical research; the four identified abilities are “specific factors characteristic of good language learners” (Ingram, 1975: 278.) Two from these four factors are special to particular linguistic levels; phonetic coding ability is peculiar to the phonological/graphological level and grammatical sensitivity is specific to the grammatical level. The two remaining abilities “are not level specific, nor are they entirely language specific” (ibid.) Carroll states, for instance, that it is through the inductive learning talent “that foreign language aptitude is most closely related with general intelligence” (Carroll 1973; in Krashen, 1981: 21.)

The general claim, then, is that some people are more gifted for language learning than others are, and that those talented in this way are likely to achieve a higher level of proficiency in the TL. That is to say, people who are gifted in distinguishing between the different sounds of a foreign language’s phonological system and in memorizing these sounds, for example, are expected to be more successful in learning the pronunciation of this language than those who are lacking in this ability.

A lot of research has been conducted in the 1950s and 1960s using purposely-designed tests to measure language aptitude, with the hypothesis that it would be possible to predict the learners’ ultimate achievement or potential of learning a foreign language before they actually begin a course by measuring their language aptitude in advance. The most famous and commonly used language aptitude tests are Carroll and Sapon’s (1959) Modern Language Aptitude Test (MLAT) and Pimsleur’s (1966) Language Aptitude Battery (LAB.) Other less well known aptitude tests include the Defense Language Aptitude Battery (DLAB) (Petersen and Al-Haik 1976) and the York Language Aptitude Test (Green 1975) (all cited in Ellis, 1994: 495.)

The results are supportive to the claim that future progress in formal language learning can be predicted using aptitude tests. Explicitly, “...research provided convincing evidence that classroom learners’ language aptitude has a major effect on their success in learning an L2” (Ellis, 1994: 498.) Nevertheless, these research findings are not generally considered reliable. Indeed, many charges are levelled against language aptitude tests, mainly because of their low validity (measuring what they intend to measure.) For instance, Krashen mentions that “aptitude tests...appear to be related to “general intelligence”, as reported by Carroll

(1963)” (Krashen, 1981: 20.) Correspondingly, Harmer argues that “they did not appear to measure any thing other than general intellectual ability even though they ostensibly looked for linguistic talents” (Harmer, 2001: 41.) From a similar perspective, Freeman and Long states,

Indeed it is plausible that language aptitude tests work well to predict success because there is a concordance of tasks between the test and formal classroom study...not because the test is measuring some innate linguistic ability.

(Freeman and Long, 1991: 169)

In addition, Snow and Shapira (1985; in Celce-Murcia et al., 1996: 18) argue that the only reason behind the found correlations between aptitude measures and ultimate attainments in language learning is the discouraging affective influence they have over bad scorers in the tests, since it is generally held that aptitude is a stable factor. In Dembo’s claim, some students are less successful solely because they do not *expect* success. They

Believe that ability or intelligence is fixed. That is, people are born with a certain amount of ability, and there is not much that can be done about it. This misperception often causes some students to accept their low achievement or to become satisfied with a B or C average, thinking that only the brightest students obtain an A... The problem is not that these students are incapable of being successful learners.

(Dembo, 2004: 8-9)

Besides, Neufeld’s (1979; in Skehan, 1998: 188) work is perhaps the most serious criticism of aptitude research. Neufeld argues that we have all shown ability for language learning while acquiring our native languages. Hence, the claim that learners vary in their abilities to acquire a new language is illegitimate, since, as he claims, this is not different from first language acquisition as far as cognitive abilities are concerned (cf. Section 3.1.) Neufeld’s criticism is restated by Skehan (1998) in the following way:

...individual differences in second language learning success should be ascribed to social factors...every one possesses language learning ability and so it is invalid to search for differences in aptitude for second language learning...everyone has the potential to learn a second language.

(Skehan, 1998: 188)

Nonetheless, it is widely accepted that each individual learner has, at least, a kind of capability which is largely responsible for his level of attainment in FL pronunciation learning. This ability is what Spolsky calls *auditory ability*, phonetic coding ability in Carroll’s terms.

Auditory ability [is] the ability to discriminate among sounds, interpret them, associate them with written symbols, [and] remember them...the better the learner can discriminate between the sounds of the language and recognize the constituent parts, the more successful his or her learning of speaking and understanding the second language will be.

(Spolsky, 1989: 104, 106)

Wilkins (1972) and Harmer (2001) seem, also, to be very convinced that people do vary in their abilities to acquire new sound systems. Notably, Wilkins asserts “if there is any

ability underlying a specifically linguistic aptitude, it seems that ability in auditory discrimination is a strong candidate” (Wilkins, 1972: 180.) Similarly, Harmer affirms,

Some students have great difficulty hearing pronunciation features, which we want them to reproduce...if they cannot distinguish between them; they will find it almost impossible to produce the different English phonemes.

(Harmer, 2001: 184-185)

Auditory or phonetic coding ability, however, is not the only skill involved in pronunciation learning. Carroll (1981; in Ellis, 1994: 494) refers to another ability, *phonemic mimicry*, which also plays a dominant role in pronunciation acquisition. People remarkably vary in the extent to which they can mimic foreign sounds, a factor which, obviously, affects their pronunciation accuracy. On the other hand, Skehan (1998) argues that the most influential component of language aptitude is memory capacity. According to him, what distinguishes exceptionally successful learners from the rest is their “unusual memories” that enable them to retain the TL items they hear (Skehan, 1998: 234.)

To conclude, a special set of individual abilities is indeed significant in FLL. Some learners can realise very advanced results almost effortlessly. Others struggle along to arrive only at poorer achievements. “Learning quickly is the distinguishing feature of aptitude,” Lightbown and Spada (1999: 53) argue. In particular, a “language-specific set of learning abilities” (Littlewood, 1984: 62) is especially involved in the acquisition of an accurate pronouncing system. To be precise, this latter is partly reliant on the learners’ abilities to discriminate between sounds, to retain them together with their corresponding written symbols, to recall and to mimic them.

### **1.3 Attitude**

Another factor which is frequently cited as having a significant impact on the final levels of attainment in FLL is the attitudes or the orientations students hold towards the TL. In particular, “the degree of success achieved by a learner is influenced greatly by his view of the people who use the target language” (Oller and Richards, 1973: 333.) What is more, Ellis argues, learners’ achievements in FLL are affected by their attitudes about “(1) the target language, (2) the target language speakers, (3) the target-language culture, (4) the social value of learning the L2, (5) the particular uses of the target language, and (6) themselves as members of their own culture” (Ellis, 1994: 199.) In an attempt to describe attitudes, Baker (1988; in Ellis, 1994: 199) argues that they are both “cognitive” (related to mental activities) and “affective” (influenced by feelings and emotions.) Unlike language aptitude, attitudes are not an innate endowment with which we are born, but we acquire them throughout our lives.

As to the precise way in which learners' attitudes are related to their levels of FLL achievement, attitudes are generally expected to enhance learning when they are positive and to inhibit it in case they are negative. Learners who have positive attitudes towards foreign languages or "a favorable orientation towards outgroups in general" (ibid: 237) are said to be more open to new languages and cultures, and accordingly more successful in FLL. Negative attitudes, on the other hand, may create strong internal barriers against interaction and learning. As Williams and Burden put it,

Language, after all, belongs to a person's whole social being; it is part of one's identity, and is used to convey this identity to other people. The learning of a foreign language involves far more than simply learning skills, or a system of rules, or a grammar; it involves an alternation in self-image.

(Williams and Burden, 1997: 115)

In other words,

An individual's identity is closely linked with the way he or she speaks...when speaking a new language one is adopting some of the identity markers of another cultural group. Depending on the learner's attitudes, learning...can be a source of enrichment or a source of resentment.

(Lightbown and Spada, 1999: 56)

To illustrate this point, some FL learners prefer to retain a foreign accent in their TL oral performances. Norrish justifies arguing, "expecting learners to produce [foreign] sounds – often reported by the learners as 'funny' – is in effect expecting them to give up part of their familiar selves" (Norrish, 1983: 18.) Social factors may be also highly significant in shaping learners' attitudes and subsequently their levels of attainment in FLL (Section 1.6.)

Nonetheless, negative attitudes are found to positively correlate with success in certain occasions. Particularly, Oller, Baca and Vigil (1977 ; in Freeman and Long, 1991: 176,) in an investigation of the acquisition of English by Mexican-American women living in Albuquerque, New Mexico, find that the subjects who conceive English Americans negatively perform better in an English cloze test. The researchers attribute this non-confirming result to social and affective factors. Indeed, the subjects form a "colonized minority" and they might be offended by the Anglophone majority. Nevertheless, they might be extremely eager to learn English "to remove themselves from oppressive conditions brought about their lack of English" (Gardner 1980; in Freeman and Long, 1991: 176) (cf. Section 1.4.3)

In addition, the relationship between levels of achievement in FLL and learners' attitudes is a bi-directional one; each one can influence the other. Explicitly, as being affected by the type of attitudes learners hold, the outcome of their learning may influence their attitudes, too; either by strengthening and weakening them, or by changing them completely. That is to say, although attitudes are generally held to be highly persistent, they can change in

consequence of different influences, such as success or failure in learning. To illustrate this point, students may choose, at the beginning, to engage in a particular learning task because of their positive attitudes towards it, but they finish by changing their views and, even, giving up due to the unexpected failure they may meet.

As an empirical evidence to the claims just made, Savignon (1972; in Freeman and Long, 1991: 177) reports that he finds no correlation between the initial attitudes held by his American college students of French and their TL achievement in the first semester of study at the university of Illinois. By the end of the course, however, the subjects were found to build orientations in accordance with their French attainments. Similar results are found by Burstall et al. (1974; in Littlewood, 1984: 56) and Green (1975; in Littlewood, 1984: 56.)

Hermann comments on such findings writing, “the mere satisfaction [a learner] derives from his achievement of the learning task may influence his attitude to the ethnolinguistic group in question and even result in a change of such attitude” (Hermann 1980; in Freeman and Long, 1991: 177.) That is to say, FLL success can “breed positive attitudes towards the TL group” (Freeman and Long, 1991: 177.)

Other research findings, although not wholly consistent, add to the belief that students’ attitudes are not something that can be neglected in FL teaching. Consequently, some (Dubin and Olshtain 1986; in Johnson and Johnson, 1998: 18) argue that gathering information about learners’ attitudes is a crucial step in any course design procedure. The generally held view is that learning is usually enhanced by positive attitudes and impeded by negative ones. Nevertheless, this is not always true. A learner with negative attitudes towards the TL culture and its native speakers may achieve a high level of proficiency while learning it, if he has strong reasons and motives to do so. Many English FL learners, for example, hold negative views about American imperialism, but are, nonetheless, exceptionally successful in learning the Americans’ language, because they consider it as a means of worldwide communication and a very useful tool that may serve many of their needs. This idea is further extended in the following section.

#### **1.4 Motivation**

Obviously, in any learning task, opportunities for success for a person who does not want to learn are very few, if not null. The key requirement of accomplishment is not feeling oneself obliged to do something, but rather feeling a desire to do it, or in more technical terms, being motivated to engage in it. From all the extra-linguistic factors that are said to affect achievement in FLL, motivation is perhaps the most relevant, least disputed, and most

investigated factor. As Littlewood puts it, it “is the crucial force which determines whether a learner embarks on a task at all, how much energy he devotes to it, and how long he preserves” (Littlewood, 1984: 53.) In a word, it is “what makes a person want to learn” (Williams and Burden, 1997: 111.) Indeed, from early behaviourist accounts on it until recent views about it, no one, to my knowledge, has questioned the relevance of motivation to language learning.

#### **1.4.1 Theories of Motivation**

Initially, behaviourists define motivation in terms of positive and negative reinforcements (i.e., rewards and punishments) that, respectively, increase and decrease the possibilities of previous behaviours to be repeated in future. In particular, if an FL learner produces a structure in the TL and his teacher praises it, or at least accepts it without comments, this behaviour from the teacher will act as a motive that encourages the learner to retain his original structure and to keep using it in future. On the other hand, if the learner’s utterance stimulates a negative reinforcement from the teacher (e.g., correction,) the learner will not try to reproduce it next times.

From another perspective, Maslow defines motivation in terms of needs to be satisfied. Human needs, as he clarifies, can be classified into two different groups; *deficiency needs* and *growth needs*. Deficiency needs such as those for food, shelter, protection, affection, etc, are essential to humans’ physical and psychological wellbeing. Consequently, the motivation to satisfy them is very strong, i.e., they must be satisfied before all other drives; but once they are met, the motivation to gratify them decreases. On the other hand, growth needs, such as the curiosity to know and to understand, can never be completely fulfilled; the greater the knowledge of a person, the more he will be motivated and curious to learn more. No one can arrive at a full understanding of the world surrounding us.

Maslow’s *drive reduction approach* to motivation is elaborated in Atkinson’s theory of *achievement motivation* (Atkinson 1964; in Williams and Burden, 1997: 62-63.) The point is that the learners’ needs to achieve or to be successful will push them to make more directed efforts to establish their goal. To be precise, some people are dominated by a drive to succeed or to be high achievers in every thing they do. Such persons are likely to actually thrive throughout their lives more than those who do not bother about whether they do well or not. Quite the reverse, however, Fontana (1995) clarifies that “achievement” motivation may also have a negative effect on the learners because “it may increase anxiety to an inhibiting level” (Fontana, 1995: 150,) (cf. Section 1.5.2.)

These two perspectives of motivation are not indeed exclusive to each other; they are complementary indeed. Actually, motivation is a complex factor consisting of external incentives and internal drives. In other words, both external environmental factors and internal processes and needs do influence motivation.

Explicitly, motivation, generally speaking, is what activates, directs, and maintains efforts while learning in order to achieve a previously determined goal; in the case of FLL, the mastery of the TL. Specifically, it is “the internal processes that give behavior its energy and direction” (Dembo, 2004: 10.) It is what causes learners to “exhibit a great deal of effort on tasks, persist even under difficult situations, and maintain positive beliefs about [their] academic abilities” (ibid: 51.) This view of motivation as an internal incentive which provokes people to work so that they can realize some goal is common to all attempts at defining it. “Motivation is some kind of internal drive which pushes someone to do things in order to achieve something” (Harmer, 2001: 51.) “It is a psychological trait which leads people to achieve some goal” (Johnson and Johnson, 1998: 219-220.) In addition, it is claimed that the strength of motivation, and hence the level of achievement, is dependent on the value this goal holds to the individual learner. For example, if a learner considers the goal of accurate pronunciation learning as futile, he will, normally, fail to achieve this goal whatever is the efficacy of the teaching materials to which he is exposed. In other words, “Motivation may also act to filter out parts of the language that are not important to the learner” (Dulay, Burt and Krashen, 1982: 50.)

In effect, motivation is a complex phenomenon that is related to many overlapping components: learners’ interests, drives, curiosity, need for achievement and success, desires, goals, and equally well to their expectations of success. More to the point, Dembo argues,

Students’ goals, beliefs, feelings, and perceptions determine their motivated behavior and, in turn, academic performance. For example, if students value a task and believe they can master it, they are more likely to use different learning strategies, try hard, and persist until completion of the task. If students believe that intelligence changes over time, they are more likely to exhibit effort in difficult courses than students who believe intelligence is fixed.

(Dembo, 2004: 62)

The above claims notwithstanding, motivation can be also shaped under the effect of situational social factors. But, because this point is treated elsewhere (Sections 1.6 and 1.4.4,) it is not overtly developed here.

### **1.4.2 Types of Motivation**

In language learning literature, it is customary to make a distinction between two different types of motivation, namely *intrinsic* (also called *integrative*) and *extrinsic* (or

*instrumental*) motivations. It is recognized, however, that learners may possess both of them simultaneously. Intrinsic motivation comes from within the individual. It consists of “a willingness (or desire) to be like valued members of the “other” language community” (Gardner, 1968: 237.) In other words, integrative motivation “reflects a sincere and personal interest in the people and culture represented by the other group” (Gardner and Lambert 1972; in Dulay, Burt and Krashen, 1982: 47.) That is to say, intrinsically motivated FL learners are interested in the TL itself and they have favourable attitudes towards its users. To be precise, they have a desire to master it, they “admire” its native speakers and they want to sound like them, and sometimes to be socially integrated within their cultural values. They enjoy the learning task itself and they consider it relevant to their needs and promising on its own. Particularly, they “feel that learning the language is valuable because it allows one to learn more about the group” (Gardner, 1968: 239.)

Extrinsic motivation, by contrast, results from an external utilitarian factor. It “reflects the practical value and advantage of learning a new language” (ibid.) In other words, extrinsically motivated FL learners do not show interests neither in the TL itself, nor in its native speakers, but they think they need to learn it because of some external practical reasons; such as to fulfill the requirements of the school curriculum, to get their dream job, to improve their social status, etc. In short, the distinction between the intrinsic and extrinsic types of motivation is that in the former FLL is seen as an end (a goal) on its own, whereas in the latter it is seen as a means or an instrument to get a further goal.

### **1.4.3 The Effect of Motivation**

From mere observation of what happens inside classrooms, anyone can notice the determining effect of motivation on the acquisition of an FL. As far as pronunciation learning is concerned, for example, some learners show great carefulness to the way in which the TL is pronounced; they pay attention to, and often repeat, every segment uttered by their teacher or anyone whom they consider a skillful speaker of the TL. On the other hand, some other learners do not bother at all about these things and they consider the corrective feedback provided by their teacher on their pronunciation errors as futile, or even illegitimate. Learners from the first group are more likely to succeed in their TL phonological learning than those from the second group who often demonstrate poor and heavily accented pronunciation performances.

There is an abundant amount of research that empirically tests this widely observed phenomenon. Most studies are correlational in design and based on self-report

questionnaires, and almost all the findings show a strong relationship between motivation (mainly intrinsic motivation) and FLL achievement. For instance, Gardner and Lambert (1972; in Ellis, 1994: 510,) in a study of Anglophone Canadians formally learning French as a second language, find a strong correlation between integrative motivation and L2 achievement. They argue that integrative motivation, which has been consistently found to have a positive impact on second language learning, is more related to success than is instrumental motivation that has emerged as a crucial factor only in a relatively limited number of studies. In particular, Gardner argues, “the truly successful student (i.e., the one who will acquire communicational facility with the language) is motivated to become integrated with the other language community” (Gardner, 1968: 244.) Correspondingly, Tucker and Lambert claim that learners with high levels of attainment are “motivated by a desire to learn about other peoples and their way of life and by a desire to be able to interact with these people” (Tucker and Lambert, 1972: 246.)

Additionally, Glikman, Gardner, and Smythe (1982; in Ellis, 1994: 512) provide evidence that integrative motivation is not only related to L2 achievement, but also to learners’ behaviours inside the classroom. “Integratively” motivated learners are found to ask more questions and to give more volunteer and correct answers than their classmates do. Consequently, they also receive more positive reinforcements from their teachers. Moreover, they are perceived by observers to be more interested in the course. “The higher [the learners’] integrative motivation, the more these classroom behaviours are evident” (Ellis, 1994: 512.)

From another perspective, Ramage (1990; in Ellis, 1994: 512) investigates the factors that lead high school students in USA to drop out from the French and Spanish FL classes. She finds that the lack of intrinsic motivation is the strongest predictor; learners with intrinsic motivation are the most likely to continue their FL course until the end. Harmer also recognizes the crucial effect of intrinsic motivation on FLL achievement and advises teachers to try to get their learners to love the target language even when they start the task of learning with an instrumental motivation (Harmer, 2001: 51.) The reason is that this latter is, Richards claims, “appropriate for short term goals but inappropriate for the laborious task of acquiring a language” (Richards, 1974: 7.) Likewise, Krashen thinks, “with instrumental motivation, language acquisition may cease as soon as enough is acquired to get the job done” (Krashen, 1981: 22.)

Some other studies, however, such as Oller, Baca, and Vigil (1977,) demonstrate that extrinsically motivated learners are more successful than those with an intrinsic motivation.

In particular, Oller, Baca, and Vigil report that the more subjects conceive themselves as “calm, conservative, religious, shy, humble, sincere” (Oller et al. 1977; in Krashen, 1981: 28,) the better is their TL performance. Integrative motivation, Oller et al., suggest is not significant in the learning context of their study (cf. Section 1.3) because of “political ill-feelings”. Their subjects, they add, “felt the oppressive weight of having been absorbed into a powerful political system in which they have traditionally had little power of choice” (Oller et al. 1977; in Krashen, 1981: 29.) Consequently, they resist Americans, but they want to learn their language.

Comparably, Lukmani (1972; in Celce-Murcia et al., 1996: 19) investigates the relationship between the motivational orientation of Marathi-speaking high school students in India and their English proficiency. Conclusively, she finds that instrumentally motivated learners outperform those with an integrative orientation. She comments that instrumental motivation, which has been proved to have only a secondary weak impact on second language learning in natural environments, turns to act as a more powerful predictor of success in FLL environments, where learners have a relatively little interest in the TL and usually no opportunities to come into contact with its native speakers. In conclusion, Lukmani asserts that the type of motivation is not the only important factor about it; on the contrary, its intensity is also highly significant.

Equally, Gardner and Lambert (1972) in a study of the learners of English in the Philippines find that instrumental motivation is the best predictor of the learners’ ultimate levels of success. Consequently, they conclude, “it seems that in settings where there is an urgency about mastering a second language – as in the Philippines and in North America for members of linguistic minority groups – the instrumental approach to language study is extremely effective” (Gardner and Lambert 1972; in Freeman and Long, 1991: 174.) Krashen corresponds writing, “when the practical value of second language proficiency is high, and frequent use necessary, instrumental motivation may be a powerful predictor of second language acquisition” (Krashen, 1981: 23.) He goes on, “instrumental motivation may take precedence as a predictor of achievement where there is a special urgency about second language acquisition and where there appears to be little desire to “integrate” ” (Krashen, 1981: 28.)

To conclude, in cases where English, or any other FL, is learned as an international language, i.e., as a lingua franca, rather than with reference to a specific community of English native speakers, instrumental motivation might act as a very powerful determiner of success. That is to say, it is the “perception of the utility of acquiring a particular FL”

(Tucker and Lambert, 1972: 246) either as an end on its own, or equally well as an instrument to arrive at a further goal, which makes significance. A learner who has exceptionally strong external reasons for learning an FL, for example to get his dream job, may outperform an intrinsically motivated learner who has an internal positive, yet less intense, need to learn. In Ingram words,

The point about motivation is that it keeps people at it. It is a massive learning job to acquire the skills which are necessary in order to function adequately in communicative situations using a second language. It does not matter what it is that makes learners persevere, it is perseverance which is essential. People do not have to like language learning – though this helps – and they *do not have to like* the nation whose language they are learning, though this helps too; but as long as economic or social circumstances require successful language learning, determined people *will learn* [italics mine].

(Ingram, 1975: 281)

Conclusively, Johnson and Johnson (1998) argue that the strength of motivation is dependent on the learners' "scale of values." This implies that any attempt at establishing the most influential motivating force (intrinsic or extrinsic motivation) in FLL would not be complete without first considering the values learners attach to the different learning goals they have. In other words, "It is not possible to generalize about intrinsic or extrinsic motivation without considering what the learner regards as important...motivation depends on the learners evaluation of the motivating forces" (Johnson and Johnson, 1998: 220.) To illustrate this point, for some learners the extrinsic benefits of success may be sufficient to keep them working at the often distant goal of learning. For others, the supposed benefits of ultimate success may mean very little and are not considered worth making efforts to achieve them.

#### **1.4.4 Relationships between Motivation and Levels of Achievement**

In all the studies mentioned above, motivation (intrinsic and extrinsic) is treated as a factor supporting FLL. But, what about the other way round of the relationship? Can success enhance motivation as it is supported by it? In other words, "are learners more highly motivated because they are successful, or are they successful because they are highly motivated?" (Lightbown and Spada, 1999: 56.) In answer, Hermann (1980; in Ellis, 1994: 515) advances the "*resultative hypothesis*" of motivation, claiming that it is the result rather than the cause of success in language learning. Empirically, Strong (1984 ; in Freeman and Long, 1991 : 175) finds that his subjects' – Spanish-speaking children learning English in an American classroom – integrative motivation increases relative to their accomplishment in the course. In conclusion, Strong declares, "motivation does not necessarily promote acquisition, but rather results from it" (Freeman and Long, 1991: 175.)

Actually, however, the relationship between motivation and achievement is a spiral one; high motivation increases learners' opportunities for success, on the other hand, makes initial motives stronger, the resultant motivation enhances learning further and so on. Likewise, learners with low initial motivation often fail in their learning, a factor that will further diminish their originally low motivation, and so forth.

In other words, success is a strong motivating factor; it is rewarding. It can strengthen and even create motivation in learning. After experiencing it, learners will be more motivated to work harder, to maintain, and even to improve their initial results. On the other hand, failure may demotivate even learners with strong internal and external reasons of learning and causes them to lose interest and give up. Overtly, "motivation might lead to greater proficiency, but so might greater proficiency help to increase a learner's motivation...each factor is likely to reinforce the other" (Littlewood, 1984: 53) and vice versa.

In sum, the direct and interactive relationship between motivation and successful FLL is a link that has been consistently proved on the basis of an abundant amount of research. Some scholars further argue that motivation is not simply an important factor affecting proficiency in FLL, but it is the most powerful one. In Wilkins words,

That there is a whole gamut of other factors at work is not to be denied. Age, amount of exposure, attitudes of individuals and groups, these and other factors have their part to play. But even with many of these factors stable, learning will vary from person to person. It seems that it is the differing needs that people have to communicate in the language that determine the extent of their learning.

(Wilkins, 1972: 182)

In short, motivation is one of the strongest factors influencing achievement in FLL. Its effect on pronunciation learning may be even more evident. This latter, when compared with grammar learning for example, needs more effort on the part of the learner at least as far as English FLL is concerned, and needless to say, if motivation is helpful in easy learning tasks, it is crucial in difficult ones.

Motivation, however, works in parallel with other factors, mainly, learners' attitudes towards the TL, and it is itself affected by these factors along with others such as learners' interests, desires and needs. To exemplify, Gardner defines it as "the combination of effort plus desire to achieve the goal of learning the language plus favorable attitudes towards learning the language" (Gardner 1985; in Ellis, 1994: 509.) The relationship between motivation and attitudes, in particular, is a close one. Learners having positive attitudes towards the TL, its culture and its native speakers usually develop integrative motives to learn it. By contrast, those who are instrumentally motivated often hold negative, and sometimes intolerant, attitudes towards the TL culture and its community.

If we now expand the notion of motivation to include both reasons for learning and attitude, we find that at the extremes we have instrumental motivation, where learning is strictly utilitarian and attitudes are intolerant, and integrative motivation, where the learner sees himself as a potential member of the second language group and has liberal attitudes.

(Wilkins, 1972: 184)

## **1.5 Personality**

Besides the learners' individual differences reviewed so far, personality is another determinative factor in FLL in general, and in pronunciation learning in particular, as Guiora argues. Guiora sees language not simply as a means of communication, but also as an important means to represent an individual's personality, or "ego" in his terms (Guiora 1982; in Spolsky, 1989: 111.) He goes further arguing that pronunciation is the most realistic representation of "language ego." In other words, an individual's linguistic behaviour, in general, and his pronunciation performance, in particular, can reveal too much about his personality. To be precise, the claim is that personality is evident in the language use of any person. To exemplify this point, the lack of self-confidence can be easily noticed in the speech of most people holding this characteristic as they, usually, use many hesitations while they speak.

Additionally, the strong association between personality and language can be seen from another perspective. That is the effect of the former on the task of language learning. In what follows, this perspective will be clarified by tracing the effect that some personality traits (namely, *empathy*, *self-confidence*, *language anxiety* and others) have on FLL.

### **1.5.1 Empathy**

To investigate the relationship between personality characteristics and language learning, empathy – "the ability to imagine oneself in someone else's position, to see the world with their eyes, to be sympathetic with their goals and ways of thinking" (Johnson and Johnson, 1998: 241) – is frequently cited. Notably, Guiora argues that empathetic persons tend to have more permeable (flexible and adaptable) language egos. The more empathetic the learner is, the more permeable his language ego will be, and the more successful he will be in acquiring the sound system of a foreign language. In other words, accurate pronunciation learning requires a learner who is "psychologically capable of stepping into a new system of communication" (Guiora 1972; in Celce-Murcia et al., 1996: 18.) Explicitly, the claim is that successful FL pronunciation learning requires a learner who is empathetic with the native speakers of the TL and who feels himself emotionally inside the TL speech community. "Individual differences in the ability to approximate native-like pronunciation

should reflect individual differences in the flexibility of psychic processes, or more specifically, in the empathetic capacity” (Guiora 1972; in Odlin, 1989: 131.)

Schumann (1975) echoes Guiora’s assertions arguing that adults’ development of “firm ego boundaries” creates “constraints” on the language learning process. These constraints prevent learners from having access to their “biologically determined capabilities” (Schumann 1975; in Celce-Murcia et al., 1996: 18,) (cf. Section 1.1.1.)

To attest his claims, Guiora collaborates in many studies (Guiora, Lane, and Bosworth 1967; Taylor, Guiora, Catford, and Lane 1969; Guiora et al. 1972; Guiora et al. 1980; all cited in Ellis, 1994: 518-519) using different instruments to measure the subjects’ empathy. In one series of these studies, learners’ empathy is measured by asking them to identify when a woman in a film changes her facial expressions. In another series, the subjects are given precise quantities of valium to alter their ego boundaries so that they become more permeable. Although the results give some support to the hypothesized correlation between empathy, ego permeability and accuracy in pronunciation performances, they are far from being conclusive because of the doubtful validity and reliability of the measuring instruments used.

Akin to Guiora’s “ego boundary” is Krashen’s notion of “affective filter”; the “internal processing system” that determines what TL data and models the learner will accept from the whole range of materials to which he is exposed. The affective filter has an indirect, but a very important, role in FLL partly by affecting the learners’ self-confidence (cf. Section 1.5.2.) Learners with a strong affective filter feel their egos threatened while learning a foreign language. As a result, they will lack the self-confidence needed to prepare them for the task of FLL by making them ready to accept the TL norms and, more seriously, able to experiment the fresh knowledge they receive about this language. In other words,

*Empathy*, the ability to put oneself in another’s shoes, is also predicted to be relevant to acquisition in that the empathic person may be the one who is able to identify more easily with speakers of a target language and thus accept their input as intake for language acquisition (lowered affective filter.)

(Krashen, 1981: 23)

The role of self-confidence in FLL is treated in more details in the following section.

### **1.5.2 Self-Confidence**

Dulay, Burt and Krashen (1982) argue that self-confidence is positively related to success in FLL in general, and to pronunciation learning in particular. This latter requires a learner who is ready to regularly try out his knowledge about the TL pronouncing system, to experiment unfamiliar sounds in front of an audience and to accept corrections and

comments on his inadequate performances. As a result, “unless they have firm confidence in themselves, [FL pronunciation learners] may come to feel that they project a silly, boring image, and become withdrawn...They may develop a sense of ‘reduced personality’ ” (Littlewood, 1984: 59.)

In particular, adult learners who lack self-confidence are not, usually, able to learn a foreign language pronunciation accurately because they are generally reluctant to use the TL orally in front of others. Consequently, they will not have sufficient opportunities for practicing their pronunciations and gradually they may become even afraid of speaking the TL. Subsequently, they will not only retain poor pronunciation habits, but they may even get worse. On the other hand, self-confident learners are usually agreeable to use the TL both inside and outside the classroom without being afraid of others’ evaluation of their speeches. This provides them with the necessary practice and feedback considered essential in pronunciation learning. Krashen states a similar stance arguing for the participation of other traits. In particular, he argues,

The self-confident or secure person will be more able to encourage intake and will also have a lower filter. Traits relating to *self-confidence* (lack of anxiety, outgoing personality, self-esteem) are thus predicted to relate to second language acquisition.

(Krashen, 1981: 23)

Brown (1977) corresponds writing:

Presumably, the person with high self-esteem is able to reach out beyond himself more freely, to be less inhibited, and because of his ego strength, to make the necessary mistakes involved in language learning with less threat to his ego.

(Brown 1977; in Krashen, 1981: 23)

In Dulay, Burt and Krashen words,

The self-confident, secure person is a more successful language learner...The filter of a self-confident person has a larger screen. In addition, self-confident people are less hampered by the conscious operation of the monitor because they are not so worried about how they appear.

(Dulay, Burt and Krashen, 1982: 75)

To provide an empirical support for their claims, Dulay, Burt and Krashen (1982: 52-53) cite a group of studies conducted to determine the personality characteristics related to successful language learning. In a good number of these studies, self-confidence acts as a powerful predictor of success. In Wittenborn, Larsen and Vigil (1945,) for example, self-confidence is said to be related to *language anxiety* (Section 1.5.3) and to *extroversion*, supposing that self-confident learners have a lower anxiety level and a tendency to be extroverted. Extroversion is a personality trait introduced in Eysenck’s Personality Inventory. It relates to such behaviours as active participation in the classroom, responsiveness, lack of inhibition, sociability, assertiveness, risk-taking and liking change. It is generally supposed

that extroverted learners are more successful in FLL, as they create more opportunities to practice their TL knowledge and skills. Slimani (1989; in Johnson and Johnson, 1998: 240,) however, provides evidence that *introverted* learners, those who act contrary to extroverted persons, may benefit from observing their extroverted classmates and eventually be equally or even more successful. In Wittenborn, Larsen and Vigil (1945,) then, the subjects' self-confidence is measured with reference to low levels of anxiety and high degrees of extroversion. The results reveal that learners with such personality characteristics are more successful in Spanish and French language learning than their colleagues who lack these qualities.

Correspondingly, Oller, Hudson, and Liu (1977) conclude that "the more positive a subject's self-concept, the higher the subject's achievement in ESL [English as a Second language]" (Oller, Hudson, and Liu 1977; in Krashen, 1981: 30.) In some of the other studies reviewed by Dulay, Burt and Krashen (1982: 52-53,) the effect of anxiety is shown to be more complicated than the way clarified by Wittenborn et al. The effect of this personality trait is more investigated in what follows.

### **1.5.3 Language Anxiety**

Obviously, FL learners' level of anxiety can significantly affect their TL performances. For example, learners' apprehension resulting from fear of negative evaluation in spontaneous speaking (and listening) activities may cause them to produce many pronunciation (and other) errors that they would not normally produce in more relaxed situations. This observation contributed to the occurrence of many correlation studies that investigate the exact impact of learners' levels of anxiety on their FLL attainments. In some of these studies, a distinction is made between *language anxiety* and *general anxiety*. In other words, the distinction is between a "situation-specific anxiety" and "trait anxiety", respectively. This latter refers to "a more permanent predisposition to be anxious". By contrast, a situation-specific anxiety is the kind of apprehension caused by a specific type of situation, such as FLL (Scovel 1978; in Ellis, 1994: 479-480.)

To cite only few from these studies, MacIntyre and Gardner (1991; in Ellis, 1994: 481-482) provide evidence that a "significant" negative correlation exists between anxiety and L2 French performance by English native speakers. "Covering several measures of proficiency, in several different samples, and even in some what different conceptual frame works, it has been shown that anxiety negatively affects performance in the second language" (MacIntyre and Gardner, 1991; in Ellis, 1994: 481-482.) Horwitz (1986; in Spolsky, 1989: 115) also reports, in a "reliable" correlation study, significant negative correlations between

foreign language classroom anxiety and the final grades attained by a group of American university students. Parkinson and Howell-Richardson (1990; in Ellis, 1994: 482,) however, fail to find a relationship between the level of language anxiety and the rate of improvement achieved by his subjects, adult learners of L2 English in Scotland.

The reason behind the non-correspondence between the above research results is, perhaps, the complexity of the relationship existing between language anxiety and levels of achievement in FLL classrooms. Scovel (1978; in Ellis, 1994: 482-483) speaks about two different types of anxiety that may cancel each other out. These are “facilitating” and “debilitating” anxieties. Up to a point, a learner anxiety motivates him to work harder enhancing the task of FLL. But, beyond this level anxiety becomes debilitating as it handicaps the learner. That is to say, “whereas too much anxiety hinders learning, it seems that a certain amount of it can stimulate a learner to invest more energy in the task” (Littlewood, 1984: 59.) In other words, “a moderate degree of anxiety may be helpful” (Krashen, 1981: 30,) but “if anxiety rises above a certain level, it is an obstacle to the learning process” (Littlewood, 1984: 58.)

In another study, that of Gardner (1985; in Spolsky, 1989: 114,) the results are supportive to the hypothesized existence of a correlation between French classroom anxiety and achievement in language learning. Anxiety, however, is not presented in this study as a source of “low final achievement” but as “an effect of low initial proficiency and motivation.” This same idea that language anxiety can act both as a source and a result of low achievement is also present in Skehan (1989; in Ellis, 1994: 483.)

After reviewing a number of other empirical studies exploring the influences of anxiety on achievement in FLL, Krashen concludes that “There appears to be a consistent relationship between various forms of anxiety and language proficiency in all situations, formal and informal,” and that “Anxiety level may...be a very potent influence on the affective filter” (Krashen, 1981: 29.)

To conclude, though available research does not provide clear-cut findings about one precise impact of anxiety on FLL, there is sufficient evidence to show that classroom anxiety is an important factor affecting the level of achievement in language learning. The relationship between these two variables is a bidirectional one, to use Spolsky’s words, “some learners, typically those with low initial proficiency, low motivation, and high general anxiety, develop levels of anxiety in learning and using a second language that interfere with the learning” (Spolsky, 1989: 115.)

#### 1.5.4 Other Traits

Researchers have also investigated the influence of other personality traits, such as *locus of control* and *outgoing personality*, on FLL, but the research evidence for each of these traits is scanty. Firstly, the trait locus of control is said to be related to the learners' interpretations of their achievements. Learners who see themselves as responsible for their own actions are more likely to make many efforts while learning. Accordingly, they are better able to succeed in the long and complex process of FLL. By contrast, those who feel that they do not possess the power to determine what happens to them and think their learning is "in the hands of others" subsequently "lose all motivation to try to succeed" (Williams and Burden, 1997: 128.) They think their efforts are worthless. On the other hand, persons with outgoing personalities are declared able to realize more success in FLL. The reason may be that such learners "may become involved in more social interaction, attract more attention from their teachers, and be less inhibited when asked to display their proficiency (e.g., in oral interviews)" (Littlewood, 1984: 64.)

In general, the findings of the different studies about the role of personality in FLL are inconsistent. Part of the reason is the fact that different researchers have employed different instruments to measure personality traits. In addition, some of the used instruments are of a doubtful reliability. Besides research inadequacies, personality, in essence, is an elusive concept involving different traits that often overlap with each other. Self-confidence, risk-taking and extroversion have been shown to be related; Dulay, Burt and Krashen (1982) consider them as one variable that they name self-confidence. These same traits are also related to empathy and sociability. Personality traits are further related to motivation and attitudes (cf. Spolsky, 1989: 115.)

To conclude, category boundaries between personality, motivation and attitudes, as well as among personality traits themselves are not clear, a fact that necessitates great carefulness while investigating them. The research shortcomings, however, cannot deny the significance of the effect of learners' personality characteristics on the ultimate levels of FLL they can achieve. Language and personality, as Guiora claims, are deeply related. Learning a new language can be seen as the addition of a new aspect to personality and a new way of seeing the world. In short, personality factors are of a crucial importance in FLL, which in turn affects personality.

## 1.6 Learner-External Factors

In addition to learners' individual differences, social and pedagogical factors can also have an essential influence on foreign language learning. Indeed, in any aspect of life, a person will not only act according to his individual capacities and characteristics, but he will also reflect the views and values of the whole society of which he is a member. In what follows, is an attempt to reveal some of the areas in which the learners' social and situational associations can be involved in their FLL.

Firstly, social factors have a crucial role in shaping learners' attitudes that directly influence motivation. On the other hand, this latter, as already shown, is closely related to achievement in FLL. For example, "parental attitudes can and do affect children's orientations and hence success in FL study" (Tucker and Lambert, 1972: 247.) In particular, "the child's integrative attitudinal orientation is fostered in the home, and...this accepting home environment has a direct association with second language achievement" (Gardner, 1968: 238.)

Obviously, learners' attitudes about any FL are strongly influenced by the status this language possesses in the society where they live, in general, and by their parents views about it, in particular. In other words, "the student will be affected by the ethnolinguistic composition of the large linguistic community of which he is a member" (Tucker and Lambert, 1972: 247.) More specifically, he will "reflect...the attitudinal atmosphere of his home" (Gardner, 1968: 238.) Likewise, the type and extent of motivation can be affected by the social and the cultural values with which learners grow up. To exemplify this point, in some societies, namely multilingual communities, the acquisition of a second, and a third, language may be, Littlewood argues,

Simply a normal and necessary extension of their communicative repertoire for coping with life's demands. In this respect, it is a process similar to the acquisition of different styles of speaking, to suit different kinds of situation, in a monolingual community.

(Littlewood, 1984: 54)

In the same way, the learners' special "family characteristics such as socioeconomic levels, parental educational levels, and parental expectations" (Dembo, 2004: 55) can also have a significant role in forming their motivation.

To be precise, students' attitudes, motivation and hence the effort they are going to make while learning foreign languages are built in accordance with their social environment. How important is FLL regarded in the society? How is pronunciation learning viewed by people surrounding the students? Is it highly esteemed to sound like the TL native-speakers? Or, do people suffice by acquiring a poor somehow intelligible pronunciation? These and

many other points may be significant in determining how successful FL learners will be by shaping their social-psychological state (i.e., their attitudes and motivation.)

To illustrate the above statements, it is generally observed that students living in urban areas and having educated parents, often, build more positive attitudes and consequently realize a higher level of FLL proficiency than those from rural areas and whose parents are illiterate. All the same, there is another significant point of difference between these two groups of learners that may equally importantly account for the varying degrees of success they meet. This is the differences in *the facilities, the opportunities of learning and of language use*, and even in *the experiences of life* met by each group of learners. Usually, the only occasion for FLL that the latter group has is that found in their language classrooms. But this is not the case with the former group. On the contrary, learners from urban areas may have many beneficial opportunities to learn foreign languages outside the classroom, such as the access to technological facilities (e.g., the internet) and the societal use of the TL. In other words, the difference between the two groups is not a difference in ability, but rather in the opportunities of learning available in each social context.

In addition, although learners' personality traits are generally said to be related to individual intrinsic factors, they may also come under the influence of social environmental causes. For instance, learners from urban areas are, generally, more self-confident via the richer learning and life experiences they meet than their peers from rural areas.

Furthermore, the most direct influence social factors may have on FLL is the one mediated by the context or setting in which learning takes place. The role of the language learning setting is perhaps the most significant by determining the input learners' receive about the TL (i.e., *their exposure to the target language*.) For example, no one can deny the dominant role played by the kind and amount of TL materials to which learners are exposed in their pronunciation learning on their ultimate levels of achievement. A theoretical support for this statement is Krashen's theory of "comprehensible input." Krashen argues that language learning can take place only when learners receive an adequate amount of comprehensible input (Section 1.1.2.)

To be precise, in the case of FLL, the usual setting is the language classroom. This is the "setting where the target language is taught as a subject only and is not commonly used as a medium of communication outside the classroom" (Ellis, 1994: 227.) It is matter of fact that foreign language classroom learners achieve a lower level of FL pronunciation proficiency than those learning in natural contexts. This is largely due to the enormous difference in the amount of exposure to the TL. Indeed, it seems logical that many FL

learners who often do not have any source of data about the TL pronouncing system but the model provided by their teacher which, itself, may deviate from the TL norms are unable to acquire an accurate pronunciation.

The language classroom setting, however, is not totally handicapping, as there are instances of some FL classroom learners who are able to achieve highly accurate learning levels. Nevertheless, Richards thinks, “those who do acquire accentless English [for instance] in a foreign language context probably do so because of unique personal opportunities, rather than because of the school programme” (Richards, 1972: 88.) Explicitly, the point is that FL classroom learners can overcome their hindrances, if they manage to develop the right amount of motivation which will push them to search for more *learning opportunities, data materials and occasions for practice*.

What is more, situational classroom factors, namely teachers’ views and behaviours in the classroom, the instructional methods and materials used as well as the types of homework given may also be considerable in determining learners’ attitudes, motivation, personality characteristics and their emotional state in general. These influences will be the higher in FLL contexts where learners usually do not come into direct contacts with the TL native speakers. In such a situation, the teacher and the instructional materials learners receive may serve as the best model of the TL community in their views. Krashen confirms arguing,

The student who feels at ease in the classroom and likes the teacher may seek out intake by volunteering...and may be more accepting of the teacher as a source of intake. Positive attitudes toward the classroom and teacher may also be manifestations of self-confidence and/or integrative motivation, and for this reason may also relate to acquisition. In addition, we would expect students with such attitudes to apply themselves more, resulting in more learning.

(Krashen, 1981 : 23-24)

Likewise, Dembo claims that successful learning

Is related to the quality of classroom life. In particular, student motivation and achievement is greater when instructors communicate high expectations for success, allow students to take greater responsibility for their learning, and encourage various forms of collaborative learning (i.e., peer learning or group learning.)

(Dembo, 2004: 60)

Moreover, although some learners’ may have a general *trait anxiety* (Section 1.5.3,) language anxiety may be the product of situational classroom factors such as the instructional practices and approaches adopted by the teacher. Experiences of failure may further worsen the situation.

The effect of context on language learning is empirically investigated in a number of studies. In two from these, Sampson (1971; in Richards, 1985: 80) and Pica (1983; in

Richards, 1985: 80,) the situational context of learning is proved to affect the learners' performances by determining both the types and frequencies of the errors they make (cf. Section 2.5.4.3.)

In summary, social factors can play an important role in foreign language learning by influencing learners' attitudes, motivation, personality traits, opportunities for learning and language use as well as the data they receive about the TL. The whole range of social factors at work and their exact effect on language learning is, however, not very clear. Indeed, a full understanding of the precise impact of social factors necessitates a thorough description of the specific sociolinguistic situation in which learning takes place, something that is beyond the scope of this research. Accordingly, the present study does not provide a comprehensive treatment of the effects of environmental factors, but it solely focuses on the most relevant pedagogical influences from these, explicitly the learners' amount of exposure to the TL as well as its practice.

## **Conclusion**

In this chapter, we examined the ways in which some nonlinguistic factors affect achievement in FLL, in general, and in foreign language pronunciation learning, in particular. Although each factor has been considered separately, it should be noticed that they all interact in complex ways. Motivation, for example, has been shown to influence and to be influenced by several other factors. It is directly related to the learners' attitudes towards the TL and its native speakers. It may be also affected by some personality traits such as anxiety and self-confidence. On the other hand, motivation, attitudes and personality characteristics are all influenced by social factors. Furthermore, it should be recognized that it is not social factors, themselves, which determine achievement in FLL, but rather the attitudes, learning opportunities, motivation and personality traits associated with them. Equally, personality traits overlap with each other and are affected by some other factors, too. For instance, ego flexibility and low inhibitions induce low anxiety and support forming positive attitudes towards the TL native speakers. In addition, it may not be personality alone that affects FLL, but rather the way it relates with the other factors, such as attitudes and motivation. What is more, the role played by aptitude in language learning may be influenced by social factors, namely by the social context of learning. In particular, aptitude may be the most significant in foreign language learning contexts, where there is a limited amount of exposure to the target language. On the other hand, aptitude, which is related to success, can also affect

motivation. Explicitly, learners with high aptitude for FLL can be highly successful in the task and by extension they may be more motivated to learn (Section 1.4.4.)

In short, the network of extra-linguistic factors influencing learners' acquisition of a foreign language is a tremendously complicated one. In reality, there are no division lines between the effects of several factors. On the contrary, they all work in parallel in addition to other linguistic factors. In particular, one of these latter, namely the role of the learners' mother tongue in their FLL, had been the most preferable topic in language learning literature for decades. This is the topic to which we are going to turn now.

PART TWO  
**CASE STUDY**

**CHAPTER TWO**  
**THE EFFECT OF LANGUAGE TRANSFER**

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## **Introduction**

After we had a glance at some extra-linguistic factors that affect FLL, we will try in this chapter to shed light on the role the learners' formerly acquired linguistic knowledge may have in this process. Generally speaking, the effect of the learners' native language(s) on their FLL, especially at the phonological level, is evident to everybody. Native speakers have been always capable of recognizing the foreignness of most FL learners' TL verbal performances. What is more, they are generally able to detect the linguistic background of these learners, only by hearing their speeches, and they are even capable to mimic them for the sake of humour, for instance. Empirically, however, the role of cross-linguistic influences, or of transfer technically speaking, in FLL has been the subject of much debate.

In this chapter, an attempt is made to identify the different kinds of influence the learners' language(s) other than the TL can have on their FLL. For this reason, we will try to follow the developmental course of transfer research starting by referring to its roots. Then, the behaviourist accounts on this subject will be clarified. The contribution of contrastive analysis in popularizing and advancing transfer studies is the third point of focus in this chapter. After that, the different criticisms the study of transfer has received, mainly because of its traditional association with behaviourism and CA, will be reviewed. Finally, the new trends and findings in modern research of transfer will be defined, along with an attempt to settle the transfer controversy and to arrive at an enlightening understanding of its role in FLL.

### **2.1 The Study of Transfer: Roots and Development**

The study of transfer is not a recent topic in linguistics. Although it had not received a significant position in the field until the 1940s, its roots go back to the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Fisiak (1981: 3,) for example, cites Grandgent's (1892) work on the sound systems of German and English as one of the earliest instances of cross-linguistic studies.

Before the 20<sup>th</sup> century, however, linguists' goals in studying human languages and the influences they may exercise upon each other were predominantly historical. The main task was to establish language families and to reconstruct parent languages. This begins with the observation that two or more languages show regular correspondences in vocabulary items (cognates.) Then, the hypothesis that these are genetically related, i.e., they descend from a single ancestor language, is proved by the reconstruction of their parent language. On the other hand, any differences existing between them are considered to be a result of the

inevitable diachronic linguistic change. This operation belongs to the linguistic enterprise called *comparative philology*.

After comparative philology had prevailed in nearly all linguistic studies, it was recognized in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century that the relationships existing between different languages go beyond their historical connections. Indeed, genetically unrelated languages may share many linguistic features because of cross-linguistic influences resulting from languages contact due to geographic proximity, for instance. On these grounds, linguists under the title of *linguistic typology* started another task of linguistic classifications aimed at grouping languages into different sets on the basis of their shared morphological, syntactic and phonological features.

Subsequently, after the Second World War, linguists shifted their attention to pedagogical interests. The war raised the importance of foreign language learning (FLL.) Consequently, great efforts were devoted to the development of new teaching methods to enhance foreign language pedagogy. Soon, it was recognized that effective teaching methods and techniques could not be developed without a prior understanding of the process through which individuals tend to learn foreign languages. The behaviourist ideas that were dominant those times gave the role of transfer the “lion’s share” in the learning of any new skill. Greatly motivated by these circumstances, and intensely influenced by the ideas of his teacher Charles Fries (1945) and the works of Weinreich (1953) and Haugen (1956) about the effects of contact between languages in bilingual areas, Lado, with his *Linguistics Across Cultures* (1957,) marked the starting point of a new era of transfer studies and gave a strong impetus for subsequent research (James, 1980: 8-9.)

To sum up, many linguists today consider the linguistic enterprises of comparative philology and linguistic typology as the roots of pedagogical studies of transfer. Nonetheless, it is Lado’s *Linguistics across Cultures* that is broadly acknowledged as the mark of the actual commencement of this latter. In what follows, the behaviourist views about transfer and the contribution of Robert Lado to this field of study will be clarified into more details.

## **2.2 Behaviourist Accounts on Language Transfer**

Behaviourism is a school of thought that was very popular and highly influential during the 1930s-1940s era. It is mainly based on the general theories of learning held by the psychologists Watson, Pavlov and Skinner. The methodological basis of behaviourism is built on the claim that only objectively observable behaviours can serve as acceptable sorts of data for scientific research. Hence, the study of learning must be restricted to account for only

observable inputs and outputs. Adopting these principles in their experiments, behaviourist psychologists argue that all kinds of human learning, including language acquisition, are similar to each other and even analogous with animal learning. To illustrate this point, it is claimed that there is no difference between the ways whereby one learns a language, how to ride a bicycle, to type, or to do anything else. The underlying process of learning, it is asserted, is the same for all these behaviours.

From the behaviourist perspective, then, all kinds of learning are conceived in a similar way. They form, it is said, a “mechanical process of habit formation.” Habits are constructed through the repeated association between stimuli and their relevant responses. Target like habits must be soon reinforced with the right kind of reward (carefully chosen according to the nature of the learning task, the individual characteristics of the learners and their level of learning.) Non-target like habits, on the other hand, must be immediately followed by corrective feedback to prevent the establishment of “bad habits.”

### **2.2.1 Language Learning as a Passive Process of Habit Formation**

To be exact, the learning goal in the behaviourist tradition is the establishment of correct habits. A habit consists of “an automatic response elicited by a given stimulus” (Ellis, 1994: 299) and once developed, it “can be carried out without the conscious use of one’s cognitive processes” (Wilkins, 1972: 164). Consequently, repetition and reinforcement tasks are deemed essential in behaviourist learning. The learner needs, first, to practise himself what he is asked to learn, mainly through imitation. Afterwards, to establish strong stimulus-response connections, the learner should perform many repetition drills wherein every correct trial must be adequately reinforced. On the other hand, if any incorrect responses occur, correction must take place immediately (as a kind of punishment,) because it is believed that “the pupil does not learn by making mistakes but by having correct responses properly reinforced” (Wilkins, 1972:165). An additional preventing procedure is held to keep errors at the lowest possible level; this is accomplished by breaking down complex behaviours into their constituent parts so that learning can take place bit by bit to avoid confusing learners.

In applying these behaviourist views to the task of FLL, one would assume that after having their mother tongue habits established, learners will have great difficulty in learning another language since their first language habits will be *transferred* to the new language by analogy. In other words,

Because language development is viewed as the formation of habits, it is assumed that a person learning a second language starts off with the habits formed in the first language and that these habits interfere with the new ones needed for the second language.

(Lightbown and Spada, 1999: 35)

The learners' already possessed set of habits (their native language) may either promote or hinder FLL. If the students' habitual responses to a given stimulus are similar to those required by the target language, the former will be helpful in acquiring the new language, by giving rise to "*positive transfer*" or "*facilitation*" that enhances learning. If, however, the students' habitual responses are different from the ones of the target language, *negative transfer* or *interference* occurs inhibiting the process of FLL. Besides positive and negative transfer, in a neutral case, the students' mother tongue may have no influence on their learning of a foreign language. This is the condition of *zero transfer*, which occurs when the native and the target languages' relative responses are not related at all (both of the stimuli and the responses are different) (Stockwell and Bowen, 1965: 20.)

In other words, transfer is the effect that the learners' mother tongue may exercise on their FLL. Behaviourists assume that it occurs (positively or negatively) whenever the stimuli students receive while learning a foreign language are similar to those with which they have been familiar in their mother tongue use. To be precise, a precondition of transfer is an individual's perceived similarity between his native language's habits and those required to learn the new language. To illustrate this point, a native speaker of Arabic would not use one of his mother tongue vowels for a consonant while learning English as a foreign language. But, he may use Arabic /v/ for both English /v/ and /□/ as he may not be able to notice the difference between the two sounds (transfer at the receptive level.) In addition, he might have a difficulty to relocate his articulators in new positions with which he was not accustomed in his mother tongue use. Justifiably, then, he resorts to use the closest sound in his native language (NL) sound system and substitute it for the target one (transfer at the productive level.)

To summarize, following the behaviourist views, transfer is the effect of prior learning on subsequent learning. As far as linguistic learning is concerned, it is the influence that the learners' mother tongue may have on their acquisition of a new language. It will be negative whenever the first language's response to a given stimulus is carried over where a new response to the stimulus is necessitated by the new language. Hence, it is assumed that the main impediment to FLL is interference from NL, and that learning a foreign language consists above all of overcoming the "bad" habits of the native language and developing a new set of habits instead. This, it is believed, can be achieved by the continuing practice of the target language habits through imitation, repetition and memorization. In addition, special teaching materials need to be designed according to the linguistic background of each group of learners, and emphasis would be put on the points where the two languages (the NL and the

FL) differ. The ultimate goal in the teaching operation is to establish automaticity in the use of the target language (TL.) In particular, it is supposed that “with enough properly reinforced repetition of the structure, the “rule” will be acquired in a way that is not only unconscious but also more conducive to spontaneous language use thereafter” (Wilkins, 1972: 167.)

These Behaviourist ideas of language learning and teaching were highly influential both in linguistics (structuralism) and in language teaching (the audiolingual method) during the 1930s-1950s period. Likewise, they were evident in the writings of many psychologists, linguists and didacticians, such as Lado’s (1957) *Linguistics across Cultures* in which he has introduced the method of linguistic investigation called *contrastive analysis* on the basis of the views reviewed above. This is the topic to which we turn now.

### **2.3 The Role of Contrastive Analysis**

Contrastive analysis (CA) is a type of data analysis wherein, following the behaviourist conception that language learning is a process of habit formation, FL learners are assumed to automatically refer to their mother tongue structures while using and learning a foreign language. Consequently, they are expected to experience difficulty in learning, and to produce errors while using, whichever FL item that differs from the corresponding one in their NL (negative transfer.) To be precise, the main source of difficulties and errors in the FLL process, it is alleged, is interference from the mother tongue. The bigger the differences between the target language and the native language of the learners, the harder their difficulties will be, and vice versa.

Support for these behaviourist theories of language learning comes first from the studies of the effects of languages contact in bilingual situations. For instance, Weinreich (1953) states, “the greater the difference between the systems, i.e., the more numerous the mutually exclusive forms and patterns in each, the greater is the learning problem and the potential area of interference” (Weinreich, 1953: 1.) Behaviourist theories of language learning coupled with the results derived from languages contact studies and the practical experience of FL teachers gave rise to the contrastive analysis hypothesis (CAH,) which was originally formulated by Charles Fries (1945) and later on further developed and popularised by his student Robert Lado.

#### **2.3.1 The Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis**

Enthusiasm for CA came first from Fries’ claim that “The most effective materials are those that are based upon a scientific description of the language to be learned, carefully

compared with a parallel description of the native language of the learner” (Fries 1945; in Lado, 1957: 1.) Fries justifies this first assertion in the foreword of Lado’s *Linguistics across Cultures* (1957) writing,

Learning a second language...constitutes a very different task from learning the first language. The basic problems arise not out of any essential difficulty in the features of the new language themselves but primarily out of the special “set” created by the first language habits.

Lado further explains his teacher’s views arguing that:

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 to act in the culture, and receptively when attempting to grasp and understand the language and the culture as practiced by natives. (Lado, 1957: 2)

Then he goes further assuming that:

The student who comes in contact with a foreign language will find some features of it quite easy and others extremely difficult. Those elements that are similar to his native language will be simple for him, and those elements that are different will be difficult. (ibid)

This assumption forms the core of the CAH, on the basis of which Lado has introduced contrastive analysis; the task of comparing any two languages (and cultures) to discover and to describe the problems that the speakers of one will have in learning the other.

We can predict and describe the patterns that will cause difficulty in learning, and those that will not cause difficulty, by comparing systematically the language and culture to be learned with the native language and culture of the student. (ibid: vii)

To come to the point, CA, as formulated by Lado, is a detailed structure-by-structure comparison of the phonological, morphological, syntactic, lexical and cultural systems of two languages (the mother tongue of the learners and the FL they want to learn.) The aim is to precisely identify all the similarities and differences existing between the two languages. Then, following the principal hypothesis that linguistic similarity and difference correspond to learning easiness and difficulty, respectively, the nature of the FLL task will be predicted. Hence, the findings of CA can form the basis of the development of teaching materials. Since all what is similar is supposed to be learned effortlessly through positive transfer, mere presentation (with encouraging learners to refer to their NL) will suffice. The teaching instruction, however, must emphasise the linguistic differences between the two languages (NL and FL) that are suspected to cause learning problems. The salient outstanding features of CA can be summarized as follows:

- a) The prime cause, or even the sole cause, of difficulty and errors in foreign language learning is interference coming from the learner’s native language;
- b) The difficulties are chiefly, or wholly, due to the difference between the two languages;
- c) The greater these differences are, the more acute the learning difficulties would be;

- d) 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; and
- e) 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 contrastive analysis.

(Lee 1968; in Khanna, 1998: 22)

### 2.3.2 Hierarchy of Difficulty

Lado's contribution to CA is not confined to the building of its theoretical basis only. On the contrary, it also includes specifying the technical procedures involved in conducting a detailed CA. Indeed, Lado's work has paved the way for others to enter a new field of linguistic studies. The 1960s was a highly productive era; many contrastive analyses were conducted, mainly comparing English to other European languages. To cite some examples, Stockwell and Bowen (1965) compare English to Spanish, Koutsoudas and Koutsoudas (1962) compare English to Greek, Lehn and Slager (1959) compare American English to Egyptian Arabic, etc.

The majority of the 1960s contrastive analyses are phonological. They result in lists of easy and difficult learning items corresponding to linguistic similarities and differences, respectively. New target sounds (those that are absent in the NL) are, generally, supposed to be the most difficult for learning as they represent the highest degree of difference. Stockwell and Bowen (1965,) however, contradict this belief by presenting a more sophisticated *hierarchy of difficulty*, i.e., a list of items arranged according to the degree of learning difficulty they represent; from the most to the least difficult.

The basic assumption in Stockwell and Bowen's hierarchy of difficulty lies on the belief that different degrees of difficulty must correspond to the presented dissimilar kinds of differences. But, unlike Lado, Stockwell and Bowen do not predict new and missing items to be the most difficult. In contrast, they argue that *splits*; where a single form in the native language is manifested in two or more items in the foreign language (e.g., the occurrence of both voiceless and voiced plosives in final positions in English, whereas only voiceless ones occur in many other languages, such as German); are the most difficult for learning. Splits, in a descending order of difficulty, are followed by *new* items (those which exist in the FL but not in the NL,) then *absent* ones (present in the NL but absent in the FL.) *Coalesced* forms (where several forms of the NL collapse in the FL) are found at a lesser degree of difficulty. At the end of the hierarchy, there are *total correspondences*. These latter are the easiest to be learned, Stockwell and Bowen argue.

### 2.3.3 Claims Made for Contrastive Analysis

As already stated, CA was highly pervasive in the 1960s period. The generally held view was that a systematic comparison of the two languages involved in FLL (the TL and the NL) could identify the problems that may appear in the task right from the beginning. More to the point, it was believed that “if trouble spots in the target language could be anticipated, errors might be prevented or at least held to a minimum. In this way, the formation of bad habits could be avoided” (Freeman and Long, 1991: 55.) It was via these pedagogical claims that CA became a major preoccupation in the field of applied linguistics. Those times, it was seen as the main contribution that could be made by linguistics to language teaching, and “nothing seemed of greater potential value to language teachers and learners than a comparative and contrastive description of the learner’s mother tongue and the target language” (Candlin in the preface of James, 1980.) Undeniably, the pervasiveness of CA has played a significant role in advancing and popularising transfer studies.

The pedagogical usefulness of CA is said to be derived from its alleged *predictive power*. According to its tenets, CA, after identifying the points of similarity and difference between two languages, can predict what items will be difficult and what forms will be easy for the speakers of one while learning the other. Accordingly, it is able to anticipate FLL errors and even to guess their tenacity (James, 1980: 116.)

Additionally, on the basis of its predictive power, CA can serve as a highly useful source on which we can base our selection and development of language teaching materials. Having identified the learning problems and detected the sources from which they have been originated (interference from the mother tongue) is the first step towards solving them. In this way, CA provides course designers with a ready-made inventory of the points they need to highlight. Thus, they are simply asked to follow its results in order to plan “the most effective materials.” That is to say, to be effective, a language teaching course book must fulfill two essential requirements: that it “presents the language and culture patterns that form the system to be studied” and that it “gives due emphasis to those patterns that are difficult because they are different from those of the native language of the student” (Lado, 1957: 3.)

The significance of CA in the preparation of adequate teaching materials, although originally declared by Fries, had gained a wide support among many scholars, as it is evident in the quotations below.

If one could juxtapose the structures of the mother tongue against those of the target language, course designers (and teachers and learners) would be better able to plan their learning and teaching; better able to foresee difficulty and consequently better able to husband resources and direct learning and teaching effort.

(Candlin in the preface of James, 1980: III)

It has become widely accepted among linguists that materials to be used in teaching English as a foreign language should be based on a comparison of the native language and the target language, English.

(Lehn and Slager, 1959: 32)

It was a useful way of looking at language learning to regard it as the task of discovering the differences between the mother tongue and the target language, i.e., what the learner does not know. The linguistic syllabus, then, is simply this set of differences.

(Corder, 1973: 229)

“CA [then] provides necessary data for the authors of textbooks with respect to the selection and arrangement of the TL items as well as emphasis that should be given to particular structures” (Walderman, 1981: 165.) On the other hand, language teachers being aware of the “real” learning problems will be better prepared for their job. CA helps them to gain more sophisticated abilities. They

Will acquire insights and tools for evaluating the language and culture content of textbooks and tests, supplementing the materials in use, preparing new materials and tests, and diagnosing student difficulties accurately.

(Lado, 1957: VII)

On their part, language learners will be better informed about the points of similarities and differences between their mother tongue and the target language. Hence, they will be better prepared to avoid the trap of making false analogies between the two languages. Consequently, they will elude making errors, it is hypothesized.

Besides its utility in developing teaching materials, CA is also useful in designing language tests. It can “tell us what we should test and what we should not test” (Lado, 1957: 6,) for the reason that it indicates “pretty accurately just what the learning problems are” (ibid: 4) so that “we can concentrate our ingenuity on how to test them” (ibid) leaving aside those items which cause no problems at all (similarities between the TL and NL.) In pronunciation learning, for instance, teachers, Lado argues, will no longer talk in vague about foreign accents, but they will be able to identify the exact features causing trouble in the speeches of their students by developing the right kind of tests including carefully chosen sentences to examine the learners abilities to receive and produce the sound contrasts between the TL and the NL. Consequently, the adequate feedback measures will be provided.

Supporting views for Lado’s stance about the validity of CA in FLL testing are also widespread. For example, Davies (1968; in James, 1980: 149) suggests, “If a test is constructed for a single group of students with identical language background and identical exposure to the target language, the contrastive analysis is essential.” Similarly, Harris (1968; in James, 1980: 150) maintains that “the most effective distractors in a test item will be those

which evoke first-language responses from those subjects who have not fully mastered the very different patterns of the target language.”

Another pedagogical operation in which CA is declared to be useful is language research. According to its proponents, CA can shed light on the problems that merit being investigated and also provide the basis for developing the right kinds of experiments to examine them. Namely, it offers insights into the nature of language and language acquisition, and contributes to a general theory of language learning (the theory of transfer.) It is also significant in testing the effectiveness of language teaching techniques by identifying what must be taught and what can be neglected. On this idea, Lado questions,

How can we design a meaningful experiment on the effectiveness of an oral technique if we do not know specifically what the student is to learn, and what he already knows because it is the same as in his native language?

(Lado, 1957: 7)

In short, CA was assumed to hold utility everywhere in the language teaching operation. It was viewed as useful in the “the preparation of better textbooks, tests, articles, and experiments, and contribute to the general improvement of the teaching and testing of foreign languages” (Lado, 1957: vii.) As so, and in view of the extreme need to enhance pedagogy, but without empirically proved validity, CA gains common approval initially. A decade after, however, caution about the actual validity of the CA claims started to appear. The different criticisms directed at CA and their influence on the general appreciation of transfer as a factor affecting FLL will be clarified in what follows.

## **2.4 The Study of Transfer Criticized and Defended**

During the 1960s, then, CA, whose function is to detect the effect of transfer on FLL, emerged as an inevitable type of investigation if any understanding of the process by which foreign languages are learned is sought. The claimed pedagogical practicability of CA, coupled with the wide acceptance of behaviourist ideas in both linguistics and psychology, resulted in a broad appreciation of the underlying assumptions on which these are based. Accordingly, mother tongue transfer gained extensive support and approval and appeared as the most influential factor affecting FLL. Nevertheless, when empirical studies investigating the veracity of the CAH and the behaviourist assertions began to appear, the theoretical postulates of more than two decades (1940s-1960s) were put into question as it is clarified in what follows.

### **2.4.1 Criticism of Transfer due to the Inadequacy of Behaviourism**

As already shown, the theory of transfer was elaborated within behaviourism. The behaviourist learning theories based on the stimulus – response connection were used initially to provide a justification for the theory of transfer. Surprisingly, however, these same ideas caused transfer to lose a lot from its initial reputation few years later, specifically, subsequent to Chomsky’s (1959) review of Skinner’s (1957) *Verbal Behavior*. Chomsky demonstrates that the behaviourist accounts of human learning are in fact a sort of a psychological fallacy. He openly states that he is reluctant to adopt “the myth that linguistic behavior is “habitual” and that a fixed stock of “patterns” is acquired through practice and used as the basis of “analogy” ” (Chomsky, 1966a: 30-31.)

Chomsky bases his criticism on many arguments. He clarifies that it cannot be accepted to generalize the results of laboratory experiments with animals to account for human behaviour. In other words, to consider human learning to be guided by stimulus – response associations just because animal learning is proved, on the basis of empirical experiments, to be so is not justified. Otherwise, how can we explain the young children’s ability to produce novel utterances that they have never heard? Explicitly, he argues, “normal linguistic behavior... is stimulus-free and innovative. Repetition of fixed phrases is a rarity” (ibid: 32.) “The notion that linguistic behavior consists of “responses” to “stimuli” is as much a myth as the idea that it is a matter of habit and generalization.” (ibid.)

Besides, the terms stimulus and response are “vacuous” as far as human linguistic learning is concerned, Chomsky argues. Furthermore, the practice of reinforcement deemed essential in the behaviourist learning theories is not really significant in humans’ language learning. Chomsky declares, “it seems to me impossible to accept the view that linguistic behavior is a matter of habit, that it is solely acquired by reinforcement, association and generalization” (ibid: 30.) Actually, parents are found to correct their children’s language only in few cases, mainly when an error affects the intelligibility of the delivered messages.

Subsequently, contrary to what was hypothesized by behaviourists, Chomsky assumes language learning to be developmental in nature, and not solely guided by outside stimuli, but also driven from the learner’s inside. In other words, humans’ linguistic learning is not a passive process of habit formation mainly governed by the environmental factors with which the learners are surrounded, but rather a creative process of rule construction that results from the innate creative abilities humans hold (Section 3.1.) Chomsky’s ideas contribute to the development of a new school of thought, namely cognitive psychology. The paradigm shift in psychology and linguistics from behaviourism to the new cognitive accounts of language

learning undermined, it is said, the psychological foundations of CA and of the theory of transfer.

To summarize the above argument, it is maintained that transfer theory can no longer survive after the premises on which it is based are proved to be inadequate in explaining language learning. Nevertheless, this is not necessarily the case, it is said in reply. There is not any essential connection between transfer and the behaviourist theories of habit formation. On the contrary, transfer can be accommodated easily in cognitive psychology. To use Littlewood words:

...it is not necessary to see transfer as inextricably linked to behaviourist theories of habit formation. It can also be seen as part of a process of creative construction: the transfer of rules from the mother tongue may be one of the learner's active strategies of making sense of the second language data.

(Littlewood, 1984: 21)

In other words, transfer should not be limitedly interpreted as the interfering effect of the previously acquired habits of the learners' mother tongue. Not at all, it can be also seen as an effect of their attempts to make sense of the new target language inputs in view of what they already know from their NL (cf. Section 3.5.4.1.)

More significantly, Odlin (1989) clarifies that the behaviourist conception of transfer is significantly different from what is implied by the influence of the mother tongue on FLL. Following the behaviourist views, the previously acquired habits should be "unlearned" so that the new ones can be fully acquired. By contrast, to learn an FL, it is neither required nor desired to withdraw one's own NL and to supersede it by the new language. So, "behaviourism may never have been relevant to the study of transfer" (Odlin, 1989: 25.) To further dissociate transfer from the behaviourist theories of habit formation, Odlin cites the fact that "over a hundred years ago Whitney (1881) used the term transfer to refer to cross-linguistic influences long before any linguists thought of linking it to the notion of habit formation" (ibid: 26.)

To conclude, even though much of the criticism delivered against transfer came from its traditional connection with behaviourism, there is not any natural or essential connection between the two. On the contrary, "although [behaviourism] was... discredited, the notion of transfer has been revived again and remains one of the most fundamental in L2 acquisition research" (Johnson and Johnson, 1998: 354.) In Gass words, "... there has been a resurgence of interest in the phenomenon of language transfer, not as a mechanical transference of first language structures but as a cognitive mechanism involving many factors" (Gass 1983; in Richards, 1985: 66,) (Section 2.5.) Even so, it is not only the behaviourist interpretations of

transfer that are a source of casting doubt on it. Lado's attempt to use results from the social studies of language contacts as a justification for his CAH, is equally problematic.

#### 2.4.2 The Unreliability of the Sort of Evidence Provided for Transfer

Indeed, Lado, right from the beginning, recognised the importance of empirical work to provide a support for the CAH. To be exact, he declared,

The list of problems resulting from the comparison of the foreign language with the native language will be a most significant list... Yet it must be considered a list of hypothetical problems until final validation is achieved by checking it against the actual speech of the students.

(Lado, 1957: 72)

Nevertheless, Lado thought the evidence available from the studies of languages' contacts in bilingual areas is enough. He declares "a practical confirmation of the validity of our assumption has come from the work of linguists who study the effect of close contact between languages in bilingual situations" (Lado, 1957: 1.) The works of Haugen (1953) and Weinreich (1953) are specifically what Lado refers to in this statement. Additionally, Lado asserts "we have ample evidence that when learning a foreign language we tend to transfer our entire native language system in the process" (ibid: 11.) Consequently, researchers, fueled by the desire to enhance pedagogy, surpassed the verification stage and go immediately to applications of CA.

Dulay, Burt and Krashen (1982,) however, clarify that the way Weinreich and Haugen conceive interference is extremely different from the idea of interference adopted in the CAH. To illustrate this point, Weinreich defines interference as "those instances of deviation from the norms of either language which occur in the speech of bilinguals as a result of their familiarity with more than one language, i.e., as a result of language contact" (Weinreich, 1953: 1.) On the other hand, Haugen characterises linguistic borrowing as the following:

Borrowing is linguistic diffusion, and can be unambiguously defined as the attempt by a speaker to reproduce in one language, patterns which he has learned in another...**it is the language of the learner that is influenced, not the language he learns.**

(Haugen 1953; in Dulay et al., 1982: 99)

Lado, however, identifies interference as "the grammatical structure of the native language [that] tends to be transferred to the foreign language" (Lado, 1957: 58.)

Clearly, Weinreich's conception of the notion of interference bears some similarity with that of Haugen. But, they are both different from that of Lado. Moreover, the difference is too big to be intolerant of confusion, Dulay, Burt and Krashen state. First of all, the distinction can be best recognized by considering the population of language users in which the writer is interested in each study. Both Weinreich and Haugen are interested in people's

acquisition and use of two different languages (a first language and a second language) in a bilingual situation. Their goal is to shed light on the long-term effects of languages' contact on the whole society. Lado, on the other hand, is interested in the individual learning of an FL at schools – “CA is concerned with the way in which NL affects FL learning *in the individual*” (James, 1980: 9) – for the sake of enhancing FL pedagogy. In other words, Weinreich and Haugen's interests are social. Their purpose is to clarify the effects of languages' contact in bilingual societies, such as, linguistic borrowing, the development of new linguistic varieties and codes, code switching, etc. Lado, however, is interested in what happens inside the language learner's mind as his previously acquired linguistic habits (the NL structures) interfere with the new ones being learned (the FL structures.) In brief, although Weinreich, Haugen and Lado are all interested in the phenomenon of interference, they treat it from different perspectives. The works of Weinreich and Haugen can be described as “sociolinguistic” but that of Lado as “psychological” (Dulay et al., 1982: 98.) To use James conception, “CA is concerned with ‘parole’, their work with ‘langue’ ” (James, 1980: 9.)

In addition, as they belong to distinct origins, the three works may represent different views about the notion of interference. Firstly, there is a problem of directionality. Interference is unidirectional in CA, “the grammatical structure of the native language [that] tends to be transferred to the foreign language”; also restrictedly, but oppositely directed in Haugen's work, “it is the language of the learner that is influenced, not the language he learns”; and bidirectional in Weinreich's work, “instances of deviation from the norms of either language”.

Another dissimilarity between the three works that merits attention is the difference in the conceived causes of interference in each study. According to Lado, FL learners resort to mother tongue transfer because of their *unfamiliarity* with the structure of the TL. They suppose that the forms and meanings of their NL are similar to those of the FL. Hence, interference will be common in the initial stages of FLL, but rare in advanced stages when learners gain more knowledge about the TL structures. In contrast, Weinreich declares that interference occurs “in the speech of bilinguals as a result of their familiarity with more than one language.” Deviations from the norms of either of the two languages spoken in a bilingual situation are supposed to occur after speakers gain mastery of both of them. The more knowledge about the two languages the speakers gain (the more bilingual they are,) the more interference and linguistic borrowing occur as there will be no threat to intelligibility between the language users. To use Weinreich's words, “when the other interlocutor is also bilingual, the requirements of intelligibility and status assertion are drastically reduced. Under such

circumstances, there is hardly any limit to interference” (Weinreich, 1953: 81.) Echoing Weinreich, Haugen, after his observations of conversations between bilinguals, asserts that “linguistic borrowing... is something that has happened whenever there have been bilinguals” (Haugen 1953; in Dulay et al., 1982: 100.)

Moreover, bilinguals are generally aware of the occurrence of interference in their speeches. What is more, they may choose to use it intentionally to exemplify the richness of their linguistic repertoires. James describes this as an *integrative* use of the NL. In FLL, however, mother tongue transfer is often unwelcome and its use is usually unconscious; it has an *interfering* effect (James, 1980: 9.)

Following the above arguments, one might suppose that the notion of interference as conceived by Weinreich and Haugen in their studies of bilingualism is not the same as the CA conception of interference about which Lado speaks in his *Linguistics across Cultures*. Therefore, his reliance on their works to provide a support for his own study is questioned. As a result, the evidence of cross-linguistic influences derived from the studies of bilingualism is declared inadequate to provide support for transfer in FLL.

The two conceptions of interference, however, are not as different as Dulay et al. (1982) claim them to be. James (1980) provides many arguments to show them as similar. He demonstrates that sociolinguistic and psycholinguistic studies of interference are not really different as there is a close link between the processes of languages change in contact situations, on the one hand, and of FLL by individual learners, on the other hand. The “pidginisation” stages in the first are similar to the “transitional dialects” in the second (James, 1980: 9.) (Section 3.3.1.)

Concerning the directionality of interference in the three works, it is true that Haugen’s perception of the course of interference is opposite to that of Lado, but that of Weinreich is not. Weinreich’s work, indeed, represents a study of the notion of interference from a broader, not from a different, perception. Moreover, it specifies that the strength of interference will be the greatest from the native language to the second language, the direction on which CA is focused. In Weinreich words, “the language which has been learned first, or the mother tongue, is in a privileged position to resist interference” (Weinreich, 1953: 88.)

The similarity between the ways in which interference is conceived in CA and in the works of Weinreich and Haugen, and hence the legitimacy of Lado’s claims, are also recognised by Odlin. He states,

While Weinreich’s use of the term *interference* to refer to both kinds of transfer (and also to code-switching) was no doubt confusing, many of the cases discussed in this book involve native language influence on the second language of bilinguals having varying degrees of linguistic proficiency. (Odlin, 1989: 24)

Correspondingly, Ellis argues “Although the two phenomena are not identical, they are now seen to be related... It is no longer possible to dismiss the evidence of transfer effects in bilinguals as irrelevant to L2 acquisition” (Ellis, 1994: 310.)

However, even though the evidence from the studies of languages’ interaction in bilingual societies is accepted to provide support for the effect of transfer on FLL, empirical testing of this latter, on its own, remains a necessity. When this appeared at last, by the beginning of the 1970s, it provoked many questions about the authenticity of the anticipated supremacy of transfer in FLL.

### **2.4.3 CA Exaggerations of the Role of Transfer in FLL**

CA considers transfer as the dominant factor in FLL. It predicts that both easiness and difficulty in this process are wholly determined by the particular role the NL of the learners will play, according to how similar to or different from it is to the TL. That is to say, CA assumes difficulties in FLL and errors in FL use to occur solely as a result of negative transfer, where the FL differs from the NL. On the other hand, it is maintained that, neither difficulty nor errors are possible in instances where the two languages are similar (positive transfer.) In other words,

The student who comes in contact with a foreign language will find some features of it quite easy and others extremely difficult. Those elements that are similar to his native language will be simple for him, and those elements that are different will be difficult.

(Lado, 1957: 2)

Hocking, however, contradicts with Lado arguing, “the idea that it is only points of difference between L1s and L2s that cause serious difficulty is simply not true, though it is surprisingly often accepted as self-evident” (Hocking, 1969: 94-95.) Actually, sometimes, it is the similarities, not the differences, between the two languages that cause serious problems. For example, as earlier as the 1950s, it was recognised that, “familiar phonemes with new allophones and new distributions are more difficult than new phonemes” (Hans Wolff 1958; in Brière, 1968: 16.) Many other researchers adopt this claim. Corder, for instance, declares:

There is evidence that something totally ‘new’ or different may prove easier to master than something which is only slightly different; for example, where a very similar sound exists in the two languages but in different phonetic environments, there may be a greater learning problem than in the case of a totally new sound...is a ‘new sound’ more ‘different’ than a ‘new environment’ for an ‘old sound’?

(Corder, 1973: 230)

More contrasting is the statement made by Koutsoudas and Koutsoudas (1962):

We believe that interference will occur whenever the student is presented with a foreign sound which has some perceptual degree of similarity to a phoneme in his native language...the greater the number of similarities present between the foreign sound and the native phoneme, in both articulation and distribution, the more difficult the mastery of a particular foreign sound or a sequence of sounds will be.

(Koutsoudas and Koutsoudas, 1962: 54, 55)

An explanation of this phenomenon – the rising of errors from similarities – is found in Torrey (1971,) (cf. Section 2.2.1.)

When two sets of material to be learned are quite different or are easily discriminated by the learner, there is relatively little interaction, that is, learning one has little effect upon learning the other. If they are similar in such a way that the learning of one serves as particular learning of the other, there may be facilitation, or positive transfer. If, however, the similarities either of stimuli or responses are such that responses interfere with one another, then there will be greater interference as similarity increases.

(Torrey 1971; in Freeman and Long, 1991: 54)

Similarities between any two languages, then, can be equally irritating to the speakers of one when trying to learn the other, just as differences are. Consequently, the CA conception that transfer will be an active factor facilitating the task of FLL wherever the two languages involved are similar is misleading. What is more, differences can also be, at least, just as unproblematic as some similarities are. To be exact, it is not true that all the structures of an FL that are different from their counterparts in the NL of a particular group of learners will be acquired later and with more difficulty than do those that are similar.

An empirical evidence for the assertions just made is available in Natalicio and Natalicio (1971; in Dulay et al., 1982: 104-105) where Spanish learners of English are discovered to have no difficulty at all in acquiring the /-z/ allomorph of the English plural morpheme, even though this allomorph is missing in Spanish (the Spanish plural morpheme has one single allomorph /-s/.) In addition, the lack of belief in the CA claim that difficulty corresponds to linguistic difference by many scholars is a further support. Some clear protests are listed here. Corder, for example, states “because a particular feature of the target language is different from the mother tongue it does not necessarily follow that it is difficult to learn” (Corder, 1973: 229-230.) Similarly, Littlewood declares,

The fact that a structure or sound has no equivalent in the learner’s mother tongue does not necessarily mean that it will be more difficult to learn because of that. On the contrary, such an item may be easier to learn than one which is only slightly different from a corresponding item in the mother tongue, since it is often very subtle differences that produce confusion and interference.

(Littlewood, 1984: 19)

In brief, the available evidence shows that errors can occur where they are not expected and vanish where they are suspected by CA. Hence, “the continuum of same – similar – different may not be parallel to the continuum of no problem – easy – difficult” (Khanna, 1998: 23); difference by itself does not predict difficulty, nor does similarity on its own foretell easiness. On the contrary, “often there is more difficulty in practice with structures that are similar than with structures that are different” (Spolsky, 1989: 120.) Conclusively, it can be argued that CA has failed to pinpoint the nature of the FLL process; it

has hardly any predictive power if ever; neither negative nor positive transfers are often actively present in FLL.

In addition, even in cases where negative transfer is at function in FLL, it is not indeed as determinative as CA assumes. One instance of evidence is found in Dušková (1969,) where the speeches and writings of 50 Czech adult learners of English are analysed. The conclusion to which the writer arrives at the end is that:

On the whole, the number of morphological errors due to the influence from Czech, as compared with the number caused by interference between related English forms is small (19 of the total of 166 systemic errors.)

(Dušková, 1969: 226)

Felix (1980; in Ellis, 1994: 311) reaches similar results. In Dulay and Burt (1974; in Dulay et al., 1982: 102) the natural speech of 179 children learning English in USA schools is investigated. From over 500 grammatical errors, less than 5% reflect the learners' NL, Spanish. After reviewing many pieces of research all coping with the question of how many errors from those actually produced by FL learners are due to transfer from the NL, Dulay, Burt and Krashen (1982: 102) conclude that children learning second languages (L2) in natural environments rarely resort to their mother tongue in their L2 use (only around 4% to 12% of the errors are traceable to transfer.) Adults, on the other hand, rely on their NL more than children do, but less than what is anticipated by CA (from 8% to 23% of the errors are traceable to transfer.)

Common to the results of all the studies cited above is the conclusion that, opposite to what is predicted by CA, transfer can only account for few from the FLL actual errors. Accordingly, it cannot be seen as the only interfering factor in this process; i.e., other factors, such as the "interference between related English forms" (Dušková, 1969: 226,) need to be proposed as governing this process (cf. Section 3.5.4.)

Other examples of errors that cannot be attributed to transfer, it is argued, include those due to *hypercorrection*. Hypercorrection causes a sort of "non-transfer" errors where a learner's exaggerated caution to avoid errors leads him directly to them. The use of /ɹ/ sound instead of /v/ has been a common example of this procedure in literature. The /v/ sound is common in most languages, /ɹ/, by contrast, is not. Some FL learners of English, after producing so many errors pronouncing /v/ instead of /ɹ/, were discovered to arrive at a further stage in which the two sounds are confused and consequently /ɹ/ is pronounced instead of /v/, an error which acts strangely to what can be predicted by the theory of transfer and CA (Brière, 1968: 18.)

Another case in which FL learners are said to behave contrary to what is predicted by CA is that where their recognition that transfer can lead them to produce errors when they perform in the target language causes them to avoid resembling their NL structures in all their TL use. LoCoco (1975; in Dulay et al., 1982: 104) in an attempt to test this observation empirically, analyses the Spanish and German performances by monolingual English speaking subjects learning foreign languages at the university level in USA. He identifies 5% to 18% of the errors his subjects produce as deviant forms that should normally be avoided if positive transfer from the mother tongue of the learners was at action. Similarly, Lightbown and Spada (1999) cite many examples wherein FL learners are reluctant to transfer their mother tongue structures to the TL, even when the translation equivalents are correct. For instance, although German, like English, requires subject-verb inversion in forming questions, German speakers learning English as a foreign language are recorded to produce structures like \**“where the little children are?”* (Lightbown and Spada, 1999: 79.) Wolfe accounts on this phenomenon arguing,

Once the student grasps the idea that the new language differs from his native language in many matters of structure, he will not know when it is safe to operate in terms of his native language... a student will persistently fail to make a grammatical distinction in the target language which he actually does make in his mother tongue.

(Wolfe 1967; in Richards, 1971b: 121-122)

A further support for the idea that transfer is merely of minor, if ever, importance in FLL comes from the observation that the learners of a particular FL, regardless of their NL, keep producing the same sorts of errors even though their mother tongues differ considerably from each other with respect to the relevant linguistic structures involved. Additionally, such errors are also found to resemble the structure of those observed in the speeches of young children acquiring the same TL as an NL. To illustrate this point, the omission of functional words, such as in the expression \**“No understand”* (Lightbown and Spada, 1999: 36) is widespread in the performances of both elementary FL learners from different linguistic backgrounds, as well as children mother tongue acquirers.

Additional evidence of the claimed worthlessness of transfer in FLL comes from the observation that different learners sharing one single mother tongue may produce different sorts of errors while learning a particular FL. These differences in learning are usually traceable to the different psychological characteristics, such as aptitude and motivation, the learners hold (Chapter 1.)

The above criticisms cause the theory of transfer to lose face initially. James (1971,) Odlin (1989,) Ellis (1994) and other scholars, however, succeed to prove the fragile grounds on which most of the skeptical positions on transfer lie. For example, the research results

reviewed above show that the amount of errors for which L1 transfer is responsible is too low. Nonetheless, Ellis (1994) questions the reliability of these researches. He declares:

Studies like those of Dulay and Burt and Felix seriously underestimates the role of the L1... The point is that by eliminating structures with a potential for transfer...Dulay and Burt have contrived to ensure that they find few interference errors... researchers tend to reflect their theoretical biases in what they interpret as transfer effects.

(Ellis, 1994: 311)

In other words, one problem within these studies is originated from the difficulty of how to discriminate transfer errors from the rest. The decision cannot be always obvious. There are some errors that permit more than one interpretation; they resemble the structure of the learners' mother tongue, on the one hand, and the construction of the erroneous forms produced by young children in their mother tongue acquisition, on the other hand (cf. Section 3.6.1.) The practice common in skeptical studies on L1 transfer is simply to eliminate all such errors. The limited number of transfer errors reported in these studies may merely be a result of such practices.

The state of linguistic theory may also have an effect on the reliability of error taxonomies, as James argues. "Many of the errors which are now not traceable to the L1, ... will, as linguistic knowledge of deep structure develops, be recognized as errors of interference" (James, 1971: 90.) Those errors attributed to influences other than transfer because of their being "categories nonexistent in the mother tongue" (Dušková, 1969: 232) are what James means in particular.

According to Odlin (1989,) two further problems are generally detected in most of the empirical studies that minimize the role of transfer in FLL. The first of these is their overemphasis on errors. "While errors no doubt provide important evidence for the strength or weakness of particular native language influences, they are far from being the only evidence" (Odlin, 1989: 23,) (cf. Section 2.5.3.) The second weakness within skeptical positions on transfer in Odlin's view-point is their over reliance on grammar. Nearly all empirical testing of the CAH is done with grammatical structures. However, "in contrast to grammatical transfer, transfer affecting second language pronunciation has been less controversial" (ibid.) Having a glance at the available FLL literature will prove that "Transfer of mother-tongue forms seems far more complete in pronunciation than in grammar" (Wilkins, 1972: 200.)

L1 does have one significant influence on the L2, particularly for adults, and that is seen in the learners pronunciation... the contrastive analysis of the phonological systems of the learner's two languages is a useful predictor of a substantial portion of the phonological performance of L2 learners. (Dulay et al., 1982: 111)

Today most researchers in the field, while minimizing the role that native language interference plays in other areas of language acquisition, would agree that **interference**... is valid in second language pronunciation acquisition.

In short, contrary to its effect on grammatical FLL, the influence of transfer on FL pronunciation learning is generally accepted. Moreover, it can be easily noticed in the speeches of most FL learners as the mother tongue of many of them can be often detected solely from their FL oral performances. What is more, “transfer can occur in *all* linguistic subsystems including morphology and syntax” (Odlin, 1989: 23.) Indeed, many studies of English FL grammar learning support this declaration by attributing a higher number of errors to mother tongue influence than that which is presented in skeptical studies on transfer. In general, between a third and half of the learners’ errors are categorized as erroneous structures traceable to L1 transfer. In table 2.1, a number of research works, together with the results reported in each, are presented. The five first ones are cited from James (1980: 146,) and the two last ones from Ellis (1994: 302.)

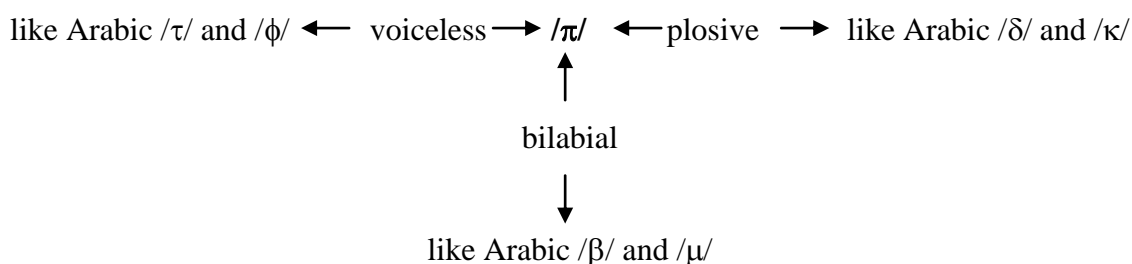
The research work	Results	
	Percentage of errors due to interference from the NL	Percentage of errors due to interference from the TL
Tran-Thi-Chau (1975)	51%	29%
Richards (1971)	53%	31%
Mukattash (1977)	23%	/
Grauberg (1971)	36%	/
H. V. George (1972)	33% (approximately)	/
Flick (1980)	31%	/
Lott (1983)	50% (approximately)	/

*Table 2.1: Percentage of grammatical errors due to interference from learner’ NL and from the TL of FLL (based on information given in James, 1980; and in Ellis, 1994)*

As to the criticism that other causes besides transfer are behind some FLL errors, it does not form any condemnation of the theory of transfer on its own. That is to say, the fact that other factors, structural or non-structural, affect FLL cannot deny the significance of mother tongue transfer in this process. Otherwise, how can we interpret the widely observed phenomenon that for any group of learners with a particular linguistic background, some foreign languages are more difficult to be learned than others, since children throughout the world master their NL in approximately the same amount of time, no matter which language

is involved (James, 1980: 187.) Moreover, it can be argued that some of the errors described as instances of influences other than transfer are indeed a result of a more advanced effect of mother tongue interference. The examples of hypercorrection errors and of the FL learners' attempts to avoid resembling the structure of their NL cited above fall into this category.

Finally, as to the argument that totally new FL sounds are learned more easily than those only slightly different it can be seen as an evidence for, not against, transfer. Brière (1968: 20) clarifies that many foreign sounds considered as absent in one language will not be really totally new for its native speakers as they are in fact simply new combinations of old articulatory features. The English / $\pi$ / sound for the Arabic native speakers is an example of this case. The phoneme / $\pi$ / in English is a combination of three articulatory features; it is a voiceless, bilabial, plosive, the three of which are present in the sound-system of Arabic as it is shown in figure 2.1.



*Figure 2.1: The articulatory features of the English phoneme / $\pi$  / with corresponding examples from Arabic sounds*

Therefore, the learning of English / $\pi$ / by Arabic native speakers is not really a case of acquiring a totally new sound, but rather a “regrouping of articulatory features already existing” (Brière, 1968: 20) in their NL sound system. This, partly, explains the relative ease with which some Arabs can acquire this sound (without denying the relevance of other factors in the task); they are simply asked to transfer their NL articulatory features to the TL and to regroup them in a new way.

To conclude, surely there is a part of logic in the criticisms raised against the anticipated supremacy of transfer in FLL by CA. All of these criticisms, however, can be answered at least to some extent as shown above. Additionally, any defect within the CA ability to predict errors cannot be seen as a sign of the irrelevance of mother tongue transfer in accounting for FLL. Really, CA exaggerates in the role it gives to transfer in FLL. Nonetheless, it is a matter of record that learners' NL will be, without a doubt, present in all their attempts to acquire a new language (cf. Section 2.5.)

#### 2.4.4 Other Problems Rising from the Association of Transfer with CA

Besides the fact that its claims are problematic, CA carries many other problems within it. Wardhaugh (1970,) for example, accuses it of being “quite unrealistic and impracticable” (Wardhaugh, 1970: 7) because it makes “demands on linguistic theory and... linguists that they are in no position to meet” (ibid: 9.) CA is, as already clarified, a structure–by–structure comparison of two languages’ phonological, morphological, syntactic, lexical and cultural systems. Obviously, practically speaking, this is not an easy task to be accomplished for many reasons. Firstly, there is not any single language that is fully described. Besides, if this could be overcome, what are the criteria that can be followed in establishing structural equivalences across languages to realize the measurement of differences existing between them? Linguistic subsystems may interact cross-linguistically. To illustrate this point, a structural distinction can be manifested lexically in one language and grammatically in another, such as in the following example between English and French (James, 1980: 30.)

He wanted to escape	—————>	Il voulait s’échapper
He tried to escape	—————>	Il a voulu s’échapper

In addition to its being a “painstaking” procedure, Corder (1967) argues that CA is not worth doing. He clarifies that FL teachers are usually aware of a great deal from their learners’ real problems and difficulties solely from their practical experiences. What they really need, he continues, is insights into how to cope with their learners’ errors and not their mere identification, as it is done by CA (Corder, 1967: 163.)

A fact that needs to be settled here is that it is not justifiable to view any criticism of CA as also criticizing the theory of transfer on its own. On the contrary, most of the CA problems rise from within its problematic methodological procedures and exaggerating pedagogical claims. However, the idea that the learners’ previously acquired linguistic knowledge will affect their future learning of an FL is undeniable. CA failure notwithstanding, language teachers, psychologists, linguist, etc, have never stopped from offering cross-linguistic influences as an explanation of many phenomena in FLL including performance errors.

In an attempt to reconcile between the failure of CA, on the one hand, and the significance of transfer in FLL on the other hand, Wardhaugh (1970) argues that even though CA may have no predictive utility, it can still have an explanatory power. Subsequently, he

suggests that CA may exist in another form different from the one originally introduced by Lado (*the strong form*), that is *the weak form* of CA.

Rather than trying to predict errors a priori, the weak version of CA is intended to explain them a posteriori. In other words, the CA weak form seeks an explanation of some of the errors actually produced by FL learners; namely those supposed to result from transfer. That is to say, linguistic description and comparison can take place only at the end, as a verifying tool. Consequently, CA, in this new form, becomes part of the major linguistic enterprise called *error analysis* (Section 3.4.)

Wardhaugh claims superiority for the weak version of CA since, he declares, it makes few demands on the linguist in order to account for *observable* difficulties in FLL. In fact, the idea that learners' errors should be made the starting point of analysis has gained wide support in linguistic circles. Lee states that instead of wasting time in a priori CA, the "study of the mistakes themselves seems to be a short cut" (Lee, 1957: 154.) Dušková confirms, "an error-based analysis is equally satisfactory, more fruitful, and less time consuming" (Dušková, 1969: 215.) Odlin maintains that "in the absence of actual data about learners' errors little if anything could be reliably predicted" (Odlin, 1989: 19.) Wilkins corroborates stating that even when it "may reveal learning difficulty," the CA strong form is unable to "determine how the learner will use his mother-tongue to resolve difficulty" (Wilkins, 1972: 201.) That is why it "should be carried out to provide a linguistic explanation for known errors, rather than as a predictive procedure" (ibid: 202.) He intensifies his claim arguing that the explanatory version of CA is also "predictive in the sense that the linguistic behaviour of second language learners in the future is expected to resemble closely the behaviour of language learners in the past" (ibid: 206.) Correspondingly, McKeating argues,

A survey of the errors of one group may help to predict the likely problem areas of a future similar group... students of the same age and with similar language and teaching backgrounds are *likely* to have similar problems.

(McKeating, 1981: 215)

In addition, Mackey questions,

What is the use of predicting mistakes already heard? Since any one who has taught a language can predict from experience the sort of mistakes his students are likely to make a posteriori, is he any the wiser for the a priori and less reliable prediction which the linguist makes on the basis of a differential analysis.

(Mackey, 1966: 8)

Conversely, James criticises the weak version of CA for being a "pseudo-procedure." He argues that CA can be only worth doing in its strong version, because it is of a little value to conduct a long comparison between two languages only to verify that the errors suspected to result from mother tongue interference are indeed so. James further argues that some errors,

namely *covert errors* (Section 3.5.2.) can go unnoticed without a *priori* CA (James, 1980: 185-187.) Similarly, Schachter (1974) shows that a *priori* CA is crucial to detect the phenomenon of *avoidance* that may occur in the performance of FL learners as a result of the structural differences between their NL and the TL of instruction (Section 2.5.3.2.) In fact, however, despite all attempts to revive it, CA has not regained its reputation.

To come to the point, the problems caused by CA raised the necessity to analyse the learners' language in itself, rather than to try to predict the form it may take. FLL is the result of different factors all working in interaction (Section 3.5.4.) Transfer is only one of these factors (Section 2.5.1.) and it is itself influenced by many criteria besides linguistic structural differences (Section 2.5.4.) Hence, an analysis that neglects all factors but cross-linguistic differences is not trustworthy as it may lead to misleading findings. To use Odlin words,

No matter how good a contrastive analysis is, more than just *structural* comparisons are necessary for a thorough understanding of transfer, since native language influence interacts with nonstructural factors.

(Odlin, 1989 : 28)

Subsequently, after being regarded as the “panacea” to all language-teaching problems, and after being the main topic dealt with in many articles, books, and graduate theses, CA has now ceased to be used. To use Spolsky words, it “has lost a good deal of its earlier popularity and respectability; error analysis and interlanguage studies have moved it to the fringes of practical and theoretical interest” (Spolsky, 1989: 119.) Nonetheless, “the original observation that formed the basis of contrastive analysis was true” (ibid: 121.) The point is that CA has simply failed to express it adequately. Nonetheless, disappointment with CA, its claims in particular, and with the behaviourist learning theories led to the development of the minimalist position on transfer (cf. Section 2.5.)

#### **2.4.5 The Minimalist Position**

The minimalist position on transfer is a stance adopted by a group of linguists in reaction to the rejection of the behaviourist theories of language learning on the one hand, and the non-supporting results obtained from the empirical tests of the CAH on the other hand. These researchers, in view of such circumstances, mistakenly miss the pervasive observational evidence of mother tongue influences on FLL and try to provide alternative theoretical explanations to these phenomena, arguing that transfer is not the real dynamic behind them.

Newmark and Reibel (1968,) for example, provide a new explanation for the rising of errors in FLL that resemble the structure of the learners' NL. They argue that such errors do

not result from NL interference, but rather from the learners' ignorance of the TL relevant structures. The learner, they argue,

Can want to say what he does not yet know how to say, and he uses whatever means he has at his disposal... This seems sufficient explanation of how interference comes about, without the unnecessary hypostatisation of competing linguistic systems... taking pot shots at each other.  
(Newmark and Reibel 1968; in James, 1980: 22)

In Newmark and Reibel's view, then, the occurrence of NL structures in the FL use of any learner is solely an unavoidable result of ignorance, "what can he do other than use what he already knows to make up for what he does not know?" (Newmark and Reibel 1968; in Ellis, 1994: 314.) These claims gave rise to the *ignorance hypothesis*.

James, however, proves the ignorance hypothesis to be untenable. He reveals that "ignorance is not an alternative to interference, but at best a precondition for it" (James, 1980: 22.) Additionally, since each of them can work without the other, interference and ignorance cannot be used to explain the same phenomenon as Newmark and Reibel proclaim. To illustrate this point, FL learners, ignorant of a particular TL structure, may resort to avoid using it (Section 2.5.3.2.) In other words, despite learners' ignorance, interference may not occur.

Interference, on the other hand, may occur without ignorance, as James shows. Particularly, many teachers are familiar with cases wherein, despite the fact that they devote ample time and provide many occasions of practice for teaching a particular TL structure, their learners may correctly produce it for a moment and return to their erroneous forms few minutes later. Interference from the mother tongue is, in some of the cases, the only feasible explanation of this phenomenon (James, 1980: 23.) Besides, "no language-learning or language-teaching theory has ever envisaged the state of affairs where the learner is asked to perform before he has some chance to gain 'knowledge' of the L2 target item" (James, 1971: 99.) Furthermore, "teachers have discovered that with equal amounts of introduction, the learner gains knowledge of some items more easily and quickly than others" (ibid: 99-100); again, in this case, nonstructural factors being equal, interference from the learners' NL seems to be the best plausible explanation.

The above claims notwithstanding, Krashen (1981, 1983) echoes the position adopted by Newmark and Reibel by viewing transfer as a *communicative strategy*, i.e., a technique used by FL learners to overcome their difficulties while they perform in the TL; rather than as a *learning strategy*, i.e., a means used to gain knowledge about the TL. He declares that:

"Interference" is not the first language "getting in the way" of second language skills. Rather, it is the result of the performer "falling back" on old knowledge when he or she has not yet acquired enough of the second language... First language influence may thus be an indicator

of low acquisition, or the result of the performer attempting to produce before having acquired enough of the target language.

(Krashen, 1981: 7-8)

He corroborates,

Transfer...can still be regarded as padding, or the result of falling back on old knowledge, the L1 rule, when new language is lacking. Its cause may simply be having to talk before 'ready', before the necessary rule has been acquired... use of an L1 rule... is not 'real' progress. It may be merely a production strategy that cannot help acquisition.

(Krashen 1983; in Odlin, 1989: 26)

From a similar perspective, Dulay, Burt and Krashen (1982: 108-110) argue that FLL is, like native language acquisition, governed by "general processing strategies." The occurrence of any erroneous forms that resemble the structure of the NL can be caused solely by the "premature use of the L2" that might occur in consequence of the "pressure to perform" in the TL before "ready"; by the "limited L2 environments" to which learners are exposed; or by the particular "elicitation tasks," such as translation, that are used to induce TL use by the learners.

In replay, Odlin (1989) cites many facts to demonstrate the vulnerability of the abovementioned claims. Firstly, the widely recognized fact that for the native speakers of a particular language the amount of time and effort needed to learn one FL can be significantly different from those required by another language is a strong evidence for the relevance of transfer in FL learning, besides communication. To illustrate this fact, at the Foreign Service Institute (1985) of the U.S. State Department, native speakers of English were given 44 weeks of intensive instruction to learn Arabic, but only 20 weeks for French; to come at the same level of proficiency in each language (Odlin, 1989: 39.) Secondly, Krashen's conception of transfer is not indeed adequate to account for the long term effects wherein the learners' NL structures become part of their internalized knowledge about the TL, such as is the case in Indian English.

From another angle, Corder (1993; in Johnson and Johnson, 1998: 354) underestimates the role of mother tongue transfer in FLL. He rejects the notion of interference arguing that transfer in FLL can only have a positive effect; i.e., facilitation, closer to *borrowing* when the NL and FL are similar. Where the two languages differ, however, transfer would have *zero effect*, he argues. Nonetheless, Corder acknowledges the *negative effect* the learners' NL may have in their FL *pronunciation* learning.

In general, minimalist alternative theoretical explanations of interference phenomena seek to play down the role of mother tongue transfer in FLL. This latter, it is argued, is not different from the process whereby native languages are acquired. More significant is the

claim that any errors that may occur in the FL learners' performances reflecting their NL structures are indeed traces of a communication strategy used to fill in the gaps in the learners' TL competence. The availability of clear evidences of learning transfer discredits these positions, however (Section 2.5.6.2.) Conclusively, it was recognized that extreme caution is demanded in interpreting results from transfer research.

“Viewing transfer as the single most important reality of second language acquisition is clearly risky - though no more so than viewing transfer as a negligible factor in acquisition” (Odlin, 1989: 151.) Transfer is so important in FLL that “no theory of L2 acquisition that ignores the learner's prior linguistic knowledge can be considered complete” (Ellis, 1994: 300.) On the other hand, a theory that neglects all factors but transfer, such as CA, is not more reliable. Further refinements, then, were needed to firmly situate the study of transfer on the map of FLL research. Subsequently, researchers start to investigate the role of transfer in FLL more elaborately; not by searching for evidence for or against it, but by trying to specify how and when it works.

## **2.5 New Trends in Studying Transfer**

That transfer is one of the factors at work in the process of FLL is now widely accepted. The question that needs to be answered, however, is when and how it works. These have been the directions that researchers take in studying transfer since the 1970s onwards. In what follows, the major findings that have emerged in this new era are presented.

### **2.5.1 The New “Significance” Attributed to Transfer Effects on FLL**

It is true that it was the traditional association of transfer with behaviourism and CA that gave it widespread popularity and reputation. Nevertheless, the vulnerability of the theories of learning as a process of habit formation and of the CAH should not be viewed as accusing the theory transfer, too. If the school of thought called behaviourism is surpassed by cognitive psychology, it was shown that transfer can be readily integrated in this latter (Section 3.5.4.) In addition, if the CAH has failed to capture the effect of learners' NL on FLL, the defect was proved to arise from within it, itself, not from transfer. Surely, even though many animals survive in some forests, a hunting trap may fail to catch any. On the other hand, the pervasive evidence of the effects of transfer on FLL cannot be harmlessly neglected (cf. Section 2.4.3); “a person's mother-tongue is visible in his foreign language performance” (Wilkins, 1972: 197.) In short, the many criticisms notwithstanding, “in all

likelihood, no amount of scholarly protestation will keep that term from being used far into the future” (Odlin, 1989: 26.)

Today, however, “language transfer is not viewed as the manifestation of a learner’s inability to resist first-language patterns” (Richards, 1985: 66,) nor it is regarded as a single, paramount factor in FLL. But, it is seen as a significant feature working in interaction with several others (Fisiak, 1981; James, 1971; Nemser, 1971; Selinker, 1972; Odlin, 1989, etc.) This point is further treated into some details elsewhere (Section 3.5.4) and hence it is not completely analysed here.

### **2.5.2 The Complexity of Transfer Sources**

So far, the term “transfer” has been used in this chapter interchangeably with the term “mother tongue transfer”; to mean the influence that the NL of a learner may exercise on his FLL because of the structural differences and similarities existing between the two languages. Nonetheless, it needs to be clarified that it is not only the forms of the learners’ mother tongue that can be transferred to an FL they are learning, but also those of any language they have previously, and perhaps imperfectly, acquired. In other words, if a learner already knows two or more languages when he starts learning a particular FL, his knowledge of each of them may be brought in the task of FLL.

### **2.5.3 The Diversity of the Forms of Transfer Effects**

The belief that transfer is a unique factor working independently in FLL is not the only one that has been rejected in its modern studies. On the contrary, the idea that it has a decisively negative role; i.e., “interference” is equally dismissed. Recently, many attempts have been made to try to detect all the possible outcomes of transfer. In particular, Odlin’s classification of the effects of transfer seems to be a comprehensive list. He (1989: 36-41) clarifies that this latter can manifest itself in any of the following effects:

#### **2.5.3.1 Positive Transfer**

The CA conception that cross-linguistic similarities can facilitate FLL through positive transfer from the NL to the TL is not totally mistaken. Walderman (1981: 154) cites a research work by Lambert (1967) providing empirical evidence for the facilitative effect of transfer. Lambert discovers that FL learners who permit “the semantic features of their two languages to interact” outperform those who maintain their two languages “functionally separate.” In addition, positive transfer can occur at all levels of linguistic learning;

similarities between any two languages' grammatical, lexical, phonological or writing systems can give the speakers of one a head start in learning the other. Contrary to many English FL learners, for example, literate Arabs generally have no difficulty to recognize and to produce the English sounds /|/ and /□/, simply because they have already acquired them while learning Standard Arabic (in some Arabic dialects the two sounds are pronounced /τ/ and /δ/ or /σ/ and /ζ/, respectively,) (Avery and Ehrlich, 1992: 122.) On the other hand, the large number of cognates shared between English and French can help French speakers to economize much from the effort and time generally needed in English vocabulary learning. Additionally, the identical writing systems used in the two languages make the knowledge of one ample to learn the alphabet of the other.

### 2.5.3.2 Negative Transfer

Although the *production of errors* was traditionally seen as the only effect negative transfer can have, subsequent research has clarified that this latter may take place in other forms as well. These latter include *avoidance strategies*, *over-uses* and *misinterpretations*. Production errors in FLL may, in part, result from the students' attempts to use structures from their previously acquired language(s) where the TL relevant structures are different. Much empirical research in FLL was conducted to determine how much from FL learners' errors are interpretable in terms of mother tongue interference. The results, though not compatible, can be used to settle the fact that a significant proportion of FLL errors results from negative transfer (cf. Section 2.4.3.) What is more, interference errors themselves can take different forms (cf. Section 3.5.4.1.)

Besides producing errors in their FL performances, learners, negatively influenced by their previously acquired linguistic knowledge, may resort to avoid using some TL structures. Students, if aware of the structural differences existing between a particular FL structure and the respective form(s) with which they are familiar, may have hints into how difficult the learning and use of such a structure will be. Subsequently, they may prefer to avoid using it and resort to paraphrasing.

The existence of the avoidance phenomena in FLL is attested in Schachter (1974.) In this study, Japanese and Chinese English foreign language (EFL) learners are found to produce fewer errors in relative clause production (on the whole 5 and 9 errors, respectively) than Arab and Persian learners (on the whole 31 and 43 errors, respectively,) despite the fact that Arabic and Persian have relative clause structures similar to those in English but Japanese and Chinese do not. Further analysis, however, reveals the fact that the Japanese and Chinese

students make use of the structure in question less frequently than the Arab and Persian learners do, and more importantly less than the English native speakers do. In the entire test requirement of the study, the American informants are found to use relative clauses in 173 instances. On the other hand, the Japanese, Chinese, Arab and Persian learners are recorded to produce relative clauses in 63, 76, 154, and 174 occasions, respectively. This means that the English performances of the Japanese and Chinese learners are more deviant from the TL accepted norms, despite the fact that they contain fewer errors. Schachter comments that “what we encounter is a phenomenon of avoidance” (Schachter, 1974: 359.) Levenston (1979; in Ellis, 1994: 304) uses the term *under-representation* to account for this same phenomenon.

In short, as it can be manifested in what FL learners do (errors,) transfer can exert itself in what they do not do (avoidance,) (Ellis, 1994: 304.) “It is quite possible [however] that the avoidance phenomenon does not occur in the acquisition of the phonological subcomponent of the target language” (Schachter, 1974: 360,) since “there is no such thing as phonological paraphrase, and therefore the avoidance phenomenon is difficult, if not impossible” (ibid: 361.)

The third type of the possible manifestations of negative transfer in FLL is over-use. Over-use is often merely a result of avoidance or “under-use.” To illustrate this point, in Schachter (1974) the Japanese and Chinese EFL learners over-use simple sentences in their TL performances in consequence of their under-use of relative clauses. Over-use (or *over-indulgence* in Levenston’s (1971) terminology) can also result directly from negative transfer. In Olshtain (1983; in Ellis, 1994: 306,) American FL learners of Hebrew, under the influence of their NL discourse norms, are found to over-use apologies in their TL performances (the use of apologies in American English is more frequent than it is in Hebrew.)

Moreover, negative transfer does not occur solely at the level of production but also at the level of perception. Linguistic structures from previously acquired languages can influence FL learners’ reception of TL structures and consequently cause them, often, to infer very different meanings from those normally deduced by the TL native speakers. In particular, “non-native speakers are likely to categorize foreign language sounds largely in terms of the phonemic inventory of the native language” (Odlin, 1989: 114.) Therefore, in English FLL

The native language not only affects the ability to produce English sounds but also the ability to hear English sounds... sounds which occur in the native language will be heard rather than the actual sounds of English... It is as if learners hear the second language through a “filter,” the filter being the sound system of the native language.

(Avery and Ehrlich, 1992: xv)

To illustrate this fact, Lehn and Slager (1959) cite that Egyptian Arab EFL learners have difficulty to distinguish between English /ɪ/ and /ε/ because of the absence of this

English phonologically functional contrast in their NL sound system. Consequently, they are recorded to have a problem in distinguishing between English *bet* and *bat*, for example, a seriously handicapping problem in their TL communication (Lehn and Slager, 1959: 38.) Negative transfer causing misinterpretations in FL learning and communication can also occur at the lexical (Prator, 1963) and cultural (Weeks, 1976) levels of linguistic learning.

### **2.5.3.3 Differing Lengths of Acquisition**

Besides its specific effects reviewed above, language transfer globally speaking can either accelerate or delay passage through the overall process of FLL. Researchers have paid relatively little attention to this area of transfer effects. Nonetheless, it is generally recognized that, other things being equal, learners sharing one linguistic background generally experience relatively little difficulty and spend less time in learning some foreign languages than others. Namely, those languages structurally similar to their mother tongue will be more easily and quickly learned by them. On the other hand, the learning of foreign languages representing structural deviations from the norms of their NL usually require them to devote more effort and time to arrive at the same level of proficiency (cf. Section 2.4.3.) In addition, the FL learners themselves are generally aware of the different degrees of difficulty they may experience in learning foreign languages differently different from their mother tongues. They, also, recognize that “several years of study of one foreign language can greatly reduce the time needed to acquire a similar language” (Odlin, 1989: 41.)

In brief, the traditional belief that transfer can exert itself either in the production of errors (where the two languages differ) or correct forms (where the two languages are similar) solely is merely an oversimplification. Indeed, the role of previously acquired linguistic data in FLL is “considerably more complex but, fortunately, not as negative as was first thought by proponents of the CAH” (Freeman and Long, 1991: 106.) An enlightening investigation of how transfer works in FLL needs considering the different effects in which it can be manifested: facilitation, production of errors, avoidance, over-use, misinterpretations, and different lengths of acquisition. It needs to be recognized, however, that the two middle effects in this list, i.e., avoidance and over-use, are less likely to occur in FL pronunciation learning. Now, after reviewing the different effects in which transfer can be exerted, it is helpful to turn to the constraints that govern it when it can be exerted.

### **2.5.4 Constraints on Transfer Effects**

After the CAH had been discredited, research revealed that the operation of transfer in FLL is generally influenced by many factors, all working in interaction to determine when transfer can occur and when it cannot. Even though they, possibly, form the most important factor among these, the structural differences between the NL and TL are only one of these influences. In other words, in addition to having several effects all forming only one factor among several others working in cooperation in FLL, the appearance of any one effect of transfer is constrained by many different criteria besides linguistic structural similarities and differences. These are generally classified into linguistic, psycholinguistic and socio-psychological constraints.

#### 2.5.4.1 Linguistic Constraints

Firstly, it is argued that the transferability of a particular linguistic form is dependent on its cross-linguistic commonness. The typological commonness or universality of a linguistic item indicates its being cross-linguistically preferred. The cross-linguistic preference of a form, on the other hand, may result from any of several physical and psychological factors. To illustrate this point, if the vowels /i/, /e/ and /u/ are among the most common vowel sounds, they are also “among the easier ones that the human vocal tract can produce, and their acoustic distinctiveness makes perceptual confusion between them unlikely” (Odlin, 1989: 46.) The generally held view is that linguistic forms that are typologically common are more likely to be transferred and more easily learned, whereas rare or language specific items resist being transferred and represent a greater amount of learning difficulty.

Eckman (1977; in Freeman and Long, 1991: 102) was the first one who systematically advanced the above claim. He argues that differentiating between *marked* linguistic forms (i.e., those which are language specific or cross-linguistically rare) and *unmarked* ones (i.e., those that are universal or typologically common) is necessary to determine the potential for transfer and the degree of learning difficulty while studying a particular FL. Subsequently, he elaborates these ideas by developing the *Markedness Differential Hypothesis (MDH.)* This latter is based on the assumption that FL learners tend to transfer their NL unmarked linguistic forms, but are unwilling to transfer the marked ones. Three consequential predictions are then made:

- a) Those areas of the L2 which differ from the L1, and are more marked than the L1 will be difficult.
- b) The relative degree of difficulty of the areas of the L2 which are more marked than the L1 will correspond to the degree of markedness.

- c) Those areas of the L2 which are different from the L1, but are not more marked than the L1, will not be difficult.

(Eckman 1977; in Freeman and Long, 1991: 102)

The general claim, then, is that the more rare a structure is, the more marked it is, the less likely it will be transferred from one language to another, and the more difficult it will be for learning. Therefore, cross-linguistically rare sounds, for example, would be supposed to be the hardest for learning. Brière (1968) finds that Native Americans have a greater difficulty to recognize and to produce Arabic /f/ (such as in the word /fUɾ/ that means “free” in English) than /x/ (such as in the word /xIɾ÷ɾ/ that means “veil” in English.) In particular, “/f/ caused the greatest difficulty from the standpoint of both perception and production” (Brière, 1968: 65.) Each of the two sounds, however, is missing in the phonological system of the NL English. This occurrence can be explained by the fact that /f/ is cross-linguistically rarer than /x/ and therefore is more marked. Consequently, it will be learned with more difficulty (cf. prediction (b) above.)

Although it has received some empirical support (cf. Ellis, 1994: 320-323; Freeman and Long, 1991: 102-103; Spolsky, 1989, 122-129,) the MDH has some problems. One of these is the vagueness of the term “markedness.” Attempts have been made to relate markedness with complexity and rarity. Consequently, marked forms are generally regarded to be more complex, less frequent, language specific, not basic and typical. By contrast, unmarked forms are defined as being less complex, more frequent, universal or typologically common, and basic. Still, Kellerman offers a more illuminating definition of the term markedness in relation to the language users’ intuitions that may act as a psycholinguistic constraint on transfer.

#### **2.5.4.2 Psycholinguistic Constraints**

Kellerman, in a series of papers (1979, 1984, 1986; in Spolsky, 1989: 128-129) argues that the transferability of FL learners’ previously acquired linguistic knowledge is generally determined by the learners’ perceived distance between their past linguistic data and the TL. Particularly, their own intuitions about how a particular form is language specific, and therefore resisting transfer, or language neutral, and hence easily transferable, is highly determinative. In other words, the learners’ decision to transfer or not to transfer a particular form from their past linguistic knowledge is affected by how they think it is acceptable in the TL. This thought is born out of their own perception of the structure as typical of one language, unusual and therefore marked or as neutral, common and therefore unmarked.

Kellerman (1979; in Freeman and Long, 1991: 105) shows evidence that FL learners tend to transfer the core uses of their NL lexical items, but are resistant to transfer *peripheral* ones. He concludes that core, i.e., unmarked, meanings of a word will be transferred before others. Additionally, they are more easily learned. Marked meanings, by opposition, being less productive, less semantically transparent, less core and less frequent, are not likely to be transferred until late in the FLL process. In conclusion, Kellerman asserts that FL learners' attempts to transfer their NL idioms, lexical and syntactic structures, especially, and perhaps all their NL forms, *except phonology*, are constrained by their perception of the NL-TL distance.

#### **2.5.4.3 Socio-Psychological Constraints**

Besides linguistic and psycholinguistic criteria, a complex set of social and psychological constraints may be significant in determining possible occurrences of transfer in FLL. To be precise, non-structural factors such as learners' motivation, attitudes towards the TL and their own language, aptitude, etc, can work independently from transfer in affecting FLL (chapter 1), as they can interact with it in many complex ways in determining both the nature and the level of achievement in the learning process. Further, FL learners' individual differences are highly determinative in their favouring or disfavouring return to their mother tongue structures.

Specifically, learners who want to mark their native identities tend to use their NL features in their TL use. By contrast, those who wish to integrate in the TL society and culture are reluctant to resort to their NL in their FL learning and use. More to the point, "individuals with little aptitude for mimicry are likely to show the effects of phonetic and phonological influence from their native language" (Odlin, 1989: 132.) The likelihood of learners' reliance on their mother tongue is also determined by their age; adults resort to their NL in their FL learning and use more than children do (Dulay et al., 1982.) The learners' level of proficiency in the TL and the style following which they are learning it are also significant. Generally, elementary learners are supposed to rely on transfer more than intermediate students as a result of their lacking of the relevant TL knowledge. Additionally, "item learning" is generally conceived to be more conducive to transfer than "system learning" (Johnson and Johnson, 1998: 356.)

The social context of learning is also influential; negative transfer is less likely in classroom settings than in natural ones, Odlin (1989) suggests. He attributes this distinction to the fact that the former context represents a *focused* learning situation. Thus, learners are

generally provided with, and required to devote, enough time to plan what to say. Additionally, they are occasionally given warning remarks about the possible negative effects of their reliance on their NL in TL use and learning. Subsequently, they are supposed to be more able to resist negative influences from their NL. By contrast, thoughtful language use taking place in natural contexts is generally hindered by the pressure to perform, which may lead FL learners to resort to their NL to fill in the data gaps in their TL competence. Quite the reverse, however, Ervin-Tripp (1974; in Richards, 1985: 80) asserts that transfer would be greater when an FL is learned in foreign language classrooms; because the TL, in such a case, “is not the language of the learner’s social milieu so that the learning contexts are aberrant both in function and frequency of structure” (cf. Section 1.6.)

To conclude, a complex web of linguistic, psychological and social factors constrains the operation of transfer in FLL. The effect of none of these can be fully grasped without viewing the others. To exemplify this point, the learners’ reliance on, or resistance to, structures from their mother tongue in any social context is dependent on their level of TL proficiency. No matter how much time students are given in a classroom setting, they cannot escape their NL influences and use target like structures if they have no idea about how these can be constructed. On the other hand, highly proficient learners rarely, if ever, produce any kind of errors in all their natural conversations. Moreover, the students’ attitudes and motivation to reflect or to hide their linguistic background can alter the outcomes suspected in any learning situation. The motivation to learn, in particular, is extremely crucial. To illustrate this point, during WWII, highly motivated American soldiers – who were expected to practice their TL knowledge to save their lives – were capable to excel – despite the hard linguistic barriers present – in Chinese and Japanese FL learning in a significantly shorter lapse of time than what is generally needed to arrive at a poorer level of attainment.

Moreover, *intralingual* factors form a set of highly powerful influences in any task of language learning. These, in turn, can also operate independently and in relation to transfer. However, as they are reviewed in some details elsewhere (Section 3.5.4,) they are not treated here. In addition, as it is clarified below, the level of language use is also functional in encouraging or hampering language transfer.

### **2.5.5 The Probability of Transfer at all Linguistic Levels**

The minimalist position on transfer notwithstanding, modern research has further strengthened the claim that FL learners’ previously acquired linguistic knowledge is involved in their subsequent language learning. To use Odlin’s words,

Along with the relatively early studies cited by Weinreich, much of the empirical research in the 1970s and 1980s has led to new and ever more persuasive evidence for the importance of transfer in all subsystems... From the nineteenth century on, the standards of evidence for transfer have been rising, and the empirical support for the importance of cross-linguistic influences on grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, etc, is now quite strong.

(Odlin, 1989: 24)

Unlike morphological and syntactic cross-linguistic influences, however, phonological transfer has been always widely recognized (cf. Section 2.4.3.) The close link that has been often made between these two variables (i.e., transfer and pronunciation learning) in the FLL literature attests the claim just made. To cite few examples, most of the contrastive analyses conducted from the 1950s till the 1960s are phonological (Section 2.3.2.) More recently, Avery and Ehrlich (1992) devote a considerable proportion from their book – which is intended to provide hints on effective FL teaching of the pronunciation of American English – to citing the pronunciation learning problems common to each group from 14 differentiated groups of EFL students according to the learners’ linguistic backgrounds. What is more, the largest and smallest spaces in this part of the book are devoted to list the problems commonly experienced by Chinese and German learners, respectively. This practice clearly corresponds to the fact that while Chinese is significantly structurally different from English, German is very close to it, both structurally and genetically. Besides all, “the existence of ‘foreign accents’ in L2 learning is so attested that it hardly requires documenting” (Ellis, 1994: 346.)

The above arguments, however, should not be interpreted as withdrawing the roles of factors other than transfer in pronunciation FLL. On the contrary, “pronunciation often shows other influences besides cross-linguistic ones” (Odlin, 1989: 112.) These can either work independently of transfer or interact with it in several complex ways to determine the possible level of proficiency attainable by the learners (cf. Section 2.5.4.3.)

## **2.5.6 Transfer in Communication and in Learning**

### **2.5.6.1 Transfer in Communication**

While adopting skeptical positions on the effect of transfer on FLL, proponents of the minimalist position generally acknowledge its role as a communication strategy used to compensate for the lack of target knowledge. Transfer in communication can occur both productively and receptively (cf. Section 2.5.3.2.) It is generally recognized that while they are performing in an FL they are learning, students may resort to use structures from their NL (or any other previously acquired language) to achieve their communicative goals, if the TL relevant knowledge is missing. In other words, “when people do not know how to say something in a foreign language, one possibility is to use words and structures from their own

language and try to make them fit into the foreign language” (Edge, 1989: 7.) Strategic use of transfer in productive communication may take the form of “literal translation” as in, \* “*the history of the English language know many changes*”; a deviant structure produced by an Arab second year student of English at Guelma university, for the TL “the history of English underwent many changes.” It can also take the form of “phonological adaptation” as in “\**cuffer* for ‘hairdresser’ (from French ‘*coiffeur*’)” (Johnson and Johnson, 1998: 357.)

On the other hand, transfer at the receptive level can occur in the FL learners’ attempts to grasp the TL messages they receive in terms of their possessed linguistic knowledge. Indeed, the reception of TL speeches and writings in FLL may include real or assumed knowledge of the TL, as well as data from other previously acquired languages (cf. Section 2.5.3.2.) Despite receiving much less attention in literature, transfer in reception is at least as significant as it is in production, Ringbom (1992; in Ellis, 1994: 337) argues. The learners’ NL forms, he suggests, a “potential knowledge” that can be used more easily in “decoding” that requires “form-to-function” processing, than in “encoding” that requires “function-to-form” processing.

The relevance of transfer in FL decoding is attested in a research work about Dutch reading comprehension by Singleton and Little (1984; in Odlin, 1989: 41.) In the study, the subjects, university students native speakers of English, are divided into two subgroups according to whether they had formal instruction about German, a language closely similar to Dutch, or not. None of the students, however, has ever learned Dutch. Students from the German subgroup are found to show better comprehension of a Dutch written text than their classmates who, despite the relatively few cognates existing between English and Dutch helped them to infer some meanings, are significantly inferior to them.

One final point worth attention at this level is that the use of transfer in FL communication is not always strategic, i.e., conscious. On the contrary, reference to old linguistic data in an FL production or reception can occur *automatically* below the learners’ level of control. Hence, a distinction is sometimes made between *strategic* and *automatic* transfer.

### **2.5.6.2 Transfer in Learning**

While acknowledging it as a communicative strategy, opponents of transfer deny its utility in learning an FL. If any sign of this latter (transfer in learning) occurs, however, it must be simply seen as an effect of communicative transfer, they argue. The point is that successive successful attempts of strategic transfer in TL communication can lead FL learners to incorporate the relevant structures from their past linguistic data into their transitional

knowledge about the TL, i.e., their interlanguage in Selinker's sense (Section 3.3.) That is to say, transfer in communication can lead to transfer in learning. In Corder's words,

An interlanguage speaker may, in his attempts to communicate, simply 'borrow' for immediate purposes items or features of his mother tongue (or any other language he knows) without incorporating them into his interlanguage system. Successful borrowing, that is when a 'borrowed' item is 'accepted' by the interlocutor as 'well-formed' in the target language, may lead to that item being incorporated into the speaker's interlanguage repertoire.

(Corder, 1978b: 104)

The above claims notwithstanding, transfer in learning can occur directly, too. That is, FL learners can directly incorporate structures from any formerly learned language into their TL interlanguage. The head start that particular groups of learners have in learning some foreign language(s) is one sort of evidence. Schachter (1983; in Johnson and Johnson, 1998: 355) from a cognitive point of view, argues that FL learners are continuously involved in forming and reforming hypotheses about the structure of the target language (cf. Section 3.1.) Whereas the TL materials they receive form the basic source on which the learners draw in the process of hypothesis construction, their already possessed linguistic knowledge, namely that of the NL and other foreign languages earlier learned, can also serve as a useful supply (cf. Section 3.5.4.1.) In other words, languages other than the target language can have a direct influence on the process of FLL by affecting the process of hypothesis formation.

The above view of cross-linguistic influences clearly surpasses all behaviourist accounts on transfer. Language transfer is no longer seen as an "impediment" in the process of FLL, but it is now acknowledged as "one of the important factors shaping the learner's interlanguage" (Johnson and Johnson, 1998: 353.) To cite Wilkins, "faced with a new learning task, an organism will make use of what knowledge or skills it already possesses to ease the process of acquisition" (Wilkins, 1972: 199.)

To sum up, transfer is – as Odlin defines it – "the influence resulting from similarities and differences between the target language and any other language that has been previously (and perhaps imperfectly) acquired" (Odlin, 1989: 27.) It is one of the significant means at the disposal of FL learners who may make use of it in both TL communication and learning; i.e., in producing and understanding TL utterances on the one hand, and in forming hypothesis about it on the other hand. Additionally, as it can occur under learners' choice (strategic use of transfer,) it may appear beyond their awareness (automatic use of transfer.) What is more, transfer in communication contributes to transfer in learning. This latter, however, can also take place directly from the past linguistic knowledge of the learners. Regardless which kind of transfer is involved, its effect can be either positive or negative. Moreover, several different forms can be realized in each case (Section 2.5.3.) Furthermore, the effect of transfer is constrained by different linguistic, psychological, and social criteria all interacting in several

complex ways to determine when it can occur and when it cannot. Despite its crucial significance, transfer is not a single paramount factor in FLL. On the contrary, it works in cooperation with many factors all responsible for the nature and the outcomes of any FLL process. Its effect on pronunciation learning is perhaps the most prominent and the least disputed in literature. Nevertheless, it is far from being the only factor involved in FL pronunciation learning.

## **Conclusion**

In this chapter, the question of whether students' past linguistic knowledge affects their learning of a new FL is considered. The result at which we arrived, though emphasizing the role of cross-linguistic influences in FLL, does not mirror the initial views about transfer held by the proponents of behaviourism and CA. Language transfer is significantly present in FLL. More than this, it is, as sometimes said, an inevitable phenomenon whenever two languages coexist in a performer's mind. Its role, however, is not as simple as it was firstly anticipated. Many other factors besides linguistic structural differences do participate. They affect the FLL process in general, as they may have a specific influence on the operation of transfer in it. Indeed, a thorough understanding of the effects of transfer necessitates considering all these other factors. "A theory of transfer is likely to also be a general theory of L2 acquisition," Ellis (1994: 335) argues. The additional factors at work in FLL, as well as transfer, are further discussed in the next chapter from a cognitive point of view.

## CHAPTER THREE

### OTHER POSSIBLE FACTORS AND ERROR ANALYSIS

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## **Introduction**

As we saw in Chapter 2, FL learners' learning and performances are far more complex to be explained by reference to transfer effects solely. The learner-based and social factors reviewed in Chapter 1 certainly play a role. Besides, new influences will be reviewed in this chapter. Before these can be presented, however, their theoretical basis need be clarified.

Explicitly, this chapter starts with a review of the theory of language learning as a creative process of rule formation. At this point, the weaknesses of the behaviourist stance will be further attested by considering the principles of the more realistic cognitive view about how languages are learned. Then, following a cause-effect order, the outcomes of this new theory will be traced. The first of these is the novel way errors come to be perceived. The negative views associated with behaviourism gave way to a more sensible position in which errors are not seen as pathologies to be eradicated, but as natural, unavoidable and essential parts of learning. Consequently, learners' performances in an FL are no longer regarded as faulty versions, but rather as instances of language use proper to the performers and to their stages of learning. Being so, FL learners' language merits being analysed in its own terms, and this, indeed, formed the impetus for the development of Error Analysis. This method of data investigation proceeds through five stages, the fourth among which, error explanation, is considered the most important one. At this level, the main factors supposed to affect FL learners' performances, namely cross-linguistic transfer, intralingual factors, and the effect of teaching practices, will be discussed from a cognitive point of view. As a method for examining learner language, however, error analysis was not safe from criticism. This forms the next topic treated in this chapter. Finally, an attempt to reassess error analysis is made.

### **3.1 Language Learning as a Creative Process of Rule Formation**

As we saw earlier, behaviourist accounts of language learning as a process of habit formation are widely discredited. Chomsky was successful to demonstrate the fragile nature of the claim considering language as a "habit structure" by attesting the most significant "creative aspect of normal language use" (Chomsky, 1966a: 30.) He argues that "ordinary linguistic behaviour characteristically involves innovation, formation of new sentences and new patterns in accordance with rules of great abstractness and intricacy" (ibid.)

During the 1960s, many researchers – inspired by these new theories about the nature of language – started investigating the linguistic performances of children acquiring their mother tongues in the hope of gaining insights into the nature of the processes of language learning. Interestingly, the results show that the utterances produced by children, especially in

early learning stages, are structured similarly. For example, sentences like *\*I goed*, *\*she can speaks* are found to be common in the speeches of all children acquiring English as an NL (Freeman and Long, 1991: 57.) In addition, these utterances, although showing great internal consistency and coherence, do not seem to resemble any from those that might be produced by adult native speakers of English. Hence, the possibility that they may have resulted from mere imitation of adults' speeches is not valid.

To provide an explanation for this phenomenon, Chomsky posits that all humans are born with an innate predisposition to learn languages. This is what “permits children to acquire the vastly complicated system that comprises a human language in a relatively short time” (Dulay, Burt and Krashen, 1982: 7.) This inborn mental capacity, triggered by exposure to a particular language, enables the child to induce the rules of his language by forming hypotheses or “informed guesses” (Norrish, 1983:7) about its structure on the basis of the TL data he receives. Then, the child will try out his formed hypotheses producing utterances of his own, such as those cited above. Of course, there is no implication here that s/he is consciously involved in this process. The child's initial hypotheses about the rules of his NL are, naturally, very simple and significantly different from those governing accepted TL use. With time, however, he starts checking or testing his hypotheses against the further linguistic data he receives, so that, as he grows older, his first guesses will be modified in favour of an increasingly target like system of rules. Indeed, before he can possess an adult like command of his mother tongue, a child should have been involved in a recycling process of hypothesis construction and revision. Many of his initial guesses about the TL structure ought to be modified or totally abandoned by the end of the learning process. To be exact,

Learners proceed not by adding items of knowledge or ability, but by a process of continual revision and reconstruction. In other words, learning is necessary a process of recurrent unlearning and relearning, whereby encoding rules and conventions for their use are modified, extended, realigned, or abandoned altogether to accommodate new language data.

(Widdowson, 2003: 141)

Empirical studies, then, reveal the fact that the process of first language learning is essentially active and creative. More interesting in our case is the finding that FL learners from different linguistic backgrounds produce some similar errors, which are also analogous with those produced by children learning the same TL as a mother tongue. Consequently, it seems logical to suppose that FL learners employ some learning strategies comparable to those “employed by the child as he teaches himself his mother tongue” (Richards, 1971b: 116.) In other words, they also approach the learning task with some active strategies, which

help them to infer the rules that underlie the TL structure. That is to say, like first language acquisition, FLL involves *an active and creative process of rule construction*.

To be precise, FL learners also produce errors which show that they are actively processing the TL data they receive.

The knowledge that... [they] acquire appears to go beyond what they were exposed to in the input, just as in the case of L1 learners; it is *generative*, in the sense that ... [they] are able to produce novel utterances which they have not encountered in the input on the basis of the linguistic knowledge they have acquired.

(Johnson and Johnson, 1998: 132)

Explicitly, when he comes in exposure with the TL, an FL learner also tries to infer the rules governing it by making successive hypotheses about its structure. Yet, the heuristic basis according to which he constructs his hypotheses does not only include TL data, but all the linguistic knowledge he has assimilated including language(s) previously learned. Subsequently, these hypotheses will form the basis of his TL use both productively and receptively. What is more, the learner will test his initial guesses on the basis of his TL use. These guesses will be proved correct, if

His interpretations will be plausible in the context and his utterances will be accepted without comment or misunderstanding. If, on the other hand, his hypothesis is faulty, he will find understanding is defective and his utterances will fail to communicate, and will be corrected.

(Corder, 1976: 73)

So, the learner – either individually or with the help of teaching instruction in the form of feedback or whatsoever – will modify his initial guesses to account for the new information he gets and the “cycle is repeated” so that his formalized rules will be gradually adapted in the direction of the TL system. Generally, learners are subconsciously involved in this process. Nevertheless, in a formal learning context, they may come to consciously acquire knowledge about the TL rules. They may benefit from direct teaching instruction about the TL structure in the form of descriptions, explanations, or corrections of their own or of their colleagues’ errors.

To conclude, language learning is characteristically a cognitive and creative process, wherein learners are, in general, actively involved. That is,

Language learning is not so much a question of acquiring a set of automatic habits, but rather a process of discovering the underlying rules, categories and systems of choice in the language by some sort of processing by the learner of the data of the language presented to him by the teacher.

(Corder, 1973: 293)

The process of discovering these linguistic entities is certainly a gradual one. That is to say, we should not expect a learner to build a thorough idea about the TL structure, and hence to produce only “correct” utterances, at once. On the contrary, in their way to acquire the TL,

learners will necessarily come through different stages wherein their TL knowledge is only partial. To be exact, deviancies from the TL accepted norms are conditioned to occur in any natural process of language learning. It is only after many attempts at hypothesis creation and revision that, if ever, an FL learner comes to wholly grasp the TL structure and to exercise a native like command of it. What status is generally attributed to such deviant forms – or errors to use common terminology – is the point to which we turn now.

### **3.2 The Significance of Language Learning Errors**

As already demonstrated, producing errors in language use is not something peculiar to FL learners. On the contrary, errors are common to all language users; FL learners, children acquiring their mother tongue and even adult native speakers. Nonetheless, deviant forms produced by the members of these three groups have not been viewed in the same way. Deviancies produced by adult native speakers and young first language acquirers are generally regarded as natural “slips of the tongue or the pen” (Section 3.5.2.) and as “transitional forms,” respectively. Nevertheless, FL learners’ errors were, and may still be, considered as “signs of failure,” “unwanted forms,” something “negative” that requires some kind of “punishment,” “undesirable occurrences,” “problems,” etc.

This attitude towards FL learners’ errors is mainly associated with behaviourism. In the behaviourist conception, errors result from the persistence of mother tongue habits, i.e., from NL interference. Accordingly, they are regarded as dangerous occurrences that may, if not immediately eradicated, lead to the establishment of “bad habits.” Hence, behaviourists advice FL teachers to correct their students’ errors as soon as they occur. What would be safer, they argue, is to conduct a CA of the learners’ NL and TL so that teaching efforts can be made to prevent errors from occurring (cf. Sections 2.2.1 and 2.3.3.)

In addition, from a teaching perspective, errors were seen as a sign that “there has not been enough effort on the part of the learner or enough explanation or practice on the part of teacher” (Corder, 1976: 65.) In other words, it was assumed that errors signify an inadequate teaching practice; that they just represent “a random event, and if teaching and learning were maximally efficient, errors would not occur” (ibid.) Lee reflects this attitude arguing, “one of the teacher’s aims should be to prevent mistakes from occurring. In the early stages while the pupils are wholly dependent on the teacher for what they learn, it should be possible to achieve this aim” (Lee 1970; in Richards, 1971b: 130.) What is common between this teaching perspective and the previous behaviourist one is the idea that errors represent something unfortunate that could be avoided with enough, efficient pedagogical efforts.

On the other hand, George (1972) conversely argues that errors should be expected to occur no matter how adequate the teaching instruction is. He states, “it is when the learner’s output includes an unwanted form which was not part of the input that we may usefully speak of an error” (George, 1972: 158.) Errors are inevitable, George maintains, they tend to occur no matter how efficient the teaching instruction is, or how endowed the learner is. What is more, they signify the “intermediate processes or intermediate mechanisms” (ibid) through which learners reorganize the data they receive, he argues.

Explicitly, learners’ errors should be viewed to positively indicate attempts to approach the learning task. Like first language acquirers, FL learners are believed to pass through a gradual process of TL rules formation. So, why should their errors be viewed differently? Children’s errors are generally perceived as *normal* and *inevitable* parts of learning. They are seen as “transitional forms” that can be used as an evidence to infer the linguistic development of their performers. As Corder demonstrates,

No one expects a child learning his mother tongue to produce from the earliest stages only forms which in adult terms are correct or non-deviant. We interpret his incorrect utterances as being evidence that he is in the process of acquiring language.

(Corder, 1967: 166)

For instance, utterances such as \**I goed*, \**she can speaks* are just what is needed to prove that the language acquirer is in his way to learn the rules governing the formation of past tense and subject verb concord in English. The fact is that the learner has already internalised the relevant rules, but has not yet recognised their exceptions. On the other hand, utterances that conform to the TL norms such as *I went*, *she can speak* would provide no guarantee that the performer masters the structures involved in their production. They may equally well result from mere imitation of heard utterances.

Briefly, the production of errors in learning is part of the human psychology. Besides, though deviant they are, language learners’ errors are often not random. They are “the result of a process or processes” (George, 1972: 158.) That is to say, they are rule governed in terms of the learners’ TL knowledge (cf. Section 3.3.1.) To use technical terminology, they are “systematic.” Additionally, errors are not solely normal and inevitable, but they also represent an essential part of learning since they are the only way learners have to test their hypotheses about the TL structure. “Learning can only proceed by unlearning” (Widdowson, 2003: 141) and “people cannot learn language without first systematically committing errors” (Dulay, Burt and Krashen 1982: 138.) In other words, errors are “indispensable to the learner himself” (Corder, 1967: 189.) They represent “a devise... [he] uses in order to learn” (ibid.) They provide “evidence not of failure but of success and achievements” (Richards and Sampson,

1974: 4) as they supply “signs that learners were actively engaged in hypothesis testing which would ultimately result in the acquisition of TL rules” (Freeman and Long, 1991: 59-60.) In other words, errors “are in fact signals that our students ... are taking the necessary learning steps” (Edge, 1989: 14.) “We should be pleased to see them” (ibid: 17,) since if learners “do not get lots of opportunity to make mistakes, they will have little chance to work out better rules” (ibid: 15.)

In short, just as it is the case with NL learning errors, errors in FLL reveal their performers’ attempts to systematically cope with the learning task. They are evidence of a rule-governed behaviour and they signify a system of their own. Of course, that is not the TL system; it is the interlanguage system.

### **3.3 Interlanguage**

#### **3.3.1 The Notion of “Interlanguage”**

FL learning errors, then, are no longer seen as evidence of failure, but of learning. They denote the learners’ systematic attempts to reorganize the TL data they receive. Therefore, learners’ output should not be considered as a faulty version of the TL, but as an independent linguistic variety proper to the learners themselves. In other words, the systematic nature of language learning errors provides evidence that performers are “using some system, although it is not yet the right system” (Corder, 1967: 168.) Indeed, Corder maintains that any language learner, at any point in his development, possesses “a definite system of language” (ibid.) That is to say, since learners’ errors, or at least part of their errors, are regular and consistent, they cannot be said to reflect their defective attempts to use the TL grammar, which they have not yet fully grasped, but rather to mirror a “personal,” “hypothetical” and “provisional” grammar of their own. To be exact, the learner himself is “the generator of the grammar of his sentences in the new language” (Richards and Sampson, 1974: 5.) It is true that his utterances “cannot be accounted for by the rules of the target dialect, [but] they are in fact grammatical in terms of the learner’s language” (Corder, 1971b: 19.)

The grammar of learners’ language is, certainly, different from the TL accepted grammar; it is a hypothetical form of it developed by the learner. Nevertheless, normally, it should be subject to continuous change so that it progressively moves towards it; i.e., it is provisional. To use Wilkins words, the learner “is constructing an internal grammar of the language. This grammar passes through successive modifications until it becomes the

complete grammar” (Wilkins, 1972: 170) of the TL. Nemser echoes Corder and Wilkins arguing, “learner speech at a given time is the patterned product of a linguistic system... distinct from LS [source language, i.e., NL] and LT [target language] and internally structured” (Nemser, 1971: 56.) It is, he continues,

Structurally organized, manifesting the order and cohesiveness of a system, although one frequently changing with atypical rapidity and subject to radical reorganization through the massive intrusion of new elements as learning proceeds.

(ibid)

In consequence, the observation that the speech output of language learners, young mother tongue acquirers and mature FL learners alike, exhibits a “true internal coherence” (Nemser, 1971 : 59) of an independent system leads researchers to the conclusion that it can be described and analysed on its own terms.

...the language learner at all points of his learning career ‘has a language’... his behaviour is rule governed and therefore, in principal, describable in linguistic terms. That his language is changing all the time, that his rules are constantly undergoing revision is, of course, true and merely complicates the problem of description but does not invalidate the concept of ‘a learner’s language’

(Corder, 1981 : 56)

Similarly, Selinker – in a paper frequently cited in the literature of applied linguistics – advances the claim calling for considering learner language as having an independent underlying system of its own right. That is, in Selinker’s terminology, the *interlanguage* system. He argues that, given the differences between FL learners’ utterances and those of adult native speakers of the same TL,

One would be completely justified in hypothesizing, perhaps even compelled to hypothesize, the existence of a separate linguistic system based on the observable output which results from a learner’s attempted production of a TL norm. This linguistic system we will call *interlanguage*.

(Selinker, 1972: 176)

Selinker’s interlanguage hypothesis has received widespread popularity and support. Nevertheless, other scholars prefer to use other terms to refer to it. Indeed, it is customary to signify the phenomenon “interlanguage” by different terms, each of them is associated with one researcher. The list includes *interlingua* (James, 1971,) *approximative systems* (Nemser, 1971,) *idiosyncratic dialect* (Corder, 1971b,) and *transitional competence* (Corder, 1977a.) All these names indicate the same fact, yet, they emphasize different aspects of it.

Like Selinker’s interlanguage, James’ interlingua highlights the intermediate, unstable status of learner language. It is, they argue, a form of language independently structured; i.e., different from both the learners’ NL and TL, but also one which shares some characteristics of both. Littlewood further explains this feature claiming that

If we imagine a continuum between the first language system (which constitutes the learner's initial language) and the second language system (which is his target,) we can say that at any given time, the learner speaks an 'interlanguage' at some point along this continuum.  
(Littlewood, 1984: 33)

Nemser, on the other hand, stresses the goal-oriented expansion of learner language in the direction of the TL system. He argues that

An approximative system is the deviant linguistic system actually employed by the learner attempting to utilize the target language. Such approximative systems vary in character in accordance with proficiency level.  
(Nemser, 1971: 55)

Explicitly, Nemser conceives learner language as a dynamic system that proceeds through different stages in which it progressively approximates the TL structure. It is in the process of complication. It embodies a collection of temporary grammars which learners gradually develop in their way to fully grasp the TL structure. In other words, approximative systems "at successive stages of learning form an evolving series... the earliest occurring when a learner first attempts to use ...[the TL], the most advanced at the closest approach" (Nemser, 1971: 56) of an approximative system to the TL. Widdowson echoes Nemser arguing,

The whole learning process is a matter of continual conceptual adaptation whereby the learner gradually approximates to the second language norm... the process involves passing through different stages of interlanguage, each of which is an adapted version of the one preceding.  
(Widdowson, 2003: 141)

Like Nemser and Widdowson, Corder sees learner language as "a dynamic, goal oriented language system of increasing complexity" (Corder, 1977a: 90.) He argues that a language acquirer

Makes systematic mistakes in a particular area for a limited time. He eventually, we hope, gets the thing right, but the transition from wrong to right is not a sudden one, it takes some time and he may pass through intermediate stages each of them having its own system.  
(Corder, 1973 : 270)

These intermediate stages form what Corder calls the learner's *transitional competence*. This term "emphasizes that the learner possesses a certain body of knowledge [his competence] which we hope is constantly developing, which underlies the utterances he makes" (Corder, 1976: 67.) Other terms used by Corder to signify the evolving nature of learner competence include *états de dialecte* and *successive states of the learner's grammar* (ibid: 27.) Clearly, Corder also demonstrates that he shares Selinker's view that learner language forms a developmental continuum towards the TL. He additionally emphasizes that the movement along this continuum is not simply one of "restructuring and accumulation" at the same level of complexity, but rather one of "increasing complexity or elaboration" (ibid: 88.)

The evolving and simplified nature of learners' language is also captured by the concept *idiosyncratic dialect*, which is defined as "a peculiar personal code of the learner"

(Corder, 1973: 268) that is based on some systematic knowledge taking the form of a “reduced” or “simplified” grammar of the TL. This grammar is subject to progressive complication, as learners will try to make it fit within the TL accepted norms. In addition, the term idiosyncratic dialect accentuates “the fact that it is a code which is not necessarily the code of any social group” (Corder, 1981: 269.) It is a “special sort of dialect” (ibid: 14) peculiar to the language learner. It shares some features of the “standard institutionalized” dialect of the TL, but it differs from it in many other points; i.e., it is an idiolect.

Whatever the surface form or apparent appropriateness of a learner’s utterances, none are utterances in the target language. In other words, he is not speaking the target language at any time, but a language of his own, a unique idiolect, which no doubt shares many features of the target language.

(Corder, 1971a : 31)

Even though researchers have generated different terms to signify the concept of learner language, Selinker’s interlanguage remains the widely used one in literature. In this perspective, however, the term is not used to solely emphasize the intermediate status of learner language, but to generally mean “a continuum between ... [the NL and the TL] along which all learners traverse. At any point along the continuum the learner’s language is systematic, i.e., rule governed” (Freeman and Long, 1991: 60) reflecting a well defined body of knowledge, i.e., competence, that the learner possesses. Normally, this competence is not stable, but it is subject to internal reorganization and modification until it gradually comes to identify with the socially accepted variety of the TL, that is usually the case in first language acquisition; or it becomes “fossilized,” as it often happens in FLL.

### **3.3.2 Fossilization**

Normally, an FL learner – as long as he remains in exposure to TL data – continues to modify his interlanguage structures. Consequently, one would expect his performance to come with time to fit more and more within the criteria of the TL system and to contain less and less errors. Actually, however, not all language learners continue to improve their mastery of the TL. Some of their errors will never disappear from their performances even when they spend long time learning the TL. That is to say, their errors may become permanent features of their interlanguage; in technical terms, they may become *fossilized*.

Instances of such errors are common within the majority of FL learners’ performances; native like mastery of an FL is very rare. In particular, pronunciation errors may be the most obvious examples of fossilized errors. They generally form the most significant part of the “foreign accent” peculiar to many FL learners both as individuals and as

groups. “Many of the unique features of immigrant dialects derive originally from errors which fossilised, first at the individual level and then in the speech community” (Littlewood, 1984: 34.)

To be exact, fossilized errors are those linguistic structures and items which the learners of one FL will tend to keep in their interlanguage, no matter what is their age or the amount of explanation and instruction they receive about the TL. To use Nemser words, this phenomenon results in the occurrence of “ stable varieties of an approximative system” wherein learners reach “a plateau in their learning” (Nemser, 1971: 57,) “beyond which it is difficult...to progress without exceptional effort and motivation” (Celce-Murcia et al., 1996: 21.)

Continuing exposure to the TL guaranteed, then, learners’ interlanguage may cease to develop. What is more, Selinker clarifies, some erroneous items that seem to be eradicated may recur in the learners’ performances especially in new and difficult situations of language use and learning or in cases of anxiety, shifting attention; and strikingly enough, “in a state of extreme relaxation” (Selinker, 1972: 178.) Even when they appear to be eradicated, Selinker confirms, such errors are in fact “still somehow present in the brain” (ibid.) This “well-observed phenomenon” (ibid) of “backsliding” (ibid) or “regression” (Corder, 1977a: 87,) i.e., the reemergence of outwardly eradicated errors; “is not, as has been generally believed, either random or toward the speaker’s NL, but toward an IL [interlanguage] norm” (Selinker, 1972: 178.)

Explicitly, students’ errors are systematic. They do not result from their blind attempts to reproduce NL structures in their TL performances, but rather from their creative tries to discover the TL structure. While, given continued exposure to the TL, some of these errors disappear, others continue to appear or to reappear in the performers’ speeches even at advanced levels of learning; these are fossilized errors.

The mechanism of fossilization, the permanence or recurrence of interlanguage norms, merits careful research attention, Selinker demands.

A crucial fact, perhaps the most crucial fact, which any adequate theory... will have to explain is this regular reappearance or reemergence in IL [interlanguage] productive performance of linguistic structures which were thought to be eradicated... It is my contention that the most interesting phenomena in IL performance are those items, rules and subsystems which are fossilizable.

(Selinker, 1972 : 178)

Comparably, Littlewood advises to “make a distinction between ‘transitional’ errors (which eventually disappear, as the learner progresses) and ‘fossilized’ errors (which do not disappear

entirely)” (Littlewood, 1984: 34.) Obviously, the latter type of errors is more “dangerous” and must be given relative attention in research.

As to the source of fossilized errors, Corder suggests that the communicative needs of learners may play a significant role.

The learner continues... to upgrade, or elaborate, his understanding of the target language only so long as he has a motive for doing so. When his interlanguage grammar reaches that state of elaboration which enables him to communicate adequately for his purposes with native speakers, his motive to improve his knowledge or elaborate his approximative systems disappear.

(Corder, 1976: 73)

On the other hand, Littlewood argues that language transfer is the major force behind the occurrence of such errors. He states that “even if the influence of the mother tongue is less strong than was once assumed in determining what errors learners make, it may still be the major influence in determining which errors fossilise” (Littlewood, 1984: 34.)

Though the communicative needs of learners and mother tongue transfer seem to form a convincing justification for the occurrence of fossilized errors, researchers have realized that a full understanding of the sources of these errors can only be guaranteed with a careful analysis of the performers’ interlanguage systems. Such an analysis, they additionally argue, would be highly fruitful for both theoretical and pedagogical reasons. In what follows, there is an attempt to shed light on some of the uses that one could gain from an investigation of FL learners’ interlanguage systems.

### **3.3.3 The Value of Interlanguage Studies**

First of all, studying learner language and investigating how it differs from accepted TL use is worth doing on its own. It “needs no justification,” Corder (1972: 35) claims. In addition, it “has a purely theoretical value independent of its ultimate relevance to language teaching. It is part of the study of language or linguistics in its broader sense,” (Corder, 1981: 1.) To be precise, language learners, as already clarified, make use of the TL in a way peculiar to them reflective of the internal grammar or competence which they have developed on the basis of the TL data they receive and the innate strategies and heuristic thinking they possess. The

Mechanisms [learners follow], not being themselves observable, are only indirectly available to investigation. It is by observation of the differences between [teaching] input and [learners’] output that we deduce their nature and manner of functioning.

(George, 1972: 158)

Then, learners’ output, i.e., their interlanguage, can function as a valuable source to detect the underlying strategies and mechanisms used in language learning. That is to say, since no one

can directly observe the way learners process the TL data they receive to reproduce it in the form of their interlanguage, a researcher can have no means but learners' errors ( the points of difference between input and output) to analyse in order to make inferences about the nature of language learning. Errors, in this sense, would not be only inevitable but also illuminating parts of the learning process. They "may provide a window for observing what goes on in the learner's mind" (Ringbom, 1995: 581.) In brief,

If we regard the learner as a learning device, then, since we cannot study the device *directly*, by cutting it into pieces, we have to *infer* its nature from a comparison of the *input to* the device with the *output from* the device, that is, the relation between the syllabus taught and the learner's grammatical competence at any particular point.

(Corder, 1981: 57)

Analysing learners' errors may, then, provide significant hints about the nature of language learning. Hence, it can serve as data to language research, i.e., developing and testing hypothesis about how languages are learned. In particular, the analysis of learner language, mainly the errors it includes, can provide researchers with reliable evidence to be used in developing a sounder theory about the nature of FLL. In fact, the investigation of learners' idiosyncratic language uses has served as an "experiment" to test the claims associated with the psycholinguistic school of behaviourism and the theory of transfer (cf. Sections 2.4.3 and 3.5.4.)

Furthermore, the insights the study of interlanguage can provide into what constitutes humans' ability to learn languages can be additionally used as data to investigate what constitutes the phenomenon "language" in itself. As Richards states, "some of the most insightful notions about what language is have come from observing how language is acquired by children" (Richards, 1971b: 114.) The search for understanding the nature of the phenomenon of language is worthwhile undertaking on its own.

There can be – indeed, there has to be, and always has been – a 'pure' interest in language study... and it is this interest in accumulating information about language as an end in itself which is the primary justification for having a separate discipline of study, linguistics.

(Crystal, 1985: 11)

Nonetheless, hints about the nature of language can be further used as insights into the nature of the mental processes that are involved in using language. In particular, Chomsky argues that "the study of universal grammar [the properties that all languages have, or that are essential to every language]... is the study of the nature of human intellectual capacities" and that the linguist who tries to establish a universal grammar is, indeed, "trying to establish certain general properties of human intelligence" (Chomsky, 1968: 28.) Correspondingly, Richards suggests, "the study of human language is the most fruitful way of discovering what constitutes human intelligence" (Richards, 1971b: 114.)

In short, studying learners' linguistic performances and analyzing their errors can provide insights into the nature of their learning and accordingly serve as a corrective feedback to general linguistic and psycholinguistic theory. What is more, it provides for a deeper understanding of the nature of our linguistic ability in general. In a word, "language learning is surely a testing ground for theories of language" (Richards, 1974: 1.) From another perspective, the theoretical findings that can be gained from an investigation of learners' errors can also yield information of high utility in the practice of language teaching, as it is clarified below.

Indeed, the studies of language learners' languages have "yielded insights into the L2 acquisition process that have stimulated major changes in teaching practices" (Dulay et al., 1982: 138.) More realistic viewpoints about what constitutes language learning would be, surely, of great use in designing and employing more effective teaching strategies and techniques; i.e., they are useful to both course and material designers on the one hand, and to language teachers on the other hand. In other words, the undertaking of teaching a language necessitates an understanding of how learners actually go with the learning task.

The use of learners' errors to detect what has been already assimilated and what remains to be taught or to be taught again has had always a significant place in all teaching practices. FL learners' performances are generally seen as reflections of their competence or lack of competence in the TL, i.e., their level of proficiency; and their errors are considered as reliable guides in view of which teachers can plan future instructions and remedial works. As Corder claims, "a good understanding of the nature of error is necessary before a systematic means of eradicating them could be found" (Corder, 1981: 1.)

As well as being reliable in assessing the performers' level of learning, a systematic analysis of language learners' errors can also serve as a means whereby teachers assess their own teaching practices and suggest alternations in the previously used methods, techniques and materials for presenting the TL (cf. Section 3.5.4.3.) In other words, a methodological attentiveness to errors can help teachers, and course designers, to give learners the most relevant guidance towards success. What is more, they get better prepared to teach other groups in future (cf. Section 2.4.4.) In other words, "the teacher/course designer may himself use the learners' output as a source of information leading to modification of his own output to the learner or to subsequent learners" (George, 1972: 160.) In this sense, the most effective teaching materials are those developed in view of the learners' actual difficulties and needs.

We may be able to allow the learner's innate strategies to dictate our practice and determine our syllabus; we may learn to adapt ourselves to *his* needs rather than impose upon him *our* preconceptions of *how* he ought to learn, *what* he ought to learn, and *when* he ought to learn it. (Corder, 1967: 171)

In brief, via an analysis of learners' errors, more rational teaching goals can be set and more fruitful materials and techniques can be developed. That is to say, an interlanguage study can provide "the sort of data on which realistic predictions about learning and teaching can be based" (Richards and Sampson, 1974: 15) and hence it can serve as an adequate input to plan the content of course books and to determine how teaching time should be spent.

To sum up, a systematic analysis of language learners' errors can be of great utility to all those who are concerned. In the first place, students' performances "may be studied as entities worthy of attention in and of themselves, the results of such study [however] should also provide feedback to language teaching practice and to general linguistic theory" (Richards and Sampson, 1974: 15.) In particular, interlanguage studies have "succeeded in elevating the status of errors from complete undesirability to the relatively special status of research object, curriculum guide, and indicator of learning stage" (Dulay et al., 1982: 141.) They have provided for "a deeper understanding of language in general and a more human approach to language teaching" (Richards and Sampson, 1974: 18) by serving as a basis for developing, testing and modifying theories about the nature of language, language learning, and language teaching procedures. All these new views about language learning errors and their significance gave a strong impetus for the development of a method of data analysis specialized in investigating language learners' languages and analysing their errors; that is, error analysis (EA.)

### **3.4 The Development of Error Analysis**

The analysis of FL learners' errors is not of course a newly developed practice. On the contrary, it has been always a significant part of language teaching. "Experienced classroom teachers have long used student errors to guide their teaching emphasis" (Robinett and Schachter, 1983: 145.) The methodology commonly employed includes collecting errors from learners' performances, classifying them, attending to recurring ones, and then suggesting elements for remedial teaching. As far as sophisticated linguistic research is concerned, however, Lee (1957) is often cited as a precursor to error analysis (EA) as conceived today (Ellis, 1994: 48; Robinett and Schachter, 1983: 145.) Lee's study mentions some of the errors common to EFL learners. Additionally, it contains many views about the efficacy of students'

errors in informing better teaching practices. Nevertheless, it is generally argued that EA has come to see its heyday only in the 1970s.

As previously revealed, CA lost its favour during the 1960s (cf. Section 2.4.4.) By demonstrating weaknesses both in its theoretical foundations and findings, researchers “pointed out an embarrassing gap between theory and reality and set the scene for the acceptance of a more comprehensive approach to errors” (Dulay et al., 1982: 140.) Concurrently, errors start to assume a new status. In consequence, researchers initiate the task of analyzing language learners’ errors in the hope of gaining insights into the nature of language learning to be used in language teaching. “It should be noted... that many of the researchers who carried out error analyses in the 1970s continued to be concerned with language teaching. Indeed, the attempt to discover more about L2 acquisition through the study of errors was itself motivated by a desire to improve pedagogy” (Ellis, 1994: 48.) In short, disappointment with the contribution of CA stimulated the need for another analytical method to be utilized in language research. The establishment of the cognitive theory of language learning and the occurrence of arguments for the systematicity of language learners’ errors provided the framework and rationale for the development of EA. Explicitly,

The assumption underlying the description of errors is that they are evidence of a system, not the system of the target language, but a system of some ‘other’ language. To describe that ‘other’ language is precisely the theoretical objective of error analysis.

(Corder, 1973 : 268)

To come to the point, even though language teachers have practiced EA to some degree or another for decades, from the 1960s onwards, EA comes to assume “a new significance.” It becomes a fundamental branch of applied linguistics. The goal was to discover “a source of explanation for the many as yet unexplained but frequently observed student errors” (Dulay et al., 1982: 140-141.) It should be noted here that the development of EA into a recognized part of applied linguistic research owed too much to the linguist S. Pit Corder. In a series of articles (1967, 1971, 1972, 1976, 1977); Corder “has done more than anyone else to develop the highly sophisticated view of error analysis that many researchers adhere to today” (Schachter and Celce-Murcia, 1977: 273.)

As a branch of applied linguistics, EA is widely regarded as the analysis of language learners’ interlanguage, more specifically, their errors. It is “the systematic investigation of the types and causes of errors made by speakers and writers in their non-native languages” (Ringbom, 1995: 281.) It “consists of compiling a corpus of... learner deviations from the target... language norms – the ‘errors’ learners make – classifying these errors by type and hypothesizing possible sources for the errors” (Johnson and Johnson, 1998: 110.)

In this sense, the weak version of CA would serve as a subcomponent in EA; particularly as a tool for providing explanations for errors attributed to language transfer (cf. Section 2.4.4.) Yet, EA clearly differs from CA. The latter is based on a theory of language learning as a process of habit formation, wherein learners are viewed as passive receivers of TL input who are completely conditioned by their mother tongue structures. By opposition, the former rests on the belief that language learning is necessarily a cognitive process of rule creation, wherein learners are actively constructing a system for the TL. Needless to say, errors are also viewed differently in the two methods. In CA, they are seen as instances of NL negative interferences that should be “unlearned.” In EA, by contrast, they are considered as systematic evidences of a rule governed behaviour that can be used for both theoretical and practical reasons. Besides, CA is a methodological comparison of two, or more, “fully-formed languages,” namely the learners’ NL and TL. EA, however, compares the learners’ interlanguage or “approximative systems” with the fully developed TL. In particular, this last point seems to capture the essence of EA; “The field of error analysis may be defined as dealing with the differences between the way people learning a language speak, and the way adult native speakers of the language use the language” (Richards, 1971b: 114.)

Briefly, EA is a systematic analysis of language learners’ errors directed at discovering the causes behind their occurrences in an attempt to arrive at more effective teaching practices. One further goal is to discover the nature of the process of language learning and the essence of human language. The procedure EA follows to achieve these goals includes a hierarchy of different stages as it is specified below.

### **3.5 EA Stages**

According to many researchers (Corder 1973; Ellis 1994; Johnson and Johnson 1998) EA has five major stages. The procedure starts with *collecting a sample* of learner language. Afterwards, efforts will be directed at *detecting the errors* existing in this sample. Then, the identified errors will be *described linguistically*. The following step, generally conceived to be the most important and insightful stage in EA, involves an attempt to understand the reasons that are behind the occurrence of the identified errors, i.e., *to explain* the errors’ sources. The final stage, that is not included in many of the currently available error analyses (EA<sub>s</sub>), is the *evaluation of errors*. In other words, EA consists of the following steps.

### 3.5.1 Collection of a Sample of Learner Language

Ellis (1994: 49) clarifies that three major types of samples can be used in EA. A *massive sample* is one which consists of several samples of linguistic performances delivered by a large number of learners who represent the entire population in one particular study. In a *specific sample*, however, it suffices to collect one single sample of language use by a limited number of learners. By contrast, an *incidental sample* consists only of one sample of linguistic performance by one single learner. Clearly, a massive sample can provide useful clues to examine a comprehensive list of errors, but it is a major undertaking. This justifies, Ellis clarifies, the reason why specific and incidental samples are the most commonly used types.

After choosing the kind of sample he is going to collect, a researcher needs to consider how to accumulate it. It is generally preferred to gather data from as wide a variety of sources as possible. To illustrate this point, while collecting instances of oral language use seems sufficient in a study designed to investigate pronunciation errors, a written sample may be additionally helpful. Pronunciation problems may occur at both productive and receptive levels. Whereas it is highly difficult to directly collect reception pronunciation errors, many indirect procedures, such as dictation exercises, may be very efficient in the task. Indeed, many spelling errors may reflect phonological (reception of sounds) rather than orthographical problems. For instance, an error like *\*lib* (written instead of English *lip*) may not result from the performer's inability to distinguish the letters *p* and *b* orthographically, but rather from his incapability to differentiate the sounds / $\pi$ / and / $\beta$ / auditorily. Hence, it is advised to use data collected from different modes of language use.

Besides, the subjects' performances need to cover different genres and topics. Asking learners to write or narrate short stories in an attempt to investigate their command of the use of English tenses, obviously, will not be very demonstrative. One further point that merits attention is that the language learners may produce will significantly differ according to whether it is produced spontaneously or as a result of an elicitation technique. Researchers generally prefer natural, spontaneously produced language use. They argue that such data form a reliable source to describe the subjects' competence in the TL. Yet, one drawback is that FL learners do not produce much spontaneous language. Consequently, Corder (1981) argues for the usefulness of elicited data (cf. Section 3.6.2.) Similarly, McKeating (1981: 217) claims the utility of the kind of language learners produce in exams as data for EA. "Examination scripts are a particularly useful additional source of data as these reflect the students' unaided efforts," he justifies. Additionally, one might argue that learners are

generally more serious and motivated to do their best in exams than in other occasions of TL language use.

An additional choice the error analyst is asked to make is between collecting his data longitudinally, i.e., through different intervals of time over a particular period; or cross-sectionally, i.e., the language use of many learners is collected at one single point in time. The former manner of data collection is required to detect the developmental nature of learner language; but, for practicable reasons, the latter is more commonly used.

### 3.5.2 Identification of Errors

Before considering how errors can be identified, we need first to clarify what is exactly meant by the term “error.” Up to now, this term has been used in this dissertation to refer to any feature of language use that deviates from the TL accepted norms. Inconsistently, Corder (1973, 1981) emphasizes making a distinction between systematic deviations and random inconsistent ones.

Random deviations, *mistakes* or *lapses* in Corder’s terminology, form what is generally meant by the term slips of the tongue or the pen. They are not systematic; i.e., they do not result from the performer’s lack of knowledge, but rather from his failure to follow a known rule because of some external (physiological or psychological) reasons; such as tiredness, carelessness, nervousness, illness, memory lapses, excitement, etc. In other words, mistakes are errors of performance; they do not reflect a defect in competence. They can go unnoticed, but if the performer’s attention is drawn to them, he can readily correct them. Moreover, mistakes do not occur consistently; they are occasional and they form normal instances of language use. What is more, they are not peculiar to FL learners, but they are common to all language users, even adult native speakers.

On the other hand, systematic deviations, *errors* in Corder’s terminology, occur when a learner has not yet acquired a particular TL structure and consistently performs it the wrong way. Errors, in this sense, do not merely represent a performance problem, but they signify a defect in the underlying knowledge about the TL. In other words, errors do not result from failure to use the TL code, but they rather represent a breach of the code. Even if they are recognized by the learner, they cannot be corrected by him since they correspond to the only rules he knows at the moment. In other words, they are a product reflective of his current competence in the TL. Certainly, normal adult native speakers do not produce errors.

The above clarified distinction between errors and mistakes is the commonly used one. Corder (1973,) however, refers to another three level division between *errors* (the same as

above,) *lapses* (the same as mistakes above) and *mistakes* (those utterances that are acceptable in terms of the TL rule system, but which are inappropriate in the particular context in which they occur.) This last taxonomy of deviant forms has not been common in EA literature, but it seems useful in analyzing students' errors at the level of pragmatics.

As previously discussed, learners' errors, in Corder's sense, can reflect either the performers' still developing knowledge about the TL (developmental errors) or their final stages of competence (fossilized errors.) While both are significant, fossilized errors are deemed more essential, especially, for pedagogical reasons. Thus, they are seen as a major concern in EA (cf. Section 3.3.2.) Mistakes, by contrast, can be entirely neglected in EA, since they reflect a performance problem and consequently bear no significance to the process of language learning (Corder, 1967: 168; Ellis, 1994: 51; Johnson and Johnson, 1998: 111.)

The researcher's task, then, may be limited to the identification of only those recurrent and systematic errors from the whole range of his subjects' deviant structures or items. According to Corder (1971, 1972,) the task of identifying errors involves three interdependent phases: *the recognition* of errors, *the interpretation* of the performers' intended meanings, and *the reconstruction* of their original utterances following the TL norms.

The recognition of errors may not be as easy as it seems to be. Corder (ibid) clarifies that while some of the learners' deviant utterances may *overtly* show themselves to be idiosyncratic, i.e., peculiar to the performers' interlanguage systems and erroneous in terms of the TL norms; others may seem perfectly acceptable linguistically speaking, but they are, nonetheless, deviant, i.e., they are *covertly* idiosyncratic, as Corder claims. In other words, learners' errors may be either overt or covert. If a learner's utterance is superficially "ill-formed," i.e., it is not acceptable in terms of the TL rules, it represents an instance of an overt error. On the other hand, if it seems all right in the TL structure, there is no guarantee that it is free from error. The point is that a learner may produce something that is perfectly correct as far as the TL rules are concerned, but does not convey the meaning he intends to say. For example, if an FL learner of English says /πεπ□/, no one can recognize that he has produced an error until he realizes that what the learner means is not a hot-tasting vegetable, i.e., pepper, but a material used for writing, i.e., paper /πε□π□/. This is what Corder labels a covert error. It is an acceptable utterance, but one which is used inappropriately.

As illuminated by Corder, there are two dimensions of appropriateness: referential and social. The former is judged according to the material truth-value of the utterance. If someone demonstrates a paper and says *this is a* /πεπ□/, his sentence is referentially inappropriate, and

accordingly it is to be regarded as involving an instance of a covert error. On the other hand, the social dimension of appropriateness refers to the ability to select the appropriate style or register of language for a particular situation or context. In this case, the same utterance may be considered appropriate in one context, but not in another one. For instance, the use of the informal style of English in a formal situation, or vice versa, is an example of the socially inappropriate language uses.

The differentiation between overt and covert errors makes it necessary to pay significant attention while attempts at error identification are being made. “Every utterance is to be regarded as idiosyncratic until shown to be otherwise” (Corder, 1971b: 21.) In other words, no utterance is to be considered free from error until it is proved to be superficially well-formed, identifiable with the performer’s intentions, and appropriate in the specific context in which it occurs. That is to say, “purely superficial formal correctness is no guarantee of absence of error” (ibid: 39.)

Obviously, the recognition of covert errors leads the error analyst directly to the second phase in the identification stage, i.e., the interpretation of the learner’s intended meanings.

Every utterance of a learner, whether well-formed or not, is potentially erroneous. Only a careful investigation of the meaning he intended to express will provide us with a means for determining whether an error is in fact present or not.

(Corder, 1972: 44)

Therefore, the identification of errors necessitates understanding the message the learner wants to transmit. Here also one needs to be extremely careful because “the immediately ‘obvious’ interpretation is not necessarily the right one” (McKeating, 1981: 219.) Needless to say, a false interpretation can significantly mislead the researcher throughout the whole EA he is undertaking (see below.)

Fortunately, many procedures are available on how to interpret learners’ idiosyncratic utterances. The first of these – and the most reliable, Corder argues – can be only used if the performer of the erroneous utterance is available. The researcher may immediately ask him to account for what he intends to say in his NL to get an *authoritative interpretation* (Corder, 1972: 37.) Alternatively, if the learner is absent, the researcher may try to arrive at the performer’s intentional meaning by referring to the linguistic and situational contexts of the utterance to get a *plausible interpretation* (ibid.) In case this last solution does not work also, the researcher may additionally resort to the learner’s mother tongue, if he knows it. The learner’s NL can be helpful, especially with idiosyncrasies caused by L1 transfer.

After he arrives at interpreting the subjects' errors, the error analyst is required to reconstruct their original utterances into others which have the same meaning but which conform within the TL norms. These form the *reconstructed utterances* in an EA. By definition, they are the utterances that a native speaker of the TL might generate, if he wishes to produce the same meaning the learner intended to convey in the same context. That is to say, the learners' original sentences and the reconstructed sentences in one EA are translation equivalents.

The procedure in which the learners' original utterances will be reconstructed depends on the one in which they were interpreted. An authoritative interpretation gives an *authoritative reconstruction*. The researcher may use the performer's account of his erroneous utterance produced in his NL and then translates it into a well-formed structure in the TL. By analogy, a plausible interpretation will give a *plausible reconstruction*. On the other hand, if recourse to the learner's NL is needed, the researcher may first translate the original erroneous utterance literally into the learner's mother tongue and then translates the resulting NL sentence back into an acceptable utterance in the TL to get the reconstruction he wants.

Clearly, the three phases involved in error identification are interdependent. Recognizing errors depends on the interpretation given to the utterances in which they appear. Additionally, the adopted interpretations will also form the basis of the reconstruction task, as well as of the following third stage of EA, i.e., the description of errors (Section 3.5.3.) Hence, it seems justifiable to argue, "the whole success of our description of errors hinges upon the correctness of our interpretation of the learner's intentions or meanings" (Corder, 1972: 37.) The end products of the identification stage are two sorts of utterances; the first are idiosyncratic (the original utterances produced by learners) and the second are well-formed (the reconstructed utterances). These form the data for EA.

### **3.5.3 Description of Errors**

At this stage, the subjects' erroneous structures are compared with the reconstructed forms and accordingly classified into different types. Dulay, Burt and Krashen (1982) give a detailed account of different descriptive taxonomies of errors. They clarify that learners' idiosyncrasies can be described and classified according to different criteria: their linguistic categories, surface forms, comparison with other structures or their communicative effect.

Firstly, in a *linguistic category taxonomy*, the erroneous utterances are classified according to the language component or the particular linguistic constituent the error affects. The categories used in this taxonomy include phonological (pronunciation,) orthographical

(spelling,) morpho-syntactic (grammar,) lexico-semantic (vocabulary and meaning,) and discourse (style) classes of errors. For the sake of clarity and precision, learners' errors may be further classified according to the different linguistic constituents that comprise each language level. For example, Richards (1971a) – in one of the earliest published EAs – groups the grammatical errors he identified into six subcategories. These are errors in the production of verb groups; errors in the distribution of verb groups; errors in the use of prepositions; errors in the use of articles; errors in the use of questions; and miscellaneous errors, i.e., those which carry some features of more than one single type from the previously cited ones (Richards, 1971a: 209-214.)

Similarly, pronunciation errors can be further classified into three subclasses. Namely, *phonemic* (i.e., errors occurring at the level of phonologically distinctive features in the sound system of one particular language, such as voice in English,) *allophonic* (i.e., errors at the level of phonologically redundant features, such as aspiration in English) and *distributional* errors (i.e., errors on how phonemes and allophones are distributed within a word; initially, medially or finally.) These three subcategories form the taxonomy according to which pronunciation errors are classified in the majority of early studies (e.g., Moulton 1962; in Brière, 1968: 19.) Recent research, however, considers additional varieties of pronunciation errors, such as errors of *vowels*, *consonants*, *clusters*, *stress*, *rhythm*, and *intonation* (Celce-Murcia et al., 1996.)

Secondly, in a *surface strategy taxonomy*, errors are classified on a “superficial basis; by the structural deformations the utterance undergoes” (Johnson and Johnson, 1998: 111.) That is to say, the intention is to describe the ways in which the surface structures of learners' idiosyncrasies differ from those of the corresponding reconstructed forms. Learners may *omit* some required elements, *add* some unnecessary ones, *wrongly select* (or misform) their utterances, or *misorder* them. Accordingly, errors can be described as errors of *omission*, *addition*, *wrong selection*, or *misordering*.

Errors of omission include utterances wherein an item that must appear in a well-formed structure is absent. By contrast, errors of addition involve an item which must not occur in a well-formed utterance. Addition errors generally reflect that “some basic rules have been acquired, but the refinements have not yet been made” (Dulay et al., 1982: 156.) One common example of such errors is *overgeneralization* or *regularization* errors, such as it is the case in the following erroneous forms: \*he *putted* it, \*the sheep*s* are outside, etc.

On the other hand, wrong selection errors (also called substitution errors) are characterized by the use of a wrong item instead of the right one. Overgeneralization errors

that involve the use of a regular form instead of an irregular one; such as \**goed*, \**tooths*, \**childs*; fall in this class. The final category in this taxonomy includes misordering or transposition errors, wherein an item, or a group of items, is placed incorrectly. That is to say, the elements used are right but they are wrongly sequenced, such as in the following erroneous interrogative sentence: \* *he can speak English?*

The third type of descriptive taxonomies of errors is *the comparative taxonomy*. Here the error analyst compares the erroneous structures he is describing with some other types of constructions, and then classifies them following the comparison findings. For example, it is customary to compare the structures of FL learners' idiosyncrasies with those of their mother tongue corresponding constructions and of the utterances produced by children learning the same TL as an NL. Accordingly, FL learners' errors are grouped into four classes: *developmental errors* (idiosyncrasies bearing a similarity with young NL learners' utterances,) *interlingual errors* (erroneous forms structurally similar to semantically equivalent utterances in the performers' mother tongue,) *ambiguous errors* (those errors which hold characteristics peculiar to both developmental and interlingual errors,) and *other errors* (uniquely structured idiosyncrasies that does not fit in any from the previously cited categories in this taxonomy.)

Finally, Dulay et al. (1982) refer to one additional descriptive taxonomy. That is *the communicative effect taxonomy*. The interest here is not on the structural properties of learners' errors, but rather on the effects these latter may have on the listeners or readers. The goal is to distinguish between errors that cause miscommunication, i.e., those which make the learner' speech incomprehensible to the addressees, and those which do not. Accordingly, learners' erroneous forms may be described as instances of *global* or of *local* errors. Global errors are those that affect the overall structure of an utterance and consequently hinder communication significantly. By contrast, local ones are those that affect solely single elements or constituents in an utterance and do not, usually, hinder communication significantly (Burt and Kiparsky, 1974). For instance, phonemic errors are generally global; they affect the whole structure of a word and can cause miscommunication (e.g., /α□ η□ϖ τυ÷ ♥υ÷ζ/ which signifies I have *two shoes*; used instead of /α□ η□ϖ τυ÷ τ♥υ÷ζ/, i.e., I have *to choose*.) In opposition, allophonic errors often do not hinder communication in any way, such as it is the case in the pronunciation of the word "park" [π≥□÷κ] as \*[π□÷κ].

The descriptive taxonomies reviewed above clarify that the description of errors can be held at various levels of depth. For example, while the surface strategy taxonomy "merely

describes errors in terms of the physical differences between the learners' utterances and the reconstructed version" (Corder, 1973: 277,) communicative effect taxonomy examines their effects on the transmission of meaning. Hendrickson (1976; in Dulay et al., 1982: 196-197) further develops Burt and Kiparsky's distinction between global and local errors and uses it as a means to measure his subjects communicative competences. He argues that a high number of global errors implies a low communicative competence. Therefore, learners who produce few or no global errors are judged as having an advanced ability to communicate, even when they make many local errors. On the other hand, a high number of local errors denotes a low linguistic competence (cf. Section 3.5.5.)

Corder (1973) emphasizes that the above descriptive taxonomies are not mutually exclusive, but rather complementary to each other. He additionally argues that the combination of them all provides a sort of a linguistic explanation that would be helpful in the following stage of EA, i.e., the psychological explanation of errors.

Describing the error as an omission of the article [for example] has little explanatory power... [We] want to know what the omission is evidence for... Of course, superficial description is a necessary condition for linguistic explanation (description) but it is not a sufficient one, just as linguistic explanation is a necessary condition of psychological explanation but not a sufficient one.

(Corder, 1973: 277)

Dulay et al. (1982,) on the other hand, stresses making a clear distinction between the descriptive and explanatory stages of EA. The description of errors, they claim, must be based only on the observable and superficial features of the errors. Afterwards, the error analyst will try to infer the sources of the errors on the basis of the findings of the descriptive stage. The surface strategy taxonomy, they add, would be particularly insightful in this task.

Nonetheless, some researchers confuse between the undertakings of describing and explaining errors in their works. The process of overgeneralization, for instance, is considered in many EA<sub>s</sub> as a source of errors on its own. Nevertheless, it – in fact – represents a superficial result of a hidden cause. Accordingly, it should serve as a linguistic, rather than a psychological, explanation of some errors, which later on could be helpful in deducing their true source (cf. Section 3.5.4.) Corder strengthens this claim arguing,

A full description of the error involves 'explaining' it in terms of the linguistic processes or rules which are being followed by the speaker. We infer these from the evidence of this utterance [which involves the error] and from others from the same learner, in which articles [for example] are or are not present, whether correctly so or not.

(Corder, 1973 : 277)

### **3.5.4 Explanation of Errors**

After having identified and described the errors existing in the sample s/he collected, the error analyst comes to the stage generally regarded as the most important one in EA. That is the explanation of errors. While the previous stages are linguistic in nature, this one is psycholinguistic. The goal is to arrive at the errors' sources, or, in other words, to discover "how and why the learner's idiosyncratic dialect is of the nature it is" (Corder, 1971b: 24.) In fact, this stage serves the very first incentive for EA, which is to bring "the multiple origins of learners' errors to our attention" (Dulay, Burt and Krashen, 1982: 138) and consequently to establish a theory about how languages are learned (cf. Sections 3.3.3 and 3.4.)

Currently available EA<sub>s</sub> contain different types of explanations for FL learners' idiosyncrasies. Unfortunately, however, while the same sources seem to be involved in the majority of these, no consistent labels or definitions of the errors' causes are adopted. The following suggested origins of learners' errors form a good illustration of the above argument. On the one hand, Richards speaks of *intralingual errors* which he defines as "those [errors] which reflect the general characteristics of rule learning, such as faulty generalizations, incomplete application of rules, and failure to learn conditions under which rules apply" (Richards, 1971a: 199.) On the other hand, Selinker's *strategies of second language learning* are said to cause such errors which reflect "an identifiable approach by the learner to the material to be learned" (Selinker, 1972: 179,) whereas his *overgeneralization of TL linguistic materials* are claimed to "result [in]... a clear overgeneralization of TL rules" (ibid.)

More serious, however, is the problem of overlap between the types of explanations used in one single study. To illustrate this point, where should a redundancy reduction error (an omission error wherein an item or feature that seems unnecessary for the transmission of the intended meaning, such as the English third person singular present tense morpheme 's', is eliminated) be classified following Selinker's explanatory categories? Should it be attributed to overgeneralization? English verbs generally do not inflect for person. We say I work, you work, they work, we work, we worked, he worked, she worked, etc; but he/ she/ it works. Consequently, it is justifiable to suppose that the learner who says \**he work* has simply overgeneralized a common morphological rule of English. Nonetheless, the same error can be readily regarded as a result of a *strategy of learning* adopted by the performer. The "economy-seeking" (Jain, 1969: 194) learner may choose to adopt a strategy of ignoring exceptions in an attempt "to reduce the target language to a small set of general properties" (Johnson and Johnson, 1998: 112.) As far as the above cited error is concerned, such a strategy "removes the necessity for concord, thus relieving the learner of considerable effort" (Richards, 1971a: 199) he otherwise ought to make. Likewise, what about Selinker's

*strategies of communication?* Strategies of communication, Selinker argues, can dictate to the learners “they know enough of the TL in order to communicate. And [consequently] they stop learning” (Selinker, 1972: 179.) Correspondingly, the learner may choose not to make efforts learning where to add the third person singular present tense morpheme ‘s’ in English, as he may recognize that this “error does not hinder him in satisfying his communicative needs” (Littlewood, 1984: 34). Or, can the error being considered be the outcome of all the above processes working in cooperation?

In another study, Richards (1971a,) a distinction is made between intralingual and developmental errors. The former are defined as those errors “which reflect the general characteristics of rule learning, such as faulty generalization, incomplete application of rules, and failure to learn conditions under which rules apply” (Richards, 1971a: 199.) By opposition, the latter are said to be the product of “the learner attempting to build up hypotheses about the English language [the TL]” (ibid.) Undoubtedly, many instances of developmental errors can also be regarded as intralingual. Omissions of the third person singular present tense morpheme ‘s’ in English form a good exemplification in this case, too.

Conversely, theoretically speaking, the explanatory categories of errors should be clearly distinguishable so that reliable findings can be achieved in different EAs. The problem, however, is that the whole process of errors explanation is “speculative” (McKeating, 1981: 229.) It “consists of formulating hypotheses about the cause(s) and gathering enough confirming evidence to persuade oneself, as well as one’s colleagues, that the hypothesized cause(s) are correct” (Dulay et al., 1982: 142.) Recourse to the learner, as Corder suggests, cannot often be guaranteed; he may be absent. Besides, the performer’s presence may not be always helpful; he may lack the sufficient metalinguistic knowledge required to clearly and reliably account for his own errors (Taylor, 1986: 148-149.) Subsequently, many researchers (McKeating, 1981; Dulay et al., 1982; Ellis, 1994) argue for adopting more obviously distinguishable types of errors’ sources. The explanatory categories adopted in this new stance are fewer. Nevertheless, they can be highly insightful and more reliable.

In particular, two major categories of errors’ sources are common to all attempts at explaining idiosyncrasies in the performances of FL learners. These are *interlingual* (also termed *transfer* or *external interference*) and *intralingual* (also labeled *internal interference*) causes of errors. From a cognitive point of view, these are seen as similar processes (cf. Section 2.4.3.) As Richards argues, “language learning both in a first and second language setting involves trying out hypotheses about the language from one’s experience of it (and in the case of second language learning, from one’s experience of other languages)” (Richards,

1971b : 122.) That is to say, FL learners do not only have one source of data from which they can draw hypotheses about the TL structure, but two: the TL structures they have already assimilated on the one hand, and the whole range of their previously acquired linguistic knowledge on the other hand.

Naturally, the learners' guesses about the TL rules will not be always correct. On the contrary, they may lead to errors (cf. Sections 3.1 and 3.2.) Depending on the source of the hypothesis that gave rise to the error (the TL itself or other previously learned languages,) learners' idiosyncrasies will be attributed to an intralingual or an interlingual source, respectively. Clearly, the mechanism of transfer, i.e., the use of previously acquired knowledge in new learning situations, is involved in the two cases. This underlying similarity notwithstanding, purposefully, intralingual and interlingual causes of errors are deemed different in EA literature. What is more, the term transfer is commonly associated only with the latter type and other names are connected with the former. In what follows, there is an attempt to clarify the differences existing between these two sources of errors.

#### **3.5.4.1 Interlingual Causes of Errors**

Even though the behaviourist accounts that gave transfer the lion's share in describing and explaining the process of FLL are now widely discredited, transfer is still conceived as a significant factor affecting any attempt to learn a new language after one's NL is acquired (Section 2.5.) To be precise, the learners' past linguistic knowledge is not now considered as a hindrance to the acquisition of a new language but rather as useful participant in the process of FLL, that can act as a heuristic basis from which hypotheses about the TL can be inferred.

Like the native learner, he [the FL learner] can use the evidence provided by the target language itself... But, unlike the first language learner, he also has an alternative source of hypotheses... [He] has already mastered the rules of one language... [what he] knows about the structure of that language is readily available to assist in the formation of hypotheses.

(Wilkins, 1972 : 203)

In other words, "The more about language we know, or the more languages we know something of, the richer the repertoire of heuristic hypotheses available to us about the structural properties of the second language data will be" (Corder, 1981: 58.) Thus, one might argue that the original claim that language transfer has often a negative influence on FLL is not true. On the contrary, "the learner's possession of his native language is facilitative" (Corder, 1967: 170,) since he can "make... up the deficiencies of his knowledge... by recourse to the appropriate parts of the mother tongue" (Corder, 1973: 284.) Nevertheless, while it can be helpful, this policy may result in errors (cf. Section 2.5.3.) Such errors,

however, “are not to be regarded as signs of inhibition, but simply as evidence of [the learner’s] strategies of learning” (Corder, 1967: 170.)

As to the different types of interlingual errors, Odlin (1989: 37-38) suggests that transfer pronunciation errors, for instance, can take different forms. In the most apparent kind, there are *substitution* errors wherein the learner uses items or structures from previously learned languages, such as NL sounds, in his TL performances. *Calques*, on the other hand, are those transfer errors that reflect very closely the structure of another language known by the learner. Instances of “cognate pronunciation,” in particular, fall in this category. For example, some EFL learners who know French pronounce the sound /l/ in the English word “athlete” as \*/τ/, whether or not they can pronounce it correctly in other words.

Clearly, substitutions and calques reflect “an obvious correspondence” (Odlin, 1989: 37) between the TL use of the learner and another language which he knows. By contrast, *alternations of structures* are errors that result from transfer, but do not show any direct influence from any one of the learner’s languages besides the TL. One common example is errors of *hypercorrection*. Hypercorrections reflect “overreactions” (ibid: 38) to transfer influences (Section 2.4.3.) To illustrate this point, Ibrahim (1978; in Odlin, 1989: 38) cites examples of pronunciation errors in which the English sound /π/ is used instead of /β/ by Arab EFL learners, such as in the mispronunciation \*/η□π□τ/ of the English word “habit.” Ibrahim argues that this error is a result of the learners’ attempt to avoid the β/π *substitution* caused by transfer from Arabic. Transfer errors taking the form of alternations of structures may easily go unnoticed. Nevertheless, they represent “the most important cases of cross-linguistic influences” (Odlin, 1989: 38.) Thus, error analysts must pay significant attention while deciding whether an error is due to transfer, Odlin advises.

#### **3.5.4.2 Intralingual Causes of Errors**

Then, some of the errors FL learners may produce are traceable to cross-linguistic transfer effects. On the other hand, to make inferences about new structures of an FL, learners may also resort to the TL knowledge they have formerly assimilated. Similarly, the ultimate product of this process may be the production of idiosyncratic forms. Such idiosyncrasies form what is termed intralingual errors.

To be precise, the origins of intralingual errors are found within the TL itself. That is to say, they do not reflect structures from the learners’ other language(s,) but rather “faulty generalizations about the rules of the target language” (McKeating, 1981: 231) made while

the learner attempts to creatively use his TL knowledge. In other words, such errors result from “the mutual interference of items within the target language” (Richards, 1971a: 207.) They cover instances in which a rule “is extended to an environment in which, to the learner it could logically apply, but just does not” (Selinker, 1972: 180.) Accordingly, these errors are generally common to all the learners of a particular FL, regardless of their linguistic backgrounds.

McKeating (1981) makes a distinction between two different types of intralingual causes of errors. These are *cross-associations* and *wrong analogies*. In the first type, an FL learner may cross-associate two seemingly similar, but in fact different, items of the TL giving rise to “hybrid” structures. This “generally involves the creation of one deviant structure in place of two target language structures” (Ellis, 1994: 59.) To illustrate this point, the great variety, and slight differences, of the vowel sounds available in the English phonological system sometimes cause learners to produce some phonological replacements from a hybrid origin, i.e., involving features from more than one sound. Avery and Ehrlich, for instance, show that EFL learners have a general difficulty to discriminate between the English vowels /ε/ and /□/, as in “bet” and “bit”, which results in their “producing a vowel which is between the two” (Avery and Ehrlich, 1992: 113.)

On the other hand, wrong analogies account for those errors described as instances of *overgeneralization* (Section 3.5.3.) Naturally, language learners generally search for “patterns and regularity in the target language in an effort to reduce the learning load by formulating rules” (McKeating, 1981: 231.) In their attempts to reorganize their TL materials, however, they may fail to take into account the boundaries of the rules’ possible applications and ultimately end by overgeneralizing some of them to contexts where they do not apply. Indeed, language “learning not only means discovering rules, but also the exact categories to which they apply” (Corder, 1973: 288.)

The performer’s production of wrong analogies or overgeneralization errors may result from his limited exposure to the TL, which prevents him from gathering sufficient information to build adequate hypotheses. Equally well, the learner’s desire to regularize the language data he receives may cause him to ignore exceptions.

Having found a rule which appears to work well the learner is not inclined to go looking for exceptions which will only complicate matters. Or, in the interests of simplicity, he may just ignore counter-examples to his rules.

(McKeating, 1981: 132)

This strategy of learning may have a simplifying effect on the FL structure. That is to say, it may cause errors of omissions of the TL redundant features that can be seen as “unnecessary

complication which can be ignored” (ibid.) For example, EFL learners may prefer to avoid complicating their acquisition of the phonology of English by neglecting aspirating voiceless plosives in initial positions, as they may realize that their speeches can still be understood.

Other possible types of intralingual pronunciation errors may include deviant articulations caused by non-correspondences between the TL spelling and phonological systems. In particular, *spelling pronunciation errors* are significantly common in the performances of EFL learners. For instance, while many foreign students of English may have no difficulty in properly articulating the sound /f/, they may not pronounce the word “enough” correctly. Besides spelling pronunciations, the *phonetic context* in which the sounds occur may cause further problems. For example, it may be extremely easy for some learners to produce the sounds /f/, /t/ and /s/ each in isolation; but it turns to be highly difficult for them, themselves, to accurately pronounce the final clusters in the words “twelfths” /tʷɛlθs/ and “sixths” /sɪks/. Similarly, McKeating (1981: 216) refers to a group of students he had, who are perfectly able to produce the sound /w/ in all contexts except before the close rounded vowel /u/ such as in the words “woman”, “wolf”, etc.

In addition, *inherent difficulty* is the source to which “those errors stemming from marked or complex features in the structure of the target language itself and which thus seem to be committed by all... learners of the TL regardless of their native language” (Celce-Murcia et al., 1996: 20) can be attributed. To illustrate this point, many phonological items of English are “inherently difficult to learn no matter what the background of the learner” (Richards and Sampson, 1974: 13) is. Namely, the failure to receive and to produce the distinction between English /ɛ/ and /æ/, such as in “set” and “sat,” on the one hand, and between /æ/ and /ɛ/, such as in “lack” and “luck,” on the other hand, is common to the majority of EFL learners (Avery and Ehrlich, 1992: 98-100.)

### 3.5.4.3 Other Possible Causes

Besides the interlingual and intralingual causes reviewed above, many researchers conceive the teaching instruction FL learners receive as an additional possible source of errors. In technical terminology, the resulting idiosyncrasies are called *transfer of training* (Selinker, 1972) or *induced* (Stenson, 1974) errors. To be precise, the choice of teaching materials, their sequencing and manner of presentation, the examples used to clarify the TL items being taught and the practice work accompanying these examples can all – if not adequately designed – hinder learners’ understanding and induce errors.

To illustrate this point, some of the FL learners' pronunciation errors may reside in their teachers' inadequate pronunciations. Additionally, intralingual errors, such as cross-associations – even though they can occur spontaneously – are sometimes encouraged by some teaching practices. In particular, faulty explanations of TL structures or drills performed without considering the meaning component can lead to such errors. Furthermore, presenting items or structures that can interfere with each other, such as phonetically similar sounds, together in the hope of helping learners establish the contrast between them can only further complicate the confusion in the learners' minds. The construction of wrong analogies can also be teaching induced. “Any inexplicit explanation may be open to misunderstanding by the student” (Stenson, 1974: 67) and consequently “lead to false generalizations” (ibid.) The occurrence of overgeneralization errors in any language learning process is of course very natural. The point being made here is that the possibility for them can be further increased by some teaching practices. What is more, teachers' overemphasis on some TL sounds which are generally problematic for their learners may give rise to *hypercorrection* or *overlearning* errors (Richards, 1971a: 200,) such as in the  $\square/v$  or the  $\pi/\beta$  substitutions by Arab EFL learners (cf. Section 3.5.4.1.)

In brief, transfer of training can increase the possibility for some errors, as it may lead to some others that might not otherwise occur (Stenson, 1974.) Stenson argues that such errors are not systematic in the sense that they are induced by some external factors; mainly, teaching instruction. Following this claim, induced errors need not form part of EA (cf. Section 3.5.2.) Nonetheless, inexplicit or inadequate teaching practices may cause learners to form faulty generalizations that they afterwards internalize in their minds; i.e., they will form part of their TL competence and accordingly they can give rise to systematic errors whose analysis is the concern of EA.

### **3.5.5 Evaluation of Errors**

The collection of the four aforementioned stages represents the procedure generally followed in traditional EA<sub>s</sub>. More recent research, however, includes one further step. This latter differs from the other stages of EA in one significant point. At this level, reference is not made to the learner who produces the error but to the listener/ reader who receives it. Explicitly, after identifying, describing and explaining the errors his subjects made, the error analyst may go further to analyze the effects these errors may have on the audience who receives them. Indeed, this step, *error evaluation*, is not included in many EA<sub>s</sub> and it is often treated as a separate subject.

The undertaking of error evaluation necessitates making some decisions in advance, namely, choosing who the addressees (more properly the judges) will be and how their judgments will be elicited. Firstly, the judges can vary according to whether they are native speakers or non-native speakers, expert teachers or ordinary people, etc. Secondly, the error analyst has to select from many alternatives following which he can elicit the addressees' judgments. He may give them contextualized or decontextualized lists of erroneous utterances taken from actual samples of learner language. The use of contextualized data is, however, generally preferred because the same error can be evaluated very differently depending on who produced it, and how, where, and when it was produced. Then, the investigator may ask his informants to evaluate the errors the learners made using specified criteria from which a statement of *error gravity* can be established. Additionally, he may ask them to correct the subjects' errors and to account for their own judgments, particularly, to explain why they have considered some errors to be more problematic than others. What is more, he can test their comprehension of the erroneous utterances they are asked to evaluate.

Criteria to be used in assessing error gravity generally include judgments about the *intelligibility* of the erroneous utterances, the *acceptability* of the errors and the *degree of irritation* caused by them. The intelligibility of an idiosyncratic form is judged according to the degree of its comprehensibility; i.e., its message carrying capacity. In other words, emphasis here is not on how the error differs from accepted TL use, but rather on the degree of deviance between the learner's intention and the result caused by his utterance, i.e., the extent to which the error diverts the addressee from making a direct connection between the utterance he receives and the performer's original intention. Burt and Kiparsky's (1974) distinction between local and global errors (cf. Section 3.5.3) is especially useful in this task. Burt and Kiparsky argue that, as far as general sentence comprehensibility is concerned, global errors are more serious than local ones; "a sentence with both global and local mistakes improves much more when a global mistake is corrected than a local one, or even a group of local ones" (Burt and Kiparsky, 1974: 73.) Consequently, global errors would be more severely judged than local ones.

In addition to judgments about intelligibility, the *degree of irritation* the error arouses is another frequently used criterion in error evaluation. Emphasis here is on the addressees' affective response or emotional state. While it is generally conceived that the most serious errors are those which can lead to misunderstanding, i.e., errors of intelligibility; one might think that errors of irritation are equally significant. The irritability of learners' errors can dictate the form of the relationship they will have with the addressees and by extension the

way they will be perceived by them. In particular, an FL learner who goes for a job – or even a college – entrance interview using a noticeably foreign accent can provide the specific justification required to reject him, even when he is perfectly successful in communicating his meanings. Political reasons may further complicate this problem. English used with an Arabic accent in USA or Great Britain may cause many problems nowadays. Richards accounts for this matter arguing, “Deviancy from grammatical or phonological norms of a speech community elicits evaluation reactions that may classify a person unfavorably” (Richards, 1971b: 131.) He also quotes Noss reporting that

It is not uncommon to characterize such people as ‘having a foreign accent’ or speaking ‘brokenly’, even though their vocabulary and general fluency may be quite satisfactory in the acquired language. Although they have little difficulty in being understood for practical purposes, they are apt to be considered as perpetual foreigners or outsiders.

(Noss 1967; in Richards, 1971b: 132)

More to the point, Odlin asserts “the more heavily accented a person’s pronunciation is, the more likely it is that listeners *will* have negative reactions... a foreign accent can trigger hostile attitudes” (Odlin, 1989: 158-159.)

The irritability of errors may correlate with their *frequency*, i.e., the number of errors learners produce. It is sometimes argued that the frequency of errors is not important as a criterion to establish error gravity, since the effect of a high number of errors that do not hinder communication (local errors) is less serious than that produced by few global ones. Nevertheless, producing a lot of errors may cause the addressees’ irritation or disturbance and subsequently their loss of attention to meaning. Normally, then, statements about error intelligibility, irritability and frequency are all important in evaluating the seriousness of errors. The first norm may cause the performers to fail to make themselves understood, the second may cause them to be unfavourably evaluated, and the latter may, indirectly, generate both of the two preceding effects.

In establishing statements about error frequency, it is often useful to make a distinction between *absolute* and *relative* frequencies. An absolute frequency refers to the number of times in which an error of one particular type occurs (e.g., 2 errors.) By opposition, a relative frequency mentions the number of times an error occurs balanced against the number of correct forms used (e.g., 2/10 errors,) as clarified by Ringbom.

The number of errors made with a particular construction (e.g., concord) is balanced against the number of correctly formed constructions. A potential error index can then be calculated by dividing the number of erroneous construction with the total number of construction used.

(Ringbom, 1995: 582)

Statements of the relative frequency of errors types are more generally preferred.

One additional criterion generally used in evaluating errors is about errors' *acceptability*. This involves judgments about the seriousness of an error in terms of its deviance from accepted TL norms. Another related criterion is error *naturalness*. This is a somehow vague standard. It is related to the degree of deviation or resonance the error has. Some errors may sound more “unnatural” to the listener or reader than others. Markedness factors (Section 2.5.4.1.) for instance, may considerably influence the judges' evaluations in this case. Stantos (1987; in Ellis, 1994: 66) argues that errors involving the substitution of marked items for unmarked ones, like in the case of pronouncing final /σ/ as \*/ζ/ in the word “choice”, are less accepted than those incorporating the substitution of unmarked items for marked ones, such as in mispronouncing “shoes” as \*/♥∪÷σ/. Explicitly, the reason may be that voiceless stops, that are phonologically common in words' final positions in most human languages, are less marked than voiced stops, which occur finally only in few languages, such as English, and hence their preference by FL learners tends to be more acceptable.

To sum up, a systematic investigation of learners' errors necessitates the researcher's involvement in many stages of analysis. Firstly, an actual sample of oral or written language use by the learners needs to be collected. Then, the errors existing in this sample will be identified, described and explained following defined procedures. One further step, which is not often included, is the evaluation of errors according to some specified criteria. One profit to be gained from this last stage is the identification of those errors that are more serious, and consequently which merit more theoretical and pedagogical attention. The procedure reviewed above is supposed to provide significant illuminations to both theory researchers and language teachers (Section 3.3.3.) Some researchers, however, disagree about this last point.

### **3.6 Charges Levelled against Error Analysis**

In the 1970s, EA experienced wide acceptance and popularity. Conversely, the successive era, the 1980s, saw the occurrence of many arguments against its practicability and utility (Schachter and Celce-Murcia, 1977; Dulay et al., 1982.) As a result, EA – like CA – fell into disfavour. Ellis (1994: 67) clarifies that the claimed inadequacies of EA includes both *weaknesses in methodological procedures* and *limitations in scope*.

#### **3.6.1 Weaknesses in Methodological Procedures**

The criticisms levelled at EA methodological procedures cover many points, some of which, those associated with errors' explanation, have already been discussed (Section 3.5.4.)

Besides, the procedure suggested by Corder (1971, 1972) to systematically identify learners' errors is shown by many researchers, including Corder himself, to be an idealized one. No clear decisions can be adopted at any phase: are the learners' idiosyncrasies instances of errors or mistakes? What interpretation can be attributed to each of them in case they are errors? In what way can they be reconstructed? Moreover, the recognition of idiosyncrasies, in itself, may not be always easily made. One typical example of this last problem is the recognition of FL learners' pronunciation errors.

In particular, the distinction between errors and mistakes has stirred much debate about the workability of EA. The criterion suggested by Corder, i.e., to see whether the error's performer can readily correct it or not, is not always reliable. Learners may confuse some TL forms (such as some similar grammatical items that need to be employed in different structures, like *since* and *for*) but still know that only one of them would be appropriate in one particular context. Therefore, if a learner produces a deviant form in such a case and gets informed that he has produced an error, he can immediately supply the correct structure. Nevertheless, the learner's original erroneous utterance was not an instance of a mistake but of an error; it, indeed, represents a defect in his TL knowledge.

Likewise, the consistency of the occurrence of deviant forms in a learner's performance has also been used as a criterion to distinguish errors from mistakes. Errors are systematic consistent deviances that tend to recur in one piece of performance, whereas mistakes are occasional and inconsistent. Before perfectly acquiring a particular TL structure, learners may come through a stage in which they produce both idiosyncratic and target like forms over it. How can the deviances of the learners be viewed in such a case?

Similarly, a learner may know how to perform a particular TL structure, but – for some reasons – continues to get it the wrong way in spontaneous language use. An EFL learner, for example, may acquire the right way of how to articulate /|/ and /□/ each in isolation, but turns to produce some other forms instead in natural language use. Equally, the majority of EFL learners come at one stage to internalize the rule that English verbs used in the present tense with third person singular pronouns inflect taking an '-s' at the end, but continue to get them uninflected, especially in oral language use. Additionally, learners may lose track of a complex structure as they utter it, even though they may produce it correctly in very relaxed situations. The question is how should such deviant utterances, and others due to the utterances' length and the processing time available, be regarded? Are they instances of errors or of mistakes? Generally, the performers will be able to correct them. Indeed, such errors do not signify a defect in knowledge but they imply the lack of automaticity in

language use; i.e., by one way or another, a defect in the TL competence. Normally, FL learners do not only need to know how the TL is structured, but also to acquire an automatic command of its structure in spontaneous language use.

Supposing that the researcher was able to successfully recognise all his subjects' errors, he is still left with another – may be more serious – problem. That is the undertaking of how to interpret the recognized idiosyncrasies. Learners' erroneous constructions may be ambiguous; i.e., they may allow more than one interpretation in one context. Corder (1971b: 22) cites an example of an erroneous sentence, \* he did not know the word so *he asked a dictionary*, wherein two plausible interpretations are equally possible; "...he asked for a dictionary" and "...he consulted a dictionary." The linguistic context of the utterance is not helpful to determine which from the above meanings the performer intends. Needless to say, if the researcher selects the wrong interpretation, his reconstruction, description and explanation of the error will not be valid, too. In fact, he would analyse an error that has not been produced at all. This problem, Corder argues, may be solved by eliciting an authoritative interpretation. Nevertheless, this solution can be sometimes either impossible or unreliable (cf. Section 3.5.4.)

Furthermore, the tasks of describing and classifying errors can be problematic, too. Any problem at the interpretation level may cause others at this stage. In other words, errors can be mistakenly attributed to one given category in a descriptive taxonomy because they were wrongly interpreted. What is more, learners' idiosyncrasies can be erroneously described even when they are rightly interpreted. To illustrate this point, some originally auditory pronunciation problems can be mistaken as orthographic errors (cf. Section 3.5.1.)

Finally, the explanatory stage of EA may present further grave methodological problems to the analyst. While it seems easy to think about the possible causes of language errors in abstract, the actual practice of explaining the idiosyncrasies of FL learners is by no means straightforward. In fact, explanation is a speculative undertaking. It is "a matter for argument, not definition" (Taylor, 1986: 158.) Therefore, the same error could be ascribed to a particular cause by one researcher and to another one by another one. The possibility for this inconsistency is augmented by the fact that the distinctions between the customary adopted sources of errors are not convincing to all researchers. In particular, intralingual and interlingual sources of errors can be easily confused. For instance, some of the apparently intralingual errors – in the sense that they are common to the majority of the FL learners of one particular language – can also have roots in the mother tongue(s) of some performers. In other words, "the learner may assign an item to a class on the analogy of the assignment of the

mother tongue” (Corder, 1973: 189.) The erroneous structure *\*Il a parti* produced by an English foreign learner of French, for example, can be said to have resulted from the influence of the French rule for forming the perfect tense with “avoir” (“have” in English); i.e., it is an intralingual error. On the other hand, the involvement of English transfer, namely the influence of the “have + past participle” structure like in *he has gone*, is also highly possible. Similarly, some pronunciation errors could result from both intralingual causes, such as the inherent difficulty of the particular items involved; and cross-linguistic transfer influences, i.e., the influence of the NL phonological system.

The distinction between interlingual and intralingual causes of errors is not easy, then. More serious, however, is the problem of how to differentiate the different types of intralingual errors. Teaching induced errors are also difficult to be identified as they may be readily attributable to other sources of errors, i.e., intralingual and interlingual effects. Besides, an investigator should not assume that there are “ready-made explanation[s] which will cover all errors” (Taylor, 1986: 157.) Consequently, “one must be extremely cautious when claiming to have identified the cause of any given error type” (Schachter and Celce-Murcia, 1977: 280.)

Clearly, undertaking an EA is not an easy business. What is more, “if clear explanatory statements about errors are often not possible the value of EA as a tool for investigating L2 acquisition is thrown into question” (Ellis, 1994: 63.) Nevertheless, the methodological problems EA is claimed to cause are, in fact, overestimated. The task of identifying errors really creates many problems, a lot of which, however, can be encountered. Solutions include cooperation with the errors’ producers, the use of the context in which the erroneous constructions occur, and the utilization of the knowledge the researcher has about the interlanguage of his subjects as well as that of other learners who have similar learning experiences as theirs. In describing and explaining errors, careful pacing may result in many useful and indispensable illuminations. Besides, the ambiguous sources of some errors may not be problematic at all; “the same word or construction may well have been arrived at by different routes” (Ringbom, 1995: 582.) Intralingual and interlingual influences may exist simultaneously giving additional strength to each other. To illustrate this point, while intralingual errors are generally common to all the learners of one TL, they tend to be more serious with those whose NL has structures similar to those of the erroneous construction(s) in question (cf. Section 2.4.3.) In short, as they may have one single source, errors – equally well– may have a compound origin.

### 3.6.2 Limitations in Scope

In addition to the arguments about weaknesses in the methodological procedures of EA, other criticisms are levelled at limitations in its scope. In the first instance of these, EA is said to deny researchers “access to the whole picture” (Freeman and Long, 1991: 61) of language learning. It is limited by definition to the analysis of only those features of learner language that deviate from the accepted norms of the TL. No account of what performers do correctly is required. “The first step in error analysis is the extraction of errors from the corpus. In many cases the corpus is then excluded from further consideration as the investigator focuses on the task of organizing the errors” (Schachter and Celce-Murcia, 1977: 276.)

Nevertheless, the incorporation of correct forms in analyzing learner language is crucial. It can provide significant insights into all the stages of EA, and especially in the explanatory phase. By exploring both their correct and incorrect language uses, the researcher can gain a more thorough view about the learners’ competence in the TL. He may better know what structures are already assimilated by them, what features are still unlearned, what are their areas of uncertainty or partial learning (the occurrence of both right and wrong forms over one structure), and what is the extent of “damage” in the learners’ competence concerning their erroneous structures; is the whole system unlearned? or, are they the exceptions to the rules solely which cause problems?

As a matter of fact, however, the criticising statements above do not account for inadequacies within the EA enterprise, but rather they represent weaknesses in some available EA studies. There is nothing in EA that prevents an analyst from including correct forms in his data. Besides, Corder – who is generally recognized as a prominent figure among the proponents of EA – argued for the relevance of correct language uses in the data for EA in more than one occasion. The following statements by Corder attest this fact. “The superficially well-formed sentences in terms of one social dialect (the target dialect in the case of the learner) are just as important as those which are overtly idiosyncratic. They too tell us what he knows” (Corder, 1971b: 21.) Moreover, “If... our objectives in undertaking ‘error analysis’ are to make a description of the ‘état de dialecte’ of the learner then the ‘well-formed and appropriate’ utterances are clearly an important part of our data” (ibid: 30.)

Conversely, the second condemnation of EA at this level is really serious. It may be the major problem of EA, indeed. Explicitly, it is argued that some of the problems FL learners may have are elusive for EA, because it seems that they are unlikely to be captured in corpus-based research. That is to say, EA is not able to reveal all the difficulties learners have.

Schachter (1974) accounts for this problem clarifying that learners may resort, either consciously or subconsciously, to avoid certain TL structures which they perceive as difficult (cf. Section 2.5.3.2.) The error analyst, by consequence, may not be able to build a complete idea about his subjects' competence. "The learner... will place limitations upon the data we work with, by selecting from his actual repertoire, where possible, only those aspects of his knowledge which, rightly or wrongly, he has most confidence in... [He] will play safe" (Corder, 1981: 60.)

In other words, EA, which is a corpus-based method of analysis, cannot investigate what performers do not do. Nonetheless, this charge need not be overvalued. The error analyst has different means of how to "capture" the phenomenon of *avoidance*. In particular, statements about the errors' relative frequencies (cf. Section 3.5.5) can be helpful. In addition, *elicitation techniques* of data collection can provide a workable solution. "The aim is to put the learner in a position where he *has to* use a particular language item and thus reveal his true ability in that particular area" (McKeating, 1981: 217-218.) What is more, an error analyst, normally, should

Be able to draw upon his or her own knowledge of the language, thus to make judgments about what is *not* in the text, as well as on the correctness of what is. We routinely draw on lexical items 'absent' from the text to suggest improvements to a student's choice of vocabulary; we can do the same with a syntactic structure, even where on some criteria it might be 'correct'.

(Taylor, 1986 : 150)

In pronunciation performances, however, the phenomenon of avoidance is less likely, if not impossible (cf. Section 2.5.3.2.)

### **3.7 EA Reassessed**

Like CA, EA has been subject to criticism. Its major charge is its "insufficiency" or limitedness. "But these criticisms need not spell the death of error analysis. They can be met" (Taylor, 1986: 145.) Indeed, "EA continues to be used as a means of investigating learner language" (Ellis, 1994: 68.) With careful processing, it "can certainly provide vital clues" (Harley 1980; in Freeman and Long, 1991: 62.) In other words, "if we are aware of its limitations, the study of errors, their causes and development, can provide valuable information on the underlying learning processes" (Ringbom, 1995: 583.)

In short, EA shortcomings need not, and did not, lead to its demise, but rather to the incorporation of some modifications within its theoretical basis and methodological procedures, as it is suggested by Schachter and Celce-Murcia (1977,) whose work is widely seen as a major threat against EA. Schachter and Celce-Murcia argue that "researchers

carrying out EA projects would attend to this potential pitfalls [i.e., EA limitations] so that the overall quality of EA research might improve” (Schachter and Celce-Murcia, 1977: 281.)

In fact, EA continues to be practiced, but “with due attention paid to non-errors as well as to errors” (Ellis, 1994: 68.) Equally, carefulness to whether there are “some units that... [the learner] uses less frequently than the native speaker, some that he does not use at all” (Harley 1980; in Freeman and Long, 1991: 62) and to considering alternative explanations and not to suffice by the most apparent ones is highly required. In addition, researchers start conducting EAs from a deductive rather than from an inductive point of view. That is to say, EA now “is more likely to serve as a means for investigating a specific research question rather than for providing a comprehensive account of learners’ idiosyncratic forms” (Ellis, 1994: 70.) To be precise, in this new perspective, error analysts start by generating “hypotheses, which are themselves then tested against error patterns” (Johnson and Johnson, 1998: 113.) What is more, Ringbom argues, “access to large computerized corpora... will no doubt give a new impetus to EA” (Ringbom, 1995: 583.) One last point is that while some researchers retain the term error analysis (Ellis, 1994), others argue that it is misleading and, thus, prefer to use other names instead such as *performance analysis* (Freeman and Long, 1991) and *corpus analysis*, although this latter is associated with other orientations as well (Aarts, 1995.)

## **Conclusion**

In this chapter, an attempt was made to explain the form of FL learners’ TL performances. Consequently, reference was made to EA. In fact, EA represents the first significant effort to investigate learner language. Even though it was once discredited, “it is showing signs of making a come-back” (Ellis, 1994: 69.) As demonstrated earlier, the charges levelled against EA are not inherent in it; they can be overcome. On the other hand, the contributions of EA are indispensable. EA has served as an empirical tool to put an end to the behaviourist/ mentalist (and by extension, the transfer/ intralingual factors) debates of the 1970s (cf. Sections 3.1, 3.5.4 and 3.6.1.) It has contributed to a more comprehensive view about learner language and to a more rational stance on their errors. Indeed, if any understanding of the structure of FL learners’ performances is sought, EA, with the new modifications brought to it, would be inescapable. Accordingly, the sixth chapter in this work is devoted to analyzing the pronunciation errors of a group of EFL students, in the hope of bringing illuminations on the process of EFL pronunciation learning.

PART TWO  
**CASE STUDY**

## CHAPTER FOUR

### A QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS OF TEACHERS' QUESTIONNAIRE

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## Introduction

The first chapter in this dissertation represents a review of some nonlinguistic factors that have been abundantly reported in literature as having an effect on the process of FL pronunciation learning. In relation to the claims made there, an attempt is made in this chapter to gather information concerning how some university teachers of English feel about these factors. Explicitly, a questionnaire was designed and a group of teachers from the English Departments at the universities of Guelma and Annaba were asked to fill it. The focus is on the same six nonlinguistic factors that form the subject of Chapter 1, i.e., on learners' age, aptitude, attitudes, motivation, personality traits as well as some external factors that are supposed to affect their pronunciation performances. The goal is to know about the informants' viewpoints regarding the effects of these factors on EFL pronunciation learning. More details about this questionnaire are provided below by identifying its aim more clearly, describing its layout, and finally reporting its results.

### 4.1 Aim of the Questionnaire

In particular, the aim of the questionnaire is to identify the respondents' views about which factors correlate best with the learning of an intelligible pronunciation of English. All the informants are teachers of English at the university level. Their long experience with the English language, as learners then as teachers, is assumed to represent a rich informative basis for gathering information about what really contributes to success in EFL pronunciation learning.

### 4.2 Description of the Questionnaire

The questionnaire was handed to 45 teachers from the English departments in the universities of Guelma and Annaba. In particular, 20 respondents are from the University of Guelma and the other 25 teachers are from the University of Annaba. Only 34 copies of the questionnaire were returned; 18 from the teachers of Guelma and 16 from the teachers of Annaba.

University	Handed		Returned	
8 <sup>th</sup> May, 1945 – Guelma	20	100%	18	90%
Baji Mokhtar – Annaba	25	100%	16	64%
Total	45	100%	34	75,55%

*Table 4.1: Number of handed and returned questionnaires*

The questionnaire consists of some open questions, where the informants are asked to provide a full personal answer, and different groups of statements about which they are required to describe their opinions by selecting from a number of given possibilities. A copy of the questionnaire is provided in appendix 1. It is made up of four sections.

The first section, **Teaching Experience Background**, includes two questions (Q1 and Q2) aiming at identifying the number of years the respondents have spent teaching English (Q1,) and the modules they teach at the university (Q2.) The second section, **Opinions**, covers seven different parts. Each part includes a number of statements about the effect of a given factor on achievement in pronunciation learning. The informants are asked to indicate their degree of agreement (whether they strongly agree, agree, are undecided, disagree or strongly disagree) about each statement by ticking one of the offered possibilities.

The first part in this section deals with **The Effect of Age on Pronunciation Achievement**. It includes five statements (S1-S5) which aim at detecting the teachers' opinions about children's superiority over adults in pronunciation learning (S1,) the possible degree of attainment by adolescents and adults in the area of pronunciation (S2,) the likelihood of improving one's fossilized pronunciation after childhood (S3,) the preference of an early exposure to English in pronunciation learning (S4,) and the possibility of achieving advanced levels in EFL pronunciation learning by adolescents and adults if adequate exposure to English is guaranteed (S5.)

The second part, **The Effect of Aptitude**, embodies five statements all dealing with the contribution of specific innate abilities to pronunciation learning. In particular, the statements in this part consider the importance of having a talent in sound discrimination (S1,) a gift to mimic foreign sounds (S2,) and an advanced ability to memorize these sounds (S3) in successful pronunciation learning. In the fourth and fifth statements in this part, teachers are required firstly to identify the degree to which they think that success in EFL pronunciation learning is dependent on the above abilities (S4,) and secondly to mention how they feel about the claim that these abilities are not significantly important in this task, which can be successfully achieved by every normal human being (S5.)

In the third part, **The Effect of Students' Attitudes**, there are three statements. The two first ones intend to gather information about whether students' attitudes towards English native speakers (S1) and towards their teachers and teaching materials (S2) affect their achievement in pronunciation learning. The questioned teachers are also asked to indicate their opinions about whether FL learners can overcome their negative attitudes towards English native speakers and achieve a high level of proficiency in the area of pronunciation (S3.)

Both of the fourth and fifth parts are designed to investigate the contribution of motivation in the task of pronunciation learning. In particular, the fourth part, **The Effect of Students' Motivation**, aims at identifying the magnitude of the effect of this factor. This is assumed to be achieved by tracing the respondents' opinions about how necessary motivation is in EFL pronunciation learning (S1,) and about the efficacy of some intermediate effects motivation is supposed to have on this process (S2.) The informants are also asked to express their views about whether motivation is more significant in English pronunciation learning than aptitude (S3) and teaching instruction (S4,) and finally about the relationship between learners' expectations of success, their motivation, and their pronunciation attainments (S5.)

On the other hand, the fifth part, **Integrative and Instrumental Motives**, intends to identify which type of motivation, integrative or instrumental, is really significant in the area of pronunciation. For this reason, six statements are put to stimulate the teachers to express their views about this controversy. The three first statements seek information about the role of integrative motivation. Specifically, teachers are asked to clarify their degrees of agreement about whether students' achievement in pronunciation learning is dependent on having an intention to socially integrate in the English society (S1,) and a desire to sound like English native speakers (S2), as well as about whether the learners' degrees of success in the area of pronunciation will reflect the strength of their integrative motives (S3.) The two following statements deal with the effect of instrumental motivation, in particular, with whether instrumental motives can create success in pronunciation acquisition (S4,) and whether learners with strong utilitarian motives can outperform those with integrative reasons to learn (S5.) Finally, teachers are asked if they agree that what matters about motivation is its strength, not its type (S6.)

The sixth part, **The Effect of Students' Personality Traits**, includes eight statements intending to gather information about the relevance of learners' personality characteristics to their pronunciation achievements (S1), as well as about the superiority of students who are extroverted (S2,) empathetic (S3,) who have permeable ego boundaries (S4,) and lots of self confidence (S5); over those who are introverted (S2,) unsympathetic (S3,) who have strong ego boundaries (S4,) and who lacks self confidence (S5.) The respondents are also asked to give their opinions about the effects of learners' anxiety (S6 and S7) and locus of control (S8) on their pronunciation attainments.

The seventh and last part in section two, **The Effect of Social and Environmental Factors**, embodies two statements dealing with the influence of external factors, namely learners' environmental opportunities of learning (S1,) and their degree of exposure to authentic English (S2) on pronunciation achievements.

The third section of the questionnaire, **Personal Perceptions**, aims at identifying the characteristics of a good pronunciation learner by asking the informants to indicate whether each from twenty-three given traits is very important, quite important, important, not very important or not at all important. The given characteristics include: having started learning at an early age (S1); having advanced abilities for FLL (S2, S3 and S4); holding strong motives to learn (S5) and to succeed (S6) as well as carrying positive attitudes towards EFL learning (S7,) the English language and culture (S8,) and English native speakers (S9, S10 and S11.) With the goal of eliciting the respondents' relevant opinions, it is also stated that a good pronunciation learner expects success (S12,) makes volunteer efforts to learn (S13,) has lots of self-confidence (S14,) and a high degree of sociability (S15.) What is more, it is declared that successful pronunciation learning requires a learner who is sympathetic with English native speakers (S16); who lacks inhibition (S17); and who likes change (S18,) and risk taking (S19.) In addition, it is suggested that success in pronunciation learning is related to having a willingness to make mistakes (S20,) to be permanently involved in classroom discussions (S21,) to practice one's pronunciation skills as often as possible (S22,) and finally to take responsibility for one's own learning (S23.)

The fourth and last section in the questionnaire, **Other Suggestions**, includes one single question wherein the respondents are asked to supply any further information they have about the processes of English pronunciation learning and teaching.

### 4.3 Analysis of the Questionnaire

#### 4.3.1 Section 1: Teaching Experience Background

**Question 1:** How many years have you spent teaching English?

1 – 5 years	6 – 10 years	11 – 15 years	16 – 20 years	21 – 25 years	26 – 38 years
06 17,65%	04 11,76%	07 20,59%	05 14,70%	05 14,70%	07 20,59%

*Table 4.2: Number of respondents grouped by number of years of experience in teaching English*

As displayed in table 4.2, the questionnaire's respondents are classified in six different groups according to the number of years they have spent in teaching English. The seven teachers from the last category (26 – 38 years,) in particular, are assumed to provide many insightful views via their long experience in the field. Nonetheless, the opinions presented by the least experienced teachers in the present questionnaire, i.e., those who have from one to five years of experience in teaching English, are also considered highly significant because of the informants' recent experiences as learners of English.

**Question 2:** What are the module(s) you teach at the university?

Phonetics	Oral Expression	Linguistics	Others (literature, civilization and ESP)
04 11,76%	22 64,71%	03 08,82%	05 14,70%

*Table 4.3: Number of respondents grouped by the modules they teach*

The questionnaire's respondents fall in another four different groups according to the type of modules they teach (Table 4.3.) Whereas the views of the teachers of phonetics and of oral expression may seem the most relevant to the present study, the teachers of linguistics and of the other modules may also represent interesting ideas due to their familiarity with the students' spoken English, their pronunciation performances in particular.

## 4.3.2 Section 2: Opinions

### 4.3.2.1 The Effect of Age on Pronunciation Achievement

**Statement 1:** Children acquire native-like pronunciation of a foreign language more readily than adults.

Years of experience in teaching	Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Total
1 – 5 years	05 83,33%	01 16,67%	00	00	00	06
6 – 10 years	02 50%	02 50%	00	00	00	04
11 – 15 years	05 71,43%	01 14,29%	00	01 14,29%	00	07
16 – 20 years	03 60%	02 40%	00	00	00	05
21 – 25 years	03 60%	01 20%	00	01 20%	00	05
26 – 38 years	06 85,71%	01 14,29%	00	00	00	07
Total	24 70,59%	08 23,52%	00	02 05,88%	00	34

*Table 4.4: Teachers' degrees of agreement about children's superiority over adults in pronunciation learning*

From table 4.4 above, it can be easily noticed that for the vast majority of respondents, children are better pronunciation learners than adults. In particular, 70,59% and 23,52% of the total 34 responded teachers strongly agree and agree, respectively, with the statement in question. On the other hand, only two teachers disagree, and no one has expressed strong disagreement, about the relative easiness children have over adults in mastering foreign pronunciations.

**Statement 2:** For the great majority of adolescent and adult English foreign language learners, an accurate pronunciation is not a realistic pedagogical goal.

Years of experience in teaching	Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Total
1 – 5 years	00	04 66,67%	01 16,67%	01 16,67%	00	06
6 – 10 years	01 25%	01 25%	01 25%	01 25%	00	04
11 – 15 years	00	02 28,57%	02 28,57%	03 42,86%	00	07
16 – 20 years	00	03 60%	01 20%	01 20%	00	05
21 – 25 years	00	03 60%	01 20%	01 20%	00	05
26 – 38 years	00	03 50%	00	03 50%	00	06
Total	01 03,03%	16 48,48%	06 18,18%	10 30,30%	00	33

*Table 4.5: Teachers' degrees of agreement about the possibility of acquiring an accurate pronunciation by adolescent and adult EFL learners*

The informants' views about the possible levels of attainment by adolescents and adults in the area of pronunciation are not totally conclusive; some teachers agree (48,48%) and some others disagree (30,30%) with the statement under consideration. Nevertheless, a predisposition to adopt the stance calling for the difficulty EFL pronunciation learning presents for adults can be noticed; one teacher strongly agree, 16 agree, and 6 are undecided about the unfeasibility for foreign adult students to achieve an accurate pronunciation of English.

**Statement 3:** After childhood, it is impossible to change a learner's fossilized pronunciation.

Years of experience in teaching	Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Total
1 – 5 years	00	00	03 50%	02 33,33%	01 16,67%	06
6 – 10 years	00	00	00	04 100%	00	04
11 – 15 years	00	00	00	06 85, 71%	01 14,29%	07
16 – 20 years	00	00	00	05 100%	00	05
21 – 25 years	00	01 20%	00	03 60%	01 20%	05
26 – 38 years	00	01 14,29%	00	05 71,43%	01 14,29%	07
Total	00	02 05,88%	03 08,82%	25 73,53%	04 11,76%	34

*Table 4.6: Teachers' degrees of agreement about the possibility of changing one's fossilized pronunciation after childhood*

Even though they recognize the difficulty adults have in EFL pronunciation learning, nearly all the respondents (11,76% + 73,53%) are against the belief that a fossilized pronunciation cannot be corrected after childhood.

**Statement 4:** The earlier the learner’s exposure to English, the better his acquisition of pronunciation.

Years of experience in teaching	Strongly agree		Agree		Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Total
1 – 5 years	03	50%	03	50%	00	00	00	06
6 – 10 years	02	50%	02	50%	00	00	00	04
11 – 15 years	05	71,43%	02	28,57%	00	00	00	07
16 – 20 years	03	60%	02	40%	00	00	00	05
21 – 25 years	04	80%	01	20%	00	00	00	05
26 – 38 years	05	71,43%	02	28,57%	00	00	00	07
Total	22	64,71%	12	35,29%	00	00	00	34

*Table 4.7: Teachers’ degrees of agreement about the existence of a sensitive period for EFL pronunciation learning*

As clearly shown in table 4.7, all the informants agree (to different degrees) about the positive effect an early exposure to English can have on one’s ultimate level of attainment in the area of pronunciation.

**Statement 5:** With adequate exposure to English, adolescents and adults can achieve advanced levels in English foreign language pronunciation learning.

Years of experience in teaching	Strongly agree		Agree		Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Total	
1 – 5 years	03	50%	03	50%	00	00	00	06	
6 – 10 years	01	25%	03	75%	00	00	00	04	
11 – 15 years	03	42,86%	04	57,14%	00	00	00	07	
16 – 20 years	02	40%	03	60%	00	00	00	05	
21 – 25 years	01	20%	03	60%	01	20%	00	05	
26 – 38 years	01	14,29%	05	71,43%	00	01	14,29%	07	
Total	11	32,35%	21	61,76%	01	02,94%	01	02,94%	34

*Table 4.8: Teachers’ degrees of agreement about the possibility of overcoming adolescents and adults’ difficulties in the area of pronunciation by ensuring adequate exposure to English*

Except for one teacher who is undecided and another who disagree, all the respondents agree, to different degrees, that the difficulties adults and adolescents have in foreign pronunciation learning can be overcome given adequate exposure to the TL. In other words, according to the responded teachers, successful pronunciation learning after childhood is not impossible.

To conclude, from the informants' opinions about the five aforementioned statements, a general preference for an early exposure (during the learners' childhood) to foreign target languages is significant. The questioned teachers, however, do not deny the likelihood of achieving success in FL pronunciation learning in adolescence or adulthood. In short, the expressed idea is that whereas FL pronunciation learning is easier and more fruitful during childhood, it is also feasible, but more demanding, thereafter.

#### 4.3.2.2 The Effect of Aptitude

**Statement 1:** Some students have a better “ear” for language sounds than others, and are, thus, more gifted in the area of pronunciation.

Years of experience in teaching	Strongly agree		Agree		Undecided		Disagree	Strongly disagree	Total
1 – 5 years	02	33,33%	02	33,33%	02	33,33%	00	00	06
6 – 10 years	02	50%	02	50%	00		00	00	04
11 – 15 years	05	71,43%	02	28,57%	00		00	00	07
16 – 20 years	03	60%	02	40%	00		00	00	05
21 – 25 years	00		03	60%	02	40%	00	00	05
26 – 38 years	02	28,57%	04	57,14%	01	14,29%	00	00	07
Total	14	41,18%	15	44,12%	05	14,70%	00	00	34

*Table 4.9: Teachers' degrees of agreement about the significance of the learners' phonetic coding abilities in FL pronunciation learning*

Except for five teachers who are undecided, all the other respondents (41,18% strongly agree and 44,12% agree) acknowledge that FL learners differ in their abilities to discriminate between foreign sounds, and, hence, in their potential to learn a foreign language's pronunciation.

**Statement 2:** Some students have a better ability to mimic foreign sounds than others, and are, thus, more gifted in the area of pronunciation.

Table 4.10 below demonstrates that the majority of informants (29,41% + 61,76%) agree that FL learners differ in their abilities in sound mimicry, and that this may affect their learning outcomes in the area of pronunciation.

Years of experience in teaching	Strongly agree		Agree		Undecided		Disagree		Strongly disagree		Total
1 – 5 years	01	16,67%	03	50%	02	33,33%	00		00		06
6 – 10 years	02	50%	02	50%	00		00		00		04
11 – 15 years	04	57,14%	03	42,86%	00		00		00		07
16 – 20 years	01	20%	04	80%	00		00		00		05
21 – 25 years	00		04	80%	00		01	20%	00		05
26 – 38 years	02	28,57%	05	71,43%	00		00		00		07
Total	10	29,41%	21	61,76%	02	05,88%	01	02,94%	00		34

*Table 4.10: Teachers' degrees of agreement about the significance of the learners' abilities to mimic foreign sounds in FL pronunciation learning*

**Statement 3:** Some students have a better memorizing ability than others, and are, thus, more gifted in the area of pronunciation.

Years of experience in teaching	Strongly agree		Agree		Undecided		Disagree		Strongly disagree		Total
1 – 5 years	00		03	50%	00		02	33,33%	01	16,67%	06
6 – 10 years	02	50%	02	50%	00		00		00		04
11 – 15 years	04	57,14%	02	28,57%	00		01	14,29%	00		07
16 – 20 years	02	40%	02	40%	01	20%	00		00		05
21 – 25 years	02	40%	01	20%	02	40%	00		00		05
26 – 38 years	00		05	71,43%	02	28,57%	00		00		07
Total	10	29,41%	15	44,12%	05	14,70%	03	08,82%	01	02,94%	34

*Table 4.11: Teachers' degrees of agreement about the significance of the learners' memorizing abilities in FL pronunciation learning*

To a smaller, but a considerable percentage (29,41% + 44,12%,) the questioned teachers also think that differences in memorizing abilities may affect the process and results of FL pronunciation learning.

**Statement 4:** The different degrees of success experienced by different learners in English foreign language pronunciation learning are due to the learners' different abilities.

In relation to their views about the three preceding statements, the respondents, in a considerable majority (11,76% + 61,76%,) show their support for the claim that FL learners' different abilities for language learning cause them to realize different degrees of success in pronunciation acquisition (Table 4.12.)

Years of experience in teaching	Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Total
1 – 5 years	00	03 50%	01 16,67%	02 33,33%	00	06
6 – 10 years	01 25%	02 50%	00	01 25%	00	04
11 – 15 years	01 14,29%	03 42,86%	02 28,57%	01 14,29%	00	07
16 – 20 years	00	04 80%	01 20%	00	00	05
21 – 25 years	01 20%	03 60%	00	01 20%	00	05
26 – 38 years	01 14,29%	06 85, 71%	00	00	00	07
Total	04 11,76%	21 61,76%	04 11,76%	05 14,70%	00	34

*Table 4.12: Teachers' degrees of agreement about the dependence of pronunciation achievement on the learners' innate abilities*

**Statement 5:** Every normal human being has the potential to successfully learn the pronunciation of English.

Years of experience in teaching	Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Total
1 – 5 years	02 33,33%	02 33,33%	00	02 33,33%	00	06
6 – 10 years	01 25%	01 25%	02 50%	00	00	04
11 – 15 years	01 14,29%	04 57,14%	00	02 28,57%	00	07
16 – 20 years	00	01 20%	03 60%	01 20%	00	05
21 – 25 years	02 40%	02 40%	00	01 20%	00	05
26 – 38 years	03 42,86%	04 57,14%	00	00	00	07
Total	09 26,47%	14 41,18%	05 14,70%	06 17,65%	00	34

*Table 4.13: Teachers' degrees of agreement about the possibility of experiencing success in EFL pronunciation learning by every normal human being*

The above views notwithstanding, the teachers' responses in relation to the present statement add to the belief that EFL pronunciation learning can be accomplished by every normal human being. That is to say, no matter how difficult it is, successful learning of the pronunciation of English does not demand exceptional abnormal capacities.

In summary, some FL learners have some advanced abilities that can support their pronunciation learning. For example, abilities in foreign sounds discrimination and mimicry can logically make the process of EFL pronunciation learning easier. Nonetheless, the present questionnaire's respondents do not believe that these gifts are really a prerequisite for a successful acquisition of the pronunciation of English.

### 4.3.2.3 The Effect of Students' Attitudes

**Statement 1:** Negative attitudes towards English native speakers create internal barriers against accepting their speech as a model for pronunciation learning.

Years of experience in teaching	Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Total
1 – 5 years	01 16,67%	02 33,33%	01 16,67%	02 33,33%	00	06
6 – 10 years	00	04 100%	00	00	00	04
11 – 15 years	00	02 33,33%	01 16,67%	02 33,33%	01 16,67%	06
16 – 20 years	01 20%	01 20%	02 40%	01 20%	00	05
21 – 25 years	00	01 20%	00	04 80%	00	05
26 – 38 years	04 57,14%	01 14,29%	02 28,57%	00	00	07
Total	06 18,18%	11 33,33%	06 18,18%	09 27,27%	01 03,03%	33

*Table 4.14: Teachers' degrees of agreement about the hindering effect negative attitudes towards English native speakers have on achievement in EFL pronunciation learning*

The responses presented in table 4.14 are not totally conclusive. Nonetheless, it can be said that the majority (18,18% + 33,33% = 51,51%) agree about the undesirable effect holding negative attitudes towards English native speakers can have on English pronunciation learning.

**Statement 2:** Students' attitudes towards their teachers and teaching materials influence the degree of English pronunciation proficiency they can achieve.

Years of experience in teaching	Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Total
1 – 5 years	02 33,33%	02 33,33%	01 16,67%	01 16,67%	00	06
6 – 10 years	01 25%	03 75%	00	00	00	04
11 – 15 years	02 28,57%	05 71,43%	00	00	00	07
16 – 20 years	01 20%	03 60%	00	01 20%	00	05
21 – 25 years	02 40%	02 40%	00	01 20%	00	05
26 – 38 years	01 14,29%	05 71,43%	01 14,29%	00	00	07
Total	09 26,47%	20 58,82%	02 05,88%	03 08,82%	00	34

*Table 4.15: Teachers' degrees of agreement about the involvement of FL learners' attitudes towards their teachers and teaching materials in their pronunciation learning*

85,29% (26,47% + 58,82%) of the informants think that in a foreign learning context, and in the absence of a direct contact between the learners and the TL native speakers, students' attitudes towards their teachers and teaching materials greatly affect their learning outcomes.

**Statement 3:** If they wish, learners who hold negative attitudes towards English native speakers and the English culture can achieve a high level of proficiency in the area of pronunciation.

Years of experience in teaching	Strongly agree		Agree		Undecided		Disagree		Strongly disagree		Total
1 – 5 years	02	33,33%	03	50%	00		01	16,67%	00		06
6 – 10 years	00		03	75%	00		01	25%	00		04
11 – 15 years	01	14,29%	03	42,86%	00		03	42,86%	00		07
16 – 20 years	00		01	20%	03	60%	00		01	20%	05
21 – 25 years	01	20%	04	80%	00		00		00		05
26 – 38 years	00		06	85,71%	00		01	14,29%	00		07
Total	04	11,76%	20	58,82%	03	08,82%	06	17,65%	01	02,94%	34

*Table 4.16: Teachers' degrees of agreement about the potential of achieving success in EFL pronunciation learning by learners who hold negative attitudes towards English natives*

Whereas the respondents agree about the disagreeable outcomes of holding negative attitudes on achievement in pronunciation learning, the greatest part of them (70,58%= 11,76% + 58,82%) do not consider these attitudes a true handicap. Explicitly, although learners' unfavorable attitudes towards English native speakers are thought to affect their pronunciation attainments, the informants still believe that these feelings may be overcome and their effect can be abolished.

#### 4.3.2.4 The Effect of Students' Motivation

**Statement 1:** Motivation is quite necessary in English foreign language pronunciation learning.

Years of experience in teaching	Strongly agree		Agree		Undecided		Disagree		Strongly disagree		Total
1 – 5 years	04	66,67%	01	16,67%	00		01	16,67%	00		06
6 – 10 years	02	50%	02	50%	00		00		00		04
11 – 15 years	05	71,43%	02	28,57%	00		00		00		07
16 – 20 years	04	80%	01	20%	00		00		00		05
21 – 25 years	04	80%	01	20%	00		00		00		05
26 – 38 years	05	71,43%	02	28,57%	00		00		00		07
Total	24	70,59%	09	26,47%	00		01	02,94%	00		34

*Table 4.17: Teachers' degrees of agreement about the importance of motivation in EFL pronunciation learning*

Table 4.17 significantly demonstrates that, with the exception of one teacher, all the informants recognize the great importance of motivation in pronunciation learning.

**Statement 2:** The more motivated the student is, the more efforts he will make while learning, the longer he will persist in difficult tasks, and, thus, the more successful he will be.

Years of experience in teaching	Strongly agree		Agree		Undecided		Disagree		Strongly disagree		Total
1 – 5 years	04	66,67%	01	16,67%	00		01	16,67%	00		06
6 – 10 years	03	75%	01	25%	00		00		00		04
11 – 15 years	06	85,71%	01	14,29%	00		00		00		07
16 – 20 years	03	60%	02	40%	00		00		00		05
21 – 25 years	04	80%	01	20%	00		00		00		05
26 – 38 years	06	85,71%	01	14,29%	00		00		00		07
Total	26	76,47%	07	20,59%	00		01	02,94%	00		34

*Table 4.18: Teachers' degrees of agreement about the positive effects motivation has on pronunciation learning*

Again, except for one teacher, all the respondents agree with regard to the contribution of motivation and its positive intermediate effects on the process of FL pronunciation learning.

**Statement 3:** Motivation plays a larger role in determining success in the area of pronunciation than aptitude (ability.)

Years of experience in teaching	Strongly agree		Agree		Undecided		Disagree		Strongly disagree		Total
1 – 5 years	00		03	50%	03	50%	00		00		06
6 – 10 years	02	50%	00		02	50%	00		00		04
11 – 15 years	01	14,29%	04	57,14%	01	14,29%	01	14,29%	00		07
16 – 20 years	00		04	80%	01	20%	00		00		05
21 – 25 years	02	40%	01	20%	00		02	40%	00		05
26 – 38 years	00		05	71,43%	01	14,29%	01	14,29%	00		07
Total	05	14,70%	17	50%	08	23,52%	04	11,76%	00		34

*Table 4.19: Teachers' degrees of agreement about the superiority of motivation over aptitude in the area of pronunciation*

In table 4.19, it is displayed that more than half of the questioned teachers (14,70% + 50% = 64,70%) think that motivation is much more important to successful EFL pronunciation learning than aptitude. 11,76% of the informants, however, disagree with this statement.

**Statement 4:** Regardless of the state of teaching instruction, students who do not want to improve their English pronunciations do not improve it.

Years of experience in teaching	Strongly agree		Agree		Undecided		Disagree		Strongly disagree		Total
1 – 5 years	02	33,33%	03	50%	00		01	16,67%	00		06
6 – 10 years	02	50%	01	25%	01	25%	00		00		04
11 – 15 years	02	28,57%	05	71,43%	00		00		00		07
16 – 20 years	01	20%	03	60%	01	20%	00		00		05
21 – 25 years	03	60%	02	40%	00		00		00		05
26 – 38 years	02	33,33%	03	50%	01	16,67%	00		00		06
Total	12	36,36%	17	51,51%	03	09,09%	01	03,03%	00		33

*Table 4.20: Teachers' degrees of agreement about the superiority of motivation over teaching instruction in the area of pronunciation*

As it can be noticed from table 4.20 above, 87,87% (36,36% + 51,51%) of the respondents believe that the absence of motivation in EFL pronunciation learning may be truly handicapping.

**Statement 5:** The higher the learners' expectations of success, the higher their motivation and the higher their achievements.

Years of experience in teaching	Strongly agree		Agree		Undecided		Disagree		Strongly disagree		Total
1 – 5 years	00		06	100%	00		00		00		06
6 – 10 years	01	25%	02	50%	01	25%	00		00		04
11 – 15 years	02	28,57%	04	57,14%	00		01	14,29%	00		07
16 – 20 years	01	20%	04	80%	00		00		00		05
21 – 25 years	02	40%	02	40%	01	20%	00		00		05
26 – 38 years	03	42,86%	02	28,57%	02	28,57%	00		00		07
Total	09	26,47%	20	58,82%	04	11,76%	01	02,94%	00		34

*Table 4.21: Teachers' degrees of agreement about the existence of a correlation between the learners' expectations of success, their motivation and their pronunciation achievement*

The majority of informants (26,47% + 58,82% = 85,29%) also agree that there is a positive correlation between learners' expectations of success and the strength of their motivation. They think that these two factors enhance the process of EFL pronunciation learning, too.

If the opinions given about the five statements above are compared together, one paramount conclusion comes out; motivation is an essential requirement to successful EFL pronunciation learning.

#### 4.3.2.5 Integrative and Instrumental Motives

**Statement 1:** A learner's desire to socially integrate into the English society determines his level of accuracy in pronouncing English.

Years of experience in teaching	Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Total
1 – 5 years	00	03 50%	00	03 50%	00	06
6 – 10 years	00	04 100%	00	00	00	04
11 – 15 years	01 14,29%	04 57,14%	01 14,29%	01 14,29%	00	07
16 – 20 years	02 40%	01 20%	00	02 40%	00	05
21 – 25 years	02 40%	03 60%	00	00	00	05
26 – 38 years	02 33,33%	04 66,67%	00	00	00	06
Total	07 21,21%	19 57,58%	01 03,03%	06 18,18%	00	33

*Table 4.22: Teachers' degrees of agreement about the necessity of integrative motives in pronunciation learning*

From table 4.22, it can be easily noticed that integrative motivation is generally thought to support EFL pronunciation learning.

**Statement 2:** Successful English foreign language pronunciation learning necessitates a strong desire to sound like English native speakers by the learner.

Years of experience in teaching	Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Total
1 – 5 years	02 33,33%	02 33,33%	01 16,67%	00	01 16,67%	06
6 – 10 years	01 25%	03 75%	00	00	00	04
11 – 15 years	01 14,29%	04 57,14%	00	02 28,57%	00	07
16 – 20 years	00	04 80%	01 20%	00	00	05
21 – 25 years	01 20%	02 40%	01 20%	01 20%	00	05
26 – 38 years	03 42,86%	03 42,86%	00	01 14,29%	00	07
Total	08 23,52%	18 52,94%	03 08,82%	04 11,76%	01 02,94%	34

*Table 4.23: Teachers' degrees of agreement about the necessity of a desire to sound like native speakers in pronunciation learning*

More than 70% of the responses show a general preference for having a desire to sound like English native speakers by FL students to succeed in the task of pronunciation learning. It ought to be recognized here that this feeling can only emerge from a primary tendency to accept English native speakers' speeches as a model for pronunciation learning.

**Statement 3:** Students will acquire English pronunciation to the degree they want to integrate in the English culture and society.

Years of experience in teaching	Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Total
1 – 5 years	00	02 33,33%	02 33,33%	02 33,33%	00	06
6 – 10 years	00	03 75%	00	01 25%	00	04
11 – 15 years	00	02 28,57%	01 14,29%	04 57,14%	00	07
16 – 20 years	01 20%	02 40%	01 20%	01 20%	00	05
21 – 25 years	00	02 40%	02 40%	01 20%	00	05
26 – 38 years	00	02 33,33%	02 33,33%	02 33,33%	00	06
Total	01 03,03%	13 39,39%	08 24,24%	11 33,33%	00	33

*Table 4.24: Teachers' degrees of agreement about the dependence of the learners' pronunciation achievement on the strength of their integrative motives*

No confident conclusions can be generalized from the results displayed in table 4.24. These responses, however, together with those presented in tables 4.22 and 4.23 above, can be used to conclude that the informants think holding integrative motives by students is facilitative in the process of FL pronunciation learning, but they do not regard these drives as highly determinative.

**Statement 4:** A desire to learn English for a utilitarian reason is not enough, no matter how strong it is, to motivate learners make the hard efforts needed to accurately acquire its pronunciation.

Years of experience in teaching	Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Total
1 – 5 years	00	03 50%	00	02 33,33%	01 16,67%	06
6 – 10 years	00	02 50%	00	02 50%	00	04
11 – 15 years	00	01 14,29%	02 28,57%	04 57,14%	00	07
16 – 20 years	01 20%	02 40%	02 40%	00	00	05
21 – 25 years	00	04 80%	00	01 20%	00	05
26 – 38 years	01 14,29%	02 28,57%	02 28,57%	02 28,57%	00	07
Total	02 05,88%	14 41,18%	06 17,65%	11 32,35%	01 02,94%	34

*Table 4.25: Teachers' degrees of agreement about the non-sufficiency of instrumental motives in the area of pronunciation*

Once more the responses are not significantly conclusive. An attempt to arrive at a logical interpretation of these results is provided in what follows.

**Statement 5:** Learners who have a strong external reason to learn may outperform those who have an internal desire to integrate in the English society and culture.

Years of experience in teaching	Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Total
1 – 5 years	00	01 16,67%	04 66,67%	00	01 16,67%	06
6 – 10 years	00	02 50%	01 25%	01 25%	00	04
11 – 15 years	00	02 28,57%	03 42,86%	02 28,57%	00	07
16 – 20 years	00	02 40%	02 40%	01 20%	00	05
21 – 25 years	01 20%	02 40%	01 20%	01 20%	00	05
26 – 38 years	01 14,29%	04 57,14%	01 14,29%	01 14,29%	00	07
Total	02 05,88%	13 38,23%	12 35,29%	06 17,65%	01 02,94%	34

*Table 4.26: Teachers' degrees of agreement about the likelihood of learners with strong instrumental motives to outperform those with integrative motives in pronunciation learning*

Nearly half of the teachers (44,11%=05,88% + 38,23%) agree that strong utilitarian reasons for FL pronunciation learning may lead to satisfying outcomes in the task. From table 4.25 above, however, it can be detected that a slightly higher percentage (47,06%) of the informants think instrumental motives are useless. The point may be that whereas the respondents believe that integrative motives are more supportive in the task of pronunciation learning than instrumental ones (cf. tables 4.22, 4.23 and 4.24,) they still think that a highly strong utilitarian motivation can also result in success. This conclusion is further supported by the responses given with regard to the following statement as illustrated in table 4.27.

**Statement 6:** The stronger a student's motivation to learn English pronunciation, the more successful he will be, regardless of whether his motives are integrative or instrumental.

Years of experience in teaching	Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Total
1 – 5 years	01 16,67%	04 66,67%	01 16,67%	00	00	06
6 – 10 years	01 25%	03 75%	00	00	00	04
11 – 15 years	02 28,57%	04 57,14%	01 14,29%	00	00	07
16 – 20 years	01 20%	02 40%	01 20%	01 20%	00	05
21 – 25 years	01 20%	02 40%	01 20%	01 20%	00	05
26 – 38 years	04 57,14%	03 42,86%	00	00	00	07
Total	10 29,41%	18 52,94%	04 11,76%	02 05,88%	00	34

*Table 4.27: Teachers' degrees of agreement about the determinativeness of the strength of motivation, rather than its type, in the area of pronunciation*

The vast majority of the responses (29,41% + 52,94% = 82,35%) are in favour of the determinative effect the strength of motivation, rather than its type, has on pronunciation learning. Thus, it can be said that whereas integrative and instrumental motives are widely thought to have different effects, these effects can be transposed by the relative strengths of the motivating forces.

#### 4.3.2.6 The Effect of Students' Personality Traits

**Statement 1:** Students' success in the area of pronunciation depends on their personality characteristics.

Years of experience in teaching	Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Total
1 – 5 years	00	02 33,33%	02 33,33%	02 33,33%	00	06
6 – 10 years	01 25%	02 50%	01 25%	00	00	04
11 – 15 years	01 14,29%	04 57,14%	01 14,29%	01 14,29%	00	07
16 – 20 years	01 20%	02 40%	02 40%	00	00	05
21 – 25 years	00	02 40%	01 20%	01 20%	01 20%	05
26 – 38 years	00	04 66,67%	02 33,33%	00	00	06
Total	03 09,09%	16 48,48%	09 27,27%	04 12,12%	01 03,03%	33

*Table 4.28: Teachers' degrees of agreement about the dependence of the learners' pronunciation achievement on their personality traits*

As table 4.28 exhibits, most of the teachers (57,57% = 09,09% + 48,48%) agree about the relevance of FL learners' personality traits to their pronunciation attainments.

**Statement 2:** Extroverted (sociable) students will learn to pronounce English better than introverted students.

Years of experience in teaching	Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Total
1 – 5 years	01 16,67%	04 66,67%	01 16,67%	00	00	06
6 – 10 years	03 75%	01 25%	00	00	00	04
11 – 15 years	01 14,29%	03 42,86%	01 14,29%	02 28,57%	00	07
16 – 20 years	01 20%	03 60%	00	01 20%	00	05
21 – 25 years	04 80%	01 20%	00	00	00	05
26 – 38 years	02 28,57%	05 71,43%	00	00	00	07
Total	12 35,29%	17 50%	02 05,88%	03 08,82%	00	34

*Table 4.29: Teachers' degrees of agreement about the superiority of extroverted learners over their introverted classmates in the area of pronunciation*

For the vast majority of respondents (85,29%,) extroverted individuals are better pronunciation learners than introverted persons.

**Statement 3:** Empathetic students are able to identify themselves more easily with foreigners than unsympathetic students, and, thus, they are readier to accept English native speakers' speeches as a model in their learning.

Years of experience in teaching	Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Total
1 – 5 years	00	05 83,33%	01 16,67%	00	00	06
6 – 10 years	01 25%	02 50%	00	01 25%	00	04
11 – 15 years	01 14,29%	05 71,43%	00	01 14,29%	00	07
16 – 20 years	01 20%	02 40%	01 20%	01 20%	00	05
21 – 25 years	00	02 40%	01 20%	02 40%	00	05
26 – 38 years	03 42,86%	03 42,86%	01 14,29%	00	00	07
Total	06 17,65%	19 55,88%	04 11,76%	05 14,70%	00	34

*Table 4.30: Teachers' degrees of agreement about the superiority of empathetic learners over their unsympathetic classmates in the area of pronunciation*

Table 4.30 demonstrates that most of the questioned teachers (17,65% + 55,88% = 73,53%) think that empathetic students are better suited for the task of pronunciation learning than unsympathetic ones.

**Statement 4:** Students with strong ego boundaries (i.e., who are enclosed on their selves) have more difficulty to learn English pronunciation than those with permeable ego boundaries.

Years of experience in teaching	Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Total
1 – 5 years	01 16,67%	04 66,67%	00	00	01 16,67%	06
6 – 10 years	02 50%	02 50%	00	00	00	04
11 – 15 years	00	04 57,14%	02 28,57%	01 14,29%	00	07
16 – 20 years	00	03 60%	01 20%	01 20%	00	05
21 – 25 years	02 40%	01 20%	00	02 40%	00	05
26 – 38 years	02 28,57%	04 57,14%	00	01 14,29%	00	07
Total	07 20,59%	18 52,94%	03 08,82%	05 14,70%	01 02,94%	34

*Table 4.31: Teachers' degrees of agreement about the superiority of learners with permeable ego boundaries over those who have strong ego boundaries in the area of pronunciation*

73,53% (20,59% + 52,94%) of the responses express the belief that firm ego boundaries are unfavourable for FL pronunciation learning.

**Statement 5:** The higher the student’s self-confidence, the higher his oral participation in the classroom and the more positively he is going to accept his teacher’s feedback on his pronunciation errors, and, thus, the more successful he will be.

Years of experience in teaching	Strongly agree		Agree		Undecided		Disagree		Strongly disagree		Total
1 – 5 years	01	16,67%	03	50%	02	33,33%	00		00		06
6 – 10 years	04	100%	00		00		00		00		04
11 – 15 years	03	42,86%	04	57,14%	00		00		00		07
16 – 20 years	01	20%	03	60%	00		01	20%	00		05
21 – 25 years	04	80%	01	20%	00		00		00		05
26 – 38 years	03	42,86%	04	57,14%	00		00		00		07
Total	16	47,06%	15	44,12%	02	05,88%	01	02,94%	00		34

*Table 4.32: Teachers’ degrees of agreement about the superiority of self-confident learners in the area of pronunciation*

Except for one who disagree and two who are undecided, all the other respondents think that self-confidence can greatly enhance the process of pronunciation learning.

**Statement 6:** A high degree of anxiety about success handicaps learners and hinders learning.

Years of experience in teaching	Strongly agree		Agree		Undecided		Disagree		Strongly disagree		Total
1 – 5 years	00		05	83,33%	01	16,67%	00		00		06
6 – 10 years	01	25%	02	50%	00		01	25%	00		04
11 – 15 years	00		05	71,43%	01	14,29%	00		01	14,29%	07
16 – 20 years	00		03	60%	00		02	40%	00		05
21 – 25 years	00		05	100%	00		00		00		05
26 – 38 years	01	16,67%	04	66,67%	01	16,67%	00		00		06
Total	02	06,06%	24	72,73%	03	09,09%	03	09,09%	01	03,03%	33

*Table 4.33: Teachers’ degrees of agreement about the negative effect of high level anxiety on pronunciation learning*

Nearly all informants (78,79%) agree that high level anxiety is handicapping in FL pronunciation learning.

**Statement 7:** A moderate amount of anxiety can push learners to work harder, and, thus, to experience more success.

Years of experience in teaching	Strongly agree		Agree		Undecided		Disagree		Strongly disagree	Total
1 – 5 years	02	33,33%	03	50%	01	16,67%	00		00	06
6 – 10 years	01	25%	03	75%	00		00		00	04
11 – 15 years	00		06	85,71%	00		01	14,29%	00	07
16 – 20 years	00		02	40%	03	60%	00		00	05
21 – 25 years	00		05	100%	00		00		00	05
26 – 38 years	01	14,29%	04	57,14%	02	28,57%	00		00	07
Total	04	11,76%	23	67,65%	06	17,65%	01	2,94%	00	34

*Table 4.34: Teachers' degrees of agreement about the positive effect of moderate anxiety on pronunciation learning*

Whereas 78,79% of the respondents believe that a high amount of anxiety hinders FL pronunciation learning (cf. Table 4.33,) 79,41% (11,76% + 67,65%) of them also think that moderate anxiety can enhance the learners' achievements in this field.

**Statement 8:** The more learners think their success is not dependent on them, but on external factors (e.g., efficacy of teaching, opportunities of learning,) the less they can achieve in the area of pronunciation.

Years of experience in teaching	Strongly agree		Agree		Undecided		Disagree		Strongly disagree	Total
1 – 5 years	01	16,67%	04	66,67%	01	16,67%	00		00	06
6 – 10 years	01	25%	02	50%	01	25%	00		00	04
11 – 15 years	00		04	57,14%	01	14,29%	02	28,57%	00	07
16 – 20 years	00		02	40%	00		03	60%	00	05
21 – 25 years	01	20%	02	40%	01	20%	01	20%	00	05
26 – 38 years	02	28,57%	04	57,14%	01	14,29%	00		00	07
Total	05	14,70%	18	52,94%	05	14,70%	06	17,65%	00	34

*Table 4.35: Teachers' degrees of agreement about the dependence of learners' achievement in pronunciation learning on their locus of control*

Table 4.35 above demonstrates the teachers' general belief that FL students who think their learning achievements are dependent on external factors, not on them, are the least successful in the area of pronunciation, when compared with those who feel and take responsibility for their own learning.

#### 4.3.2.7 The Effect of Social and Environmental Factors

**Statement 1:** The social and environmental opportunities of learning available to each learner affect his degree of attainment in English pronunciation.

Years of experience in teaching	Strongly agree		Agree		Undecided		Disagree		Strongly disagree		Total
1 – 5 years	01	16,67%	03	50%	01	16,67%	01	16,67%	00		06
6 – 10 years	02	50%	02	50%	00		00		00		04
11 – 15 years	05	71,43%	02	28,57%	00		00		00		07
16 – 20 years	01	20%	02	40%	01	20%	01	20%	00		05
21 – 25 years	04	80%	01	20%	00		00		00		05
26 – 38 years	03	42,86%	04	57,14%	00		00		00		07
Total	16	47,06%	14	41,18%	02	05,88%	02	05,88%	00		34

*Table 4.36: Teachers' degrees of agreement about the dependence of pronunciation achievement on the external opportunities of learning the students have*

Approximately all the teachers (88,24%) are in agreement that social and environmental opportunities of learning affect FL students' levels of achievement in the area of pronunciation.

**Statement 2:** The degree of success in English foreign language pronunciation learning depends on the amount of exposure to authentic English the learners have.

Years of experience in teaching	Strongly agree		Agree		Undecided		Disagree		Strongly disagree		Total
1 – 5 years	05	83,33%	00		00		01	16,67%	00		06
6 – 10 years	03	75%	01	25%	00		00		00		04
11 – 15 years	06	85,71%	01	14,29%	00		00		00		07
16 – 20 years	04	80%	01	20%	00		00		00		05
21 – 25 years	03	60%	01	20%	00		01	20%	00		05
26 – 38 years	04	57,14%	03	42,86%	00		00		00		07
Total	25	73,53%	07	20,59%	00		02	05,88%	00		34

*Table 4.37: Teachers' degrees of agreement about the dependence of pronunciation achievement on the learners' amount of exposure to English*

More than 94% (94,12% = 73,53% + 20,59%) of the informants think that EFL learners' levels of pronunciation proficiency are dependent on their amounts of exposure to authentic English.

### 4.3.3 Section 3: Personal Perceptions

**Statement 1:** A good pronunciation learner has started learning at an early age.

Years of experience in teaching	Very important		Quite important		Important		Not very important		Not at all important	Total
1 – 5 years	02	33,33%	02	33,33%	01	16,67%	01	16,67%	00	06
6 – 10 years	02	50%	01	25%	01	25%	00		00	04
11 – 15 years	05	71,43%	00		01	14,29%	01	14,29%	00	07
16 – 20 years	03	60%	00		02	40%	00		00	05
21 – 25 years	02	40%	03	60%	00		00		00	05
26 – 38 years	04	57,14%	01	14,29%	02	28,57%	00		00	07
Total	18	52,94%	07	20,59%	07	20,59%	02	05,88%	00	34

*Table 4.38: Degrees of importance given to an early exposure to English*

52,94% of the respondents conceive starting EFL learning early in childhood as very important to pronunciation acquisition, 20,59% regard it as quite important and 20,59% think it is important.

**Statement 2:** A good pronunciation learner has an “ear” for foreign sounds.

Years of experience in teaching	Very important		Quite important		Important		Not very important		Not at all important	Total
1 – 5 years	03	50%	01	16,67%	00		02	33,33%	00	06
6 – 10 years	01	25%	02	50%	01	25%	00		00	04
11 – 15 years	03	42,86%	02	28,57%	02	28,57%	00		00	07
16 – 20 years	04	80%	01	20%	00		00		00	05
21 – 25 years	00		02	50%	00		02	50%	00	04
26 – 38 years	02	28,57%	04	57,14%	01	14,29%	00		00	07
Total	13	39,39%	12	36,36%	04	12,12%	04	12,12%	00	33

*Table 4.39: Degrees of importance given to phonetic coding ability*

Some informants, exactly 39,39% and 36,36% of them, consider the skill of phonetic coding to be, respectively, very important and quite important in pronunciation learning. The rest of teachers are divided into two equal groups. The first regard this talent as only important to acquire an FL pronunciation and the second think that it is not very important.

**Statement 3:** A good pronunciation learner is endowed with an ability to mimic foreign sounds.

Years of experience in teaching	Very important		Quite important		Important		Not very important		Not at all important		Total
1 – 5 years	03	50%	02	33,33%	00		00		01	16,67%	06
6 – 10 years	01	25%	01	25%	02	50%	00		00		04
11 – 15 years	03	42,86%	03	42,86%	01	14,29%	00		00		07
16 – 20 years	03	60%	02	40%	00		00		00		05
21 – 25 years	01	20%	01	20%	02	40%	01	20%	00		05
26 – 38 years	01	14,29%	03	42,86%	03	42,86%	00		00		07
Total	12	35,29%	12	35,29%	08	23,52%	01	02,94%	01	02,94%	34

*Table 4.40: Degrees of importance given to ability in phonemic mimicry*

Table 4.40 demonstrates that the majority of respondents view ability in phonemic mimicry as significant. In particular, 35,29% of them state it is very important, 35,29% assert it is quite important, and 23,52% declare it is important.

**Statement 4:** A good pronunciation learner has a large memory capacity.

Years of experience in teaching	Very important		Quite important		Important		Not very important		Not at all important		Total
1 – 5 years	01	16,67%	02	33,33%	02	33,33%	01	16,67%	00		06
6 – 10 years	02	50%	01	25%	01	25%	00		00		04
11 – 15 years	03	42,86%	01	14,29%	03	42,86%	00		00		07
16 – 20 years	03	60%	01	20%	01	20%	00		00		05
21 – 25 years	01	20%	02	40%	01	20%	01	20%	00		05
26 – 38 years	01	14,29%	01	14,29%	02	28,57%	03	42,86%	00		07
Total	11	32,35%	08	23,52%	10	29,41%	05	14,70%	00		34

*Table 4.41: Degrees of importance given to memory ability*

Five teachers from the thirty-four respondents feel that memory ability is not very important in pronunciation learning. Nonetheless, the majority judge this gift to be very important, quite important or important, as it can be easily noticed from table 4.41.

**Statement 5:** A good pronunciation learner has strong motives to learn.

Years of experience in teaching	Very important		Quite important		Important		Not very important		Not at all important		Total
1 – 5 years	01	16,67%	04	66,67%	01	16,67%	00		00		06
6 – 10 years	03	75%	01	25%	00		00		00		04
11 – 15 years	03	42,86%	03	42,86%	01	14,29%	00		00		07
16 – 20 years	03	60%	01	20%	01	20%	00		00		05
21 – 25 years	02	40%	02	40%	01	20%	00		00		05
26 – 38 years	03	42,86%	02	28,57%	02	28,57%	00		00		07
Total	15	44,12%	13	38,23%	06	17,65%	00		00		34

*Table 4.42: Degrees of importance given to motivation*

As revealed by the results above, most of the questioned teachers (44,12%) feel that motivation is very important to learn an FL pronunciation. A smaller percentage of them (38,23%) state that it is quite important, and the smallest proportion (17,65%) regard it as important, but no one thinks motivation is not significant.

**Statement 6:** A good pronunciation learner is dominated by a drive, a strong desire, to succeed in every thing he does.

Years of experience in teaching	Very important		Quite important		Important		Not very important		Not at all important		Total
1 – 5 years	01	16,67%	02	33,33%	03	50%	00		00		06
6 – 10 years	01	25%	02	50%	00		01	25%	00		04
11 – 15 years	02	28,57%	02	28,57%	02	28,57%	01	14,29%	00		07
16 – 20 years	00		03	60%	01	20%	01	20%	00		05
21 – 25 years	01	20%	00		01	20%	03	60%	00		05
26 – 38 years	02	28,57%	01	14,29%	04	57,14%	00		00		07
Total	07	20,59%	10	29,41%	11	32,35%	06	17,65%	00		34

*Table 4.43: Degrees of importance given to having a drive for success*

From the results displayed in table 4.43, it seems that the great part of the respondents believe that being motivated by a drive to succeed in everything one does is important in FL pronunciation learning.

**Statement 7:** A good pronunciation learner values English foreign language learning.

Years of experience in teaching	Very important	Quite important	Important	Not very important	Not at all important	Total
1 – 5 years	01 16,67%	02 33,33%	02 33,33%	00	01 16,67%	06
6 – 10 years	02 50%	02 50%	00	00	00	04
11 – 15 years	02 28,57%	02 28,57%	03 42,86%	00	00	07
16 – 20 years	01 20%	03 60%	01 20%	00	00	05
21 – 25 years	01 20%	01 20%	02 40%	01 20%	00	05
26 – 38 years	02 28,57%	01 14,29%	03 42,86%	01 14,29%	00	07
Total	09 26,47%	11 32,35%	11 32,35%	02 05,88%	01 02,94%	34

*Table 4.44: Degrees of importance given to holding positive attitudes towards EFL learning*

The collected answers in relation to the present statement reveal that the majority think valuing EFL learning is quite important (32,35%) or important (32,35%) to pronunciation achievement.

**Statement 8:** A good pronunciation learner has a sincere personal interest in the English language and culture.

Years of experience in teaching	Very important	Quite important	Important	Not very important	Not at all important	Total
1 – 5 years	01 16,67%	02 33,33%	01 16,67%	02 33,33%	00	06
6 – 10 years	01 25%	02 50%	01 25%	00	00	04
11 – 15 years	02 28,57%	03 42,86%	00	01 14,29%	01 14,29%	07
16 – 20 years	01 20%	03 60%	01 20%	00	00	05
21 – 25 years	01 20%	01 20%	02 40%	01 20%	00	05
26 – 38 years	02 28,57%	00	03 42,86%	02 28,57%	00	07
Total	08 23,52%	11 32,35%	08 23,52%	06 17,65%	01 02,94%	34

*Table 4.45: Degrees of importance given to holding positive attitudes towards the English language and culture*

The results are not totally in accord, but it can be said that having a personal interest in the English language and culture is generally deemed important to the learning of its pronunciation.

**Statement 9:** A good pronunciation learner has a willingness, or a desire, to be like English native speakers.

Years of experience in teaching	Very important	Quite important	Important	Not very important	Not at all important	Total
1 – 5 years	00	02 33,33%	01 16,67%	03 50%	00	06
6 – 10 years	00	02 50%	00	02 50%	00	04
11 – 15 years	03 42,86%	02 28,57%	00	02 28,57%	00	07
16 – 20 years	00	02 40%	02 40%	00	01 20%	05
21 – 25 years	00	01 20%	01 20%	02 40%	01 20%	05
26 – 38 years	02 28,57%	01 14,29%	02 28,57%	02 28,57%	00	07
Total	05 14,70%	10 29,41%	06 17,65%	11 32,35%	02 05,88%	34

*Table 4.46: Degrees of importance given to holding positive attitudes towards English native speakers (desire to be like them)*

Again the teachers' views are inconsistent. Nonetheless, it can be concluded that the majority do not think that EFL pronunciation learners really need to feel a desire to be like English native speakers.

**Statement 10:** A good pronunciation learner admires English native speakers.

Years of experience in teaching	Very important	Quite important	Important	Not very important	Not at all important	Total
1 – 5 years	00	01 16,67%	01 16,67%	03 50%	01 16,67%	06
6 – 10 years	00	01 25%	00	03 75%	00	04
11 – 15 years	04 57,14%	00	01 14,29%	02 28,57%	00	07
16 – 20 years	01 20%	01 20%	02 40%	00	01 20%	05
21 – 25 years	00	00	01 20%	03 60%	01 20%	05
26 – 38 years	03 42,86%	00	01 14,29%	02 28,57%	01 14,29%	07
Total	08 23,52%	03 08,82%	06 17,65%	13 38,23%	04 11,76%	34

*Table 4.47: Degrees of importance given to holding positive attitudes towards English native speakers (admiration for them)*

The informants' opinions concerning the present statement are similar to those given with regard to the previous one. Different views come out, but as a majority decision, FL pronunciation learners do not need to admire the TL native speakers.

**Statement 11:** A good pronunciation learner wants to sound like English native speakers.

Years of experience in teaching	Very important		Quite important		Important		Not very important		Not at all important		Total
1 – 5 years	01	16,67%	01	16,67%	04	66,67%	00		00		06
6 – 10 years	00		03	75%	01	25%	00		00		04
11 – 15 years	03	42,86%	01	14,29%	02	28,57%	01	14,29%	00		07
16 – 20 years	01	20%	03	60%	00		00		01	20%	05
21 – 25 years	01	20%	02	40%	02	40%	00		00		05
26 – 38 years	02	28,57%	01	14,29%	04	57,14%	00		00		07
Total	08	23,52%	11	32,35%	13	38,23%	01	02,94%	01	02,94%	34

*Table 4.48: Degrees of importance given to holding positive attitudes towards English native speakers (desire to sound like them)*

Whereas the questioned teachers do not think EFL pronunciation students are required to admire English native speakers or to be like them, they still believe they need to feel a desire to sound like them. This, of course, has not to affect the learners' individual personality traits because it is simply related to the act of choosing native speakers' speeches as a model for pronunciation learning.

**Statement 12:** A good pronunciation learner expects success.

Years of experience in teaching	Very important		Quite important		Important		Not very important		Not at all important		Total
1 – 5 years	02	33,33%	02	33,33%	02	33,33%	00		00		06
6 – 10 years	01	25%	03	75%	00		00		00		04
11 – 15 years	02	28,57%	04	57,14%	00		01	14,29%	00		07
16 – 20 years	00		02	40%	03	60%	00		00		05
21 – 25 years	02	40%	01	20%	01	20%	01	20%	00		05
26 – 38 years	01	14,29%	03	42,86%	02	28,57%	01	14,29%	00		07
Total	08	23,52%	15	44,12%	08	23,52%	03	08,82%	00		34

*Table 4.49: Degrees of importance given to learners' expectations of success*

As shown by the results in table 4.49, nearly all the respondents consider having high expectations of success by learners to be important (to different degrees) to pronunciation achievement.

**Statement 13:** A good pronunciation learner makes volunteer efforts to learn.

Years of experience in teaching	Very important		Quite important		Important		Not very important		Not at all important		Total
1 – 5 years	02	33,33%	01	16,67%	03	50%	00		00		06
6 – 10 years	01	25%	03	75%	00		00		00		04
11 – 15 years	04	57,14%	02	28,57%	01	14,29%	00		00		07
16 – 20 years	00		03	60%	02	40%	00		00		05
21 – 25 years	03	60%	02	40%	00		00		00		05
26 – 38 years	02	28,57%	02	28,57%	02	28,57%	01	14,29%	00		07
Total	12	35,29%	13	38,23%	08	23,52%	01	02,94%	00		34

*Table 4.50: Degrees of importance given to making volunteer efforts to learn*

It can be concluded from the teachers' responses above that a good pronunciation learner must take responsibility for his own learning. This same conclusion is further conformed by the results shown in table 4.60.

**Statement 14:** A good pronunciation learner has a good self-image and a lot of confidence.

Years of experience in teaching	Very important		Quite important		Important		Not very important		Not at all important		Total
1 – 5 years	02	33,33%	02	33,33%	02	33,33%	00		00		06
6 – 10 years	01	25%	03	75%	00		00		00		04
11 – 15 years	01	14,29%	03	42,86%	03	42,86%	00		00		07
16 – 20 years	01	20%	02	40%	02	40%	00		00		05
21 – 25 years	00		03	60%	02	40%	00		00		05
26 – 38 years	01	14,29%	02	28,57%	03	42,86%	01	14,29%	00		07
Total	06	17,65%	15	44,12%	12	35,29%	01	2,94%	00		34

*Table 4.51: Degrees of importance given to self-confidence*

Once more, the majority of the questioned teachers (97,06% = 17,65% + 44,12% + 35,29%) express their belief that the trait *self-confidence* is really supportive in FL pronunciation learning (cf. Table 4.32.)

**Statement 15:** A good pronunciation learner has a high degree of sociability.

Years of experience in teaching	Very important	Quite important	Important	Not very important	Not at all important	Total
1 – 5 years	00	03 50%	03 50%	00	00	06
6 – 10 years	01 25%	02 50%	01 25%	00	00	04
11 – 15 years	01 14,29%	03 42,86%	03 42,86%	00	00	07
16 – 20 years	01 20%	03 60%	00	01 20%	00	05
21 – 25 years	01 20%	01 20%	02 40%	01 20%	00	05
26 – 38 years	01 14,29%	00	05 71,43%	00	01 14,29%	07
Total	05 14,70%	12 35,29%	14 41,18%	02 05,88%	01 02,94%	34

*Table 4.52: Degrees of importance given to sociability*

Being sociable is also deemed important to pronunciation learning by most of the informants. Particularly, 14,70% of them regard this trait as very important, 35,29% consider it quite important, and 05,88% think it is important.

**Statement 16:** A good pronunciation learner is sympathetic with English native speakers, their cultural values and their ways of thinking.

Years of experience in teaching	Very important	Quite important	Important	Not very important	Not at all important	Total
1 – 5 years	00	00	02 33,33%	03 50%	01 16,67%	06
6 – 10 years	00	02 50%	01 25%	00	01 25%	04
11 – 15 years	01 14,29%	01 14,29%	02 28,57%	02 28,57%	01 14,29%	07
16 – 20 years	01 20%	03 60%	00	01 20%	00	05
21 – 25 years	00	00	00	03 60%	02 40%	05
26 – 38 years	00	01 16,67%	02 33,33%	03 50%	00	06
Total	02 06,06%	07 21,21%	07 21,21%	12 36,36%	05 15,15%	33

*Table 4.53: Degrees of importance given to sympathy*

The responses recorded in table 4.53 show that the majority do not feel a need to be sympathetic towards English native speakers to succeed in learning the pronunciation of their language. In particular, 06,06%, 21,21% and 21,21% of the questioned teachers state that this feature is, respectively, very important, quite important and important. On the other hand, a majority of 36,36% believe this quality is not very important and 15,15% declare that it is not at all important to EFL pronunciation learning.

**Statement 17:** A good pronunciation learner lacks inhibition.

Years of experience in teaching	Very important	Quite important	Important	Not very important	Not at all important	Total
1 – 5 years	01 16,67%	01 16,67%	02 33,33%	01 16,67%	01 16,67%	06
6 – 10 years	01 25%	03 75%	00	00	00	04
11 – 15 years	01 14,29%	02 28,57%	03 42,86%	00	01 14,29%	07
16 – 20 years	00	03 60%	00	01 20%	01 20%	05
21 – 25 years	00	01 25%	01 25%	02 50%	00	04
26 – 38 years	01 14,29%	01 14,29%	02 28,57%	02 28,57%	01 14,29%	07
Total	04 12,12%	11 33,33%	08 24,24%	06 18,18%	04 12,12%	33

*Table 4.54: Degrees of importance given to lacking inhibition*

The greatest part of the respondents thinks that inhibition has negative effects on the process of EFL pronunciation learning. Accordingly, they report in a majority of 69,69% (12,12% + 33,33% + 24,24%) that lacking this characteristic is desirable to come at satisfying results in this field of study.

**Statement 18:** A good pronunciation learner likes change.

Years of experience in teaching	Very important	Quite important	Important	Not very important	Not at all important	Total
1 – 5 years	00	00	02 33,33%	03 50%	01 16,67%	06
6 – 10 years	00	02 50%	01 25%	01 25%	00	04
11 – 15 years	01 14,29%	01 14,29%	02 28,57%	02 28,57%	01 14,29%	07
16 – 20 years	00	01 20%	02 40%	02 40%	00	05
21 – 25 years	00	01 20%	00	02 40%	02 40%	05
26 – 38 years	01 16,67%	00	03 50%	01 16,67%	01 16,67%	06
Total	02 06,06%	05 15,15%	10 30,30%	11 33,33%	05 15,15%	33

*Table 4.55: Degrees of importance given to liking change*

In general, the results displayed in table 4.55 above show that the questioned teachers do not think liking change is really important to pronunciation learning.

**Statement 19:** A good pronunciation learner is a risk taker.

Years of experience in teaching	Very important	Quite important	Important	Not very important	Not at all important	Total
1 – 5 years	00	01 16,67%	03 50%	00	02 33,33%	06
6 – 10 years	00	02 50%	01 25%	01 25%	00	04
11 – 15 years	01 14,29%	00	03 42,86%	01 14,29%	02 28,57%	07
16 – 20 years	00	00	04 80%	00	01 20%	05
21 – 25 years	00	00	01 20%	01 20%	03 60%	05
26 – 38 years	01 14,29%	01 14,29%	03 42,86%	01 14,29%	01 14,29%	07
Total	02 05,88%	04 11,76%	15 44,12%	04 11,76%	09 26,47%	34

*Table 4.56: Degrees of importance given to risk taking*

The informants represent different views about how well risk takers do in pronunciation learning. Two and four teachers state that the present characteristic is very important and quite important, respectively. Nine respondents, however, declare that risk taking is not at all important in pronunciation acquisition. Yet, the majority (fifteen teachers: 44,12%) think it is important.

**Statement 20:** A good pronunciation learner is willing to make mistakes.

Years of experience in teaching	Very important	Quite important	Important	Not very important	Not at all important	Total
1 – 5 years	00	00	04 66,67%	01 16,67%	01 16,67%	06
6 – 10 years	00	01 25%	02 50%	00	01 25%	04
11 – 15 years	01 14,29%	00	02 28,57%	01 14,29%	03 42,86%	07
16 – 20 years	00	00	03 60%	01 20%	01 20%	05
21 – 25 years	01 20%	00	01 20%	01 20%	02 40%	05
26 – 38 years	01 16,67%	01 16,67%	03 50%	01 16,67%	00	06
Total	03 09,09%	02 06,06%	15 45,45%	05 15,15%	08 24,24%	33

*Table 4.57: Degrees of importance given to having a willingness to make mistakes*

The respondents' views concerning learners' willingness to make mistakes while speaking English and the effect of this on their pronunciation attainment are not in agreement, too. Different degrees of importance are attached to this trait, but the largest part (45,45%) regards it as important.

**Statement 21:** A good pronunciation learner is permanently involved in classroom discussions and debates.

Years of experience in teaching	Very important		Quite important		Important		Not very important		Not at all important		Total
1 – 5 years	02	33,33%	01	16,67%	03	50%	00		00		06
6 – 10 years	01	25%	02	50%	01	25%	00		00		04
11 – 15 years	03	42,86%	01	14,29%	03	42,86%	00		00		07
16 – 20 years	01	20%	02	40%	01	20%	01	20%	00		05
21 – 25 years	03	60%	01	20%	01	20%	00		00		05
26 – 38 years	00		05	71,43%	02	28,57%	00		00		07
Total	10	29,41%	12	35,29%	11	32,35%	01	02,94%	00		34

*Table 4.58: Degrees of importance given to permanent participation in classroom discussions*

As demonstrated in table 4.58, all the questioned teachers, except for one, view participation in classroom discussions as essential to pronunciation achievement.

**Statement 22:** A good pronunciation learner practices his language skills as often as possible.

Years of experience in teaching	Very important		Quite important		Important		Not very important		Not at all important		Total
1 – 5 years	02	33,33%	02	33,33%	02	33,33%	00		00		06
6 – 10 years	02	50%	02	50%	00		00		00		04
11 – 15 years	03	42,86%	03	42,86%	01	14,29%	00		00		07
16 – 20 years	02	40%	02	40%	01	20%	00		00		05
21 – 25 years	04	80%	01	20%	00		00		00		05
26 – 38 years	02	28,57%	05	71,43%	00		00		00		07
Total	15	44,12%	15	44,12%	04	11,76%	00		00		34

*Table 4.59: Degrees of importance given to practice*

All the teachers, with no exception, regard pronunciation practice as very important, quite important or important to learners' attainments in the area of pronunciation. In other words, whereas the informants differ in how much significant they conceive it, no one disregard the role of practice in EFL pronunciation learning. What is more, only four respondents value it as merely important and the rest declare it is very or quite important.

**Statement 23:** A good pronunciation learner takes responsibility for his own learning and does not completely rely on his teacher.

Years of experience in teaching	Very important		Quite important		Important		Not very important		Not at all important		Total
1 – 5 years	03	50%	01	16,67%	02	33,33%	00		00		06
6 – 10 years	03	75%	01	25%	00		00		00		04
11 – 15 years	02	28,57%	03	42,86%	01	14,29%	01	14,29%	00		07
16 – 20 years	01	20%	02	40%	01	20%	01	20%	00		05
21 – 25 years	01	20%	02	40%	01	20%	01	20%	00		05
26 – 38 years	02	28,57%	02	28,57%	01	14,29%	02	28,57%	00		07
Total	12	35,29%	11	32,35%	06	17,65%	05	14,70%	00		34

Table 4.60: Degrees of importance given to learners' locus of control

In accordance with the results displayed in Table 4.50, the teachers reaffirm their conviction that EFL pronunciation learners must take responsibility for their learning.

In order to arrive at more clear conclusions about the characteristics teachers deem essential to pronunciation learning, an attempt is made in what follows to contrast the respondents' views about all the provided qualities together so that more determinative results can emerge. For example, table 4.61 compares how many teachers state that a particular characteristic is *very important* for all the given traits. The table noticeably demonstrates that *starting EFL learning early* is regarded by the informants as the most important characteristic to successful pronunciation acquisition. Clearly, 52,94% of the questioned teachers state that this quality is very important. In addition, 44,12% of the teachers qualifies *motivation* and *practice* as very important. On the other hand, only 06,06% think that *liking change* and *sympathy* are very important to pronunciation achievement, and merely 05,88% judge *risk taking* in a similar way. In short, it can be concluded that – according to our respondents – *starting EFL learning early, motivation and practice* are the first characteristics considered essential to EFL pronunciation learning.

More to the point, as it can be noticed from table 4.62, the teachers confirm the significance they attribute to *practice* and *motivation* by stating in a majority of 44,12% that *practice* and *high expectations of success* (a trait shown earlier to be related to motivation, cf. sections 1.4 and 4.3.2.4) are *quite important* to pronunciation learning. What is more, 44,12% of the informants show that *self-confidence* is also quite important in this process. In addition to the characteristics the informants regard as highly essential in the task of EFL pronunciation learning, the results in table 4.63 show that *willingness to make mistakes, risk taking* and *sociability* are judged by 45,45%, 44,12% and 41,18% of the respondents to be *important*.

The provided characteristics	1 – 5 years	6 – 10 years	11 – 15 years	16 – 20 years	21 – 25 years	26 – 38 years	Total
An early exposure to English	02 33,33%	02 50%	05 71,43%	03 60%	02 40%	04 57,14%	18 52,94%
Phonetic coding ability	03 50%	01 25%	03 42,86%	04 80%	00	02 28,57%	13 39,39%
Phonemic mimicry	03 50%	01 25%	03 42,86%	03 60%	01 20%	01 14,29%	12 35,29%
Memory capacity	01 16,67%	02 50%	03 42,86%	03 60%	01 20%	01 14,29%	11 32,35%
Motivation	01 16,67%	03 75%	03 42,86%	03 60%	02 40%	03 42,86%	15 44,12%
Drive for success	01 16,67%	01 25%	02 28,57%	00	01 20%	02 28,57%	07 20,59%
Positive attitudes towards EFL learning	01 16,67%	02 50%	02 28,57%	01 20%	01 20%	02 28,57%	09 26,47%
Positive attitudes towards English and its culture	01 16,67%	01 25%	02 28,57%	01 20%	01 20%	02 28,57%	08 23,52%
Desire to be like English native speakers	00	00	03 42,86%	00	00	02 28,57%	05 14,70%
Admiration for English native speakers	00	00	04 57,14%	01 20%	00	03 42,86%	08 23,52%
Desire to sound like English native speakers	01 16,67%	00	03 42,86%	01 20%	01 20%	02 28,57%	08 23,52%
Expectations of success	02 33,33%	01 25%	02 28,57%	00	02 40%	01 14,29%	08 23,52%
Making volunteer efforts to learn	02 33,33%	01 25%	04 57,14%	00	03 60%	02 28,57%	12 35,29%
Self-confidence	02 33,33%	01 25%	01 14,29%	01 20%	00	01 14,29%	06 17,65%
Sociability	00	01 25%	01 14,29%	01 20%	01 20%	01 14,29%	05 14,70%
Sympathy	00	00	01 14,29%	01 20%	00	00	02 06,06%
Lacking inhibition	01 16,67%	01 25%	01 14,29%	00	00	01 14,29%	04 12,12%
Liking change	00	00	01 14,29%	00	00	01 16,67%	02 06,06%
Risk taking	00	00	01 14,29%	00	00	01 14,29%	02 05,88%
Willingness to make mistakes	00	00	01 14,29%	00	01 20%	01 16,67%	03 09,09%
Classroom participation	02 33,33%	01 25%	03 42,86%	01 20%	03 60%	00	10 29,41%
Practice	02 33,33%	02 50%	03 42,86%	02 40%	04 80%	02 28,57%	15 44,12%
Locus of control	03 50%	03 75%	02 28,57%	01 20%	01 20%	02 28,57%	12 35,29%

Table 4.61: Degrees of importance: very important

The provided characteristics	1 – 5 years	6 – 10 years	11 – 15 years	16 – 20 years	21 – 25 years	26 – 38 years	Total
An early exposure to English	02 33,33%	01 25%	00	00	03 60%	01 14,29%	07 20,59%
Phonetic coding ability	01 16,67%	02 50%	02 28,57%	01 20%	02 50%	04 57,14%	12 36,36%
Phonemic mimicry	02 33,33%	01 25%	03 42,86%	02 40%	01 20%	03 42,86%	12 35,29%
Memory capacity	02 33,33%	01 25%	01 14,29%	01 20%	02 40%	01 14,29%	08 23,52%
Motivation	04 66,67%	01 25%	03 42,86%	01 20%	02 40%	02 28,57%	13 38,23%
Drive for success	02 33,33%	02 50%	02 28,57%	03 60%	00	01 14,29%	10 29,41%
Positive attitudes towards EFL learning	02 33,33%	02 50%	02 28,57%	03 60%	01 20%	01 14,29%	11 32,35%
Positive attitudes towards English and its culture	02 33,33%	02 50%	03 42,86%	03 60%	01 20%	00	11 32,35%
Desire to be like English native speakers	02 33,33%	02 50%	02 28,57%	02 40%	01 20%	01 14,29%	10 29,41%
Admiration for English native speakers	01 16,67%	01 25%	00	01 20%	00	00	03 08,82%
Desire to sound like English native speakers	01 16,67%	03 75%	01 14,29%	03 60%	02 40%	01 14,29%	11 32,35%
Expectations of success	02 33,33%	03 75%	04 57,14%	02 40%	01 20%	03 42,86%	15 44,12%
Making volunteer efforts to learn	01 16,67%	03 75%	02 28,57%	03 60%	02 40%	02 28,57%	13 38,23%
Self-confidence	02 33,33%	03 75%	03 42,86%	02 40%	03 60%	02 28,57%	15 44,12%
Sociability	03 50%	02 50%	03 42,86%	03 60%	01 20%	00	12 35,29%
Sympathy	00	02 50%	01 14,29%	03 60%	00	01 16,67%	07 21,21%
Lacking inhibition	01 16,67%	03 75%	02 28,57%	03 60%	01 25%	01 14,29%	11 33,33%
Liking change	00	02 50%	01 14,29%	01 20%	01 20%	00	05 15,15%
Risk taking	01 16,67%	02 50%	00	00	00	01 14,29%	04 11,76%
Willingness to make mistakes	00	01 25%	00	00	00	01 16,67%	02 06,06%
Classroom participation	01 16,67%	02 50%	01 14,29%	02 40%	01 20%	05 71,43%	12 35,29%
Practice	02 33,33%	02 50%	03 42,86%	02 40%	01 20%	05 71,43%	15 44,12%
Locus of control	01 16,67%	01 25%	03 42,86%	02 40%	02 40%	02 28,57%	11 32,35%

Table 4.62: Degrees of importance: quite important

The provided characteristics	1 – 5 years	6 – 10 years	11 – 15 years	16 – 20 years	21 – 25 years	26 – 38 years	Total
An early exposure to English	01 16,67%	01 25%	01 14,29%	02 40%	00	02 28,57%	07 20,59%
Phonetic coding ability	00	01 25%	02 28,57%	00	00	01 14,29%	04 12,12%
Phonemic mimicry	00	02 50%	01 14,29%	00	02 40%	03 42,86%	08 23,52%
Memory capacity	02 33,33%	01 25%	03 42,86%	01 20%	01 20%	02 28,57%	10 29,41%
Motivation	01 16,67%	00	01 14,29%	01 20%	01 20%	02 28,57%	06 17,65%
Drive for success	03 50%	00	02 28,57%	01 20%	01 20%	04 57,14%	11 32,35%
Positive attitudes towards EFL learning	02 33,33%	00	03 42,86%	01 20%	02 40%	03 42,86%	11 32,35%
Positive attitudes towards English and its culture	01 16,67%	01 25%	00	01 20%	02 40%	03 42,86%	08 23,52%
Desire to be like English native speakers	01 16,67%	00	00	02 40%	01 20%	02 28,57%	06 17,65%
Admiration for English native speakers	01 16,67%	00	01 14,29%	02 40%	01 20%	01 14,29%	06 17,65%
Desire to sound like English native speakers	04 66,67%	01 25%	02 28,57%	00	02 40%	04 57,14%	13 38,23%
Expectations of success	02 33,33%	00	00	03 60%	01 20%	02 28,57%	08 23,52%
Making volunteer efforts to learn	03 50%	00	01 14,29%	02 40%	00	02 28,57%	08 23,52%
Self-confidence	02 33,33%	00	03 42,86%	02 40%	02 40%	03 42,86%	12 35,29%
Sociability	03 50%	01 25%	03 42,86%	00	02 40%	05 71,43%	14 41,18%
Sympathy	02 33,33%	01 25%	02 28,57%	00	00	02 33,33%	07 21,21%
Lacking inhibition	02 33,33%	00	03 42,86%	00	01 25%	02 28,57%	08 24,24%
Liking change	02 33,33%	01 25%	02 28,57%	02 40%	00	03 50%	10 30,30%
Risk taking	03 50%	01 25%	03 42,86%	04 80%	01 20%	03 42,86%	15 44,12%
Willingness to make mistakes	04 66,67%	02 50%	02 28,57%	03 60%	01 20%	03 50%	15 45,45%
Classroom participation	03 50%	01 25%	03 42,86%	01 20%	01 20%	02 28,57%	11 32,35%
Practice	02 33,33%	00	01 14,29%	01 20%	00	00	04 11,76%
Locus of control	02 33,33%	00	01 14,29%	01 20%	01 20%	01 14,29%	06 17,65%

Table 4.63: Degrees of importance: important

#### 4.3.4 Section 4: Other Suggestions

**Question 1:** Are there any further points you would like to make about pronunciation learning and teaching?

Years of experience in teaching	Answered		Did not answered		Total
1 – 5 years	05	83,33%	01	16,67%	06
6 – 10 years	04	100%	00		04
11 – 15 years	05	71,43%	02	28,57%	07
16 – 20 years	04	80%	01	20%	05
21 – 25 years	03	60%	02	40%	05
26 – 38 years	04	57,14%	03	42,86%	07
Total	25	73,53%	09	26,47%	34

Table 4.64: Number of given suggestions

The respondents' suggestions came as follows:

- ❖ Nearly all the respondents (88,23% of the maximum 25 teachers who provided further suggestions) recommend that hours devoted to pronunciation teaching (both theory and practice) should be increased.
- ❖ 19 teachers (76%) emphasize that *practice* is the key requirement in pronunciation learning. Some informants from these (78,95%) suggest that *listen and repeat activities* are, in particular, highly helpful. Students, according to them, must familiarize themselves with the native speakers' speech patterns by watching English speaking channels, especially BBC (British Broadcasting Corporation) news. The other respondents (21,05%,) however, propose that the learning of an accurate pronunciation of English necessitates *direct contact* with native speakers. Another teacher further suggests that universities should either organize occasional trips to England or USA for the students, or try to bring some specialized native speakers to teach learners pronunciation accurately.
- ❖ One teacher further argues that an *earlier exposure to accurate English* can significantly enhance the levels of pronunciation achievement by the students.
- ❖ In addition, 28% of the informants highlight the effect of *learners' affective characteristics* on their pronunciation attainments. 57,14% from these put the greatest emphasis on the role of *motivation* which they consider “a fundamental criterion in pronunciation learning.” The

other teachers (42,86%) argue that what is really determinative in pronunciation learning is the learners' sincere involvement in the task and their taking of responsibility for their own learning. Another teacher from this last category further explains that the students' affective state may act against them and delay their learning. In particular, she exemplifies, learners' *inhibition* is a serious impediment to accurate pronunciation learning.

- ❖ From a different perspective, 8% of the respondents argue that accurate pronunciation learning depends on having "*qualified teachers.*" One of these, a teacher with 31 years of experience in teaching the pronunciation of English, recommends that "*hard work,*" "*patience,*" "*motivation,*" "*competence,*" and "*love of pronunciation teaching*" are qualities that must characterize pronunciation teachers.
- ❖ From a similar perspective, another teacher proposes that pronunciation must be the first skill to develop in learners "before any grammar or other learning" is sought.
- ❖ Finally, 16% of the informants emphasize the role of explicit pronunciation teaching. The concerned teachers particularly suggest that introducing the IPA (International Phonetic Alphabet) form an early stage can provide the learners with many indispensable opportunities for pronunciation practice with the help of dictionaries.

## Conclusion

In this chapter, an attempt was made to gather information about the viewpoints of a group of teachers regarding the effects of some nonlinguistic factors on learners' attainments in EFL pronunciation learning. The teachers' responses mainly confirm the claims made for the major roles *motivation* and *practice* have in shaping learners' outcomes in this field of study (cf. Tables 4.17, 4.18, 4.20, 4.42 and 4.59.) The crucial impacts of motivation and practice are also affirmed by the support the respondents give to the influences of some related characteristics, such as having *high expectations of success* (Table 4.21) and making *volunteer efforts to learn* (Table 4.50.) *Starting EFL learning early* in childhood is also deemed essential to pronunciation acquisition (cf. Table 4.61.) Besides, some *personality traits* are repeatedly reported in the questionnaire's results as having a considerable influence on pronunciation achievement. These include *self-confidence* (Tables 4.32 and 4.51) and some other related attributes like *willingness to make mistakes* and *risk taking* (cf. Table 4.63.) What is more, *sociable* learners are also strongly declared to have a privilege in pronunciation learning (Tables 4.29 and 4.52.)

## CHAPTER FIVE

### AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE LEARNERS' VARIABLES RELATED TO LEVELS OF PRONUNCIATION ACHIEVEMENT

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## **Introduction**

The data gathered via the teachers' questionnaire in Chapter 4 are considered reliable to release conclusions about the process of EFL pronunciation learning owing to the respondents' practical experiences with different groups of EFL learners. As a measure to even further increase the credibility of the findings, another questionnaire is designed for students. This questionnaire aims at measuring the individual characteristics (namely, *attitudes* to English and EFL pronunciation learning, *motivation* to achieve intelligible speech patterns, *personality traits* and amounts of pronunciation *practice*) of a group of students and at identifying the *age* levels at which they have started learning English as an FL. In addition to this questionnaire, two tests are also employed to measure the learners' aptitude for pronunciation learning and their levels of pronunciation intelligibility. The questionnaire and the two tests are scored and the resulting measures are used to empirically identify which variables significantly correlate with attaining intelligible speech patterns of English by the subject students.

The analytical procedures used to arrive at the abovementioned goal are described in this chapter. For thorough coverage, however, these are preceded by a depiction of the attributes of the students who participated in the study and a description of each of the three employed data collection procedures, i.e., the questionnaire and the two tests. A discussion of the final findings follows. At this level, an attempt is made to interpret the statistical results exhibiting the main findings more clearly. Finally, in the hope of improving pronunciation teaching instruction, some implications are inferred from a consideration of the results reached in this chapter, together with those obtained from the analysis of the teachers' questionnaire in Chapter 4.

### **5.1 Subjects**

The subjects in this study are twenty-three male and female students in their third year of an undergraduate course of English at the University of Guelma, all of whom have an Algerian nationality (specifically, they come from eastern Algeria,) except for one learner from Western Sahara. These subjects were randomly selected from the population of third year students of English at the University of Guelma. They belong to one of five groups composing the whole population. In addition, they are all native speakers of Arabic.

This subject group presents many advantages. Firstly, at this stage in their learning (third year at the university,) the students are about to finish their courses of phonetics and of oral expression, which are designed to support their knowledge and performance of the

pronunciation of English. Hence, it could be assumed that their pronunciation performances do not represent a “transitional competence,” but ultimate levels of attainment; and that those pronunciation errors still present in their speeches are the most difficult for them. Secondly, the subjects are all well-motivated and eager to participate in the present study. They are about to terminate their formal career learning English. Consequently, they show a desire to benefit from a systematic analysis of their pronunciation performances before they embark in their professional lives with the English language. Because of this, they were ready to participate in all the tasks involved in the study and to reveal as much relevant information as they can.

The third advantage represented by the subjects in this enquiry is that they all belong to the same class. This fact can ensure that they had exactly the same learning experiences at the university level. Therefore, any differences which may exist in the levels of pronunciation intelligibility they exhibit could be trustworthily related to their individual characteristics (which form the focus of the present research work,) such as their attitudes, motivation, etc.

Finally, the subjects diverge as far as their first formal contact with the English language is concerned. Explicitly, six students have started learning English at the primary school, sixteen at the middle school and one (the student from Western Sahara) at the university level. As already pointed out (Section 1.1,) the effect of learners’ age is claimed to be significant in determining their ultimate level of achievement in FL pronunciation learning. Hence, this divergence is believed to be useful in investigating the age effect in this study. The number of students who form the different age subgroups is clearly limited, however. Nonetheless, it could be assumed that some conclusions could be gained if this number limitation are taken in consideration.

## **5.2 Data Collection Procedures**

Three data collection procedures, which differ to suit the variables of the information that is sought, are employed in this study. These include a questionnaire and two tests. The first of the two latter is designed to examine the learners’ aptitude for pronunciation learning by testing their abilities in sound discrimination and identification. On the other hand, the second test aims at investigating the subjects’ performances in English pronunciation. Detailed information about each of these three elicitation techniques is provided in what follows.

## 5.2.1 Students' Questionnaire

### 5.2.1.1 Aim of the Questionnaire

The present questionnaire is aimed at detecting the subject learners' affective characteristics, namely, their attitudes, motivation, and personality traits, as well as at identifying the age levels at which they have started learning English and how frequently they practice their pronunciation skill. The results of this questionnaire will be analyzed in relation with the subjects' achievements on a test designed to examine their phonetic coding abilities and another meant to identify their levels of pronunciation intelligibility. Openly, the findings of the three elicitation instruments will be processed together to meet the research final goal, which is to identify which learner characteristics correlate best with the ability to attain an intelligible pronunciation of English.

### 5.2.1.2 Description of the Questionnaire

The questionnaire was handed to the subject students (cf. Section 5.1) during a class session under the supervision of the writer of this dissertation. The questionnaire consists of close and open questions and it is made up of seven main sections (the questionnaire is provided in appendix 2.)

The first section, **General Background**, contains three questions (Q1-Q3.) The first of these (Q1) aims at identifying the respondent's name. It needs to be mentioned here that the subjects were informed that they were required to reveal their identities for research purposes and that their names would not be divulged in the report, but they will be replaced by a given system of coding. The second and third questions in this section intend to find out each respondent's native language (Q2) along with the other languages he can speak (Q3.)

The second section, **English Study Background**, includes seven questions (Q4-Q10) dealing with the level at which the respondents have started learning English (Q4,) how often they speak English (Q5,) whether they use it outside the classroom (Q6,) and with whom (Question 6-a.) The subjects are also required to reveal whether they have more experience with British English or American English (Q7,) whether they possess any supportive media that they use to improve their pronunciation (Q8,) which media (Q8-a,) and how often they use them (Q8-b.) In addition, the respondents are asked to mention if they know any people who speak English where they live (Q9,) and who these persons are (Q9-a.) Finally, they are requested to describe their exposure to English (Q10.)

The third section, **Attitudes towards the Study of English**, embodies four questions (Q11-Q14) related to the learners' attitudes towards English pronunciation learning (Q11,)

their target in learning the pronunciation of English (Q12,) how they perceive the English people and their culture (Q13,) and why (Q14.)

The fourth section, **Motivation for Learning English Pronunciation**, covers seven questions (Q15-Q21) which seek information about the way English was chosen to be studied by the subjects (Q15,) their goals in learning English (Q16,) whether they dream to travel to an English speaking country (Q17,) which country (Q17-a,) and for what reason (Q17-b.) The questioned students are also inquired to describe their motivation to learn the pronunciation of English (Q18,) their expectation of success in this area (Q19,) their behaviour when they encounter an unknown word in an English reading text (Q20,) and what they do after school to improve their pronunciation level (Q21.)

The fifth section, **Self-Awareness**, contains five questions (Q22-Q26) intending to identify the learners' feelings while using English (Q22,) their preferences when they speak in English (Q23,) their behaviours during classroom discussion sessions (Q24,) why they behave in the suggested manners (Q24-a,) their sympathetic orientations (Q25,) and some of their personality traits (Q26.)

The sixth section, **Beliefs and Perceptions**, consists of two questions (Q27-Q28) which aim at identifying the respondents' locus of control (Q27,) and part of their attitudes towards English pronunciation learning and English native speakers (Q28.)

The seventh and last section in the questionnaire, **Other Suggestions**, includes one single question (Q29.) In particular, this question seeks to enrich the obtained data with any further information the respondents are ready to supply about their experience in English pronunciation learning.

### **5.2.1.3 Analysis of the Questionnaire**

At this stage, only general information about the way the subjects' answers to each question are analysed and measured will be given. A detailed account of all the subjects' responses to each question in the questionnaire is provided in appendix 3.

## **Section 1: General Background**

### **Question 1: What is your name?**

Each subject revealed his/her first and last names so that he/she can be distinguished from the other students participating in the study. In appendix 3 each respondent's name is replaced by a given number.

**Question 2:** What is your native language?

All the subjects confirmed that their native language is Arabic. The Arabic language is coded as A in appendix 3.

**Question 3:** What are the other languages you can speak (not including English)?

The languages which the subjects declared they know are French, Chaouia, Spanish, Italian and German. These languages are coded in appendix 3 as B, C, D, E and F, respectively. In addition, the proficiency levels of the subjects in each of these languages are presented by 1: basic, 2: intermediate, 3: advanced for each language (cf. Appendix 3.) The purpose of including question 3 in the questionnaire is to gain information about all the linguistic varieties the subjects know. This information would be especially valuable in Chapter 6, mainly in tracing the sources of the learners' pronunciation errors (cf. Section 6.4.)

**Section 2: English Study Background**

**Question 4:** At what level have you started learning English?

Primary school	A
Middle school	B
Secondary school	C
University	D

The respondents' answers are presented in appendix 3 as it is shown above. Explicitly, A means that the subject has started learning English at the primary school. Whereas B, C and D respectively signify that the respondent has initiated this task at the middle school, at the secondary school or at the university level. These answers will be used to classify the subjects in different subgroups to see whether starting learning English at different age levels results in arriving at different levels of proficiency in pronunciation acquisition.

**Question 5:** In general, how often do you speak English?

Too often	5
Often	4
Sometimes	3
Rarely	2
Too rarely	1

The present question is used to know how often each subject learner speaks English, and this is assumed to reflect the frequency of his pronunciation practice. Five point scale is used to rate the subjects' responses. Explicitly, it is assumed that the more frequently a learner speaks English, the more often he practices his pronunciation skill and, accordingly, the higher his rank in the scale will be, as it is clarified above.

**Question 6:** Do you speak English outside the classroom?

Yes	1
No	0

The respondents' answers are ranked on a two point scale as demonstrated above. It is assumed that learners who speak English outside the classroom practice their pronunciation skill more than those who do not.

**Question 6-a:** If yes, with whom?

English teachers	A
Classmates	B
Native speakers	C
Others	D

The responses are coded as: A: English teachers, B: colleagues, C: native speakers and D: others.

**Question 7:** Have you had more experience with British English or American English?

British English	A
American English	B

British English is presented in appendix 3 as A and American English as B. The reason behind including this question in the questionnaire is to know the pronunciation variety to which the learners were much more exposed, and hence to identify the norm of their pronunciation learning.

**Question 8:** Do you have the access to any media that you use to improve your pronunciation of English?

Yes	1
No	0

Here also the subjects' responses are graded on a two point scale. The assumption is that learners who have access to some media which they use to improve their pronunciation of English have more opportunities to practice their pronunciation skill than the other subjects.

**Question 8-a:** If yes, please specify.

Easy access to an English speaking channel	A
Personnel computer (or family computer)	B
Multimedia equipments (e.g., tapes, CDs, internet)	C
Teaching pronunciation books	D
Others	E

The answers provided by the subjects are presented in appendix 3 following the coding system demonstrated above.

**Question 8-b:** How frequently do you use these tools?

Too often	5	Rarely	2
Often	4		
Sometimes	3	Too rarely	1

The frequency of the use of the media which the subjects have clarified (cf. questions 8 and 8-a) that they utilize to improve their pronunciation proficiency is assumed to reflect the frequency of their pronunciation practice. Accordingly, the learners are ranked on a five point scale (5 being high) according to how frequently they use these tools, and by extension how frequently they are assumed to practice their pronunciation skill.

**Question 9:** Are there any people who know English in the environment where you live?

Yes	1
No	0

On the basis of the assumption that the presence of English speakers in the environments where the subjects live would give them additional opportunities for practice, the learners' responses to the question being considered are rated on a two point scale; wherein 1 corresponds to the presence of English speakers and 0 to their absence.

**Question 9-a:** If yes, please specify.

Parents	A
Brothers/sisters	B
Friends	C
Neighbors	D
Relatives	E
Others	F

The respondents' answers to this question are coded in appendix 3 as A: parents, B: brothers/sisters, C: friends, D: neighbors, E: relatives and F: others.

**Question 10:** In general how can you describe your exposure to English?

Very frequent	5
Frequent	4
Average	3
Rare	2
Very rare	1

In this question, the subjects are asked to describe their exposure to English in the assumption that this would also describe their receptive practice of English pronunciation. Consequently, the learners are ranked on a five point scale following the same principle adopted in analyzing the answers given to question 8-b. Clearly, the learners who describe their exposure to English as "very frequent" are placed in the highest rank (rank 5) and are assumed to receive the largest amount of practice, and so forth.

### Section 3: Attitudes towards the Study of English

**Question 11:** Learning the pronunciation of English is:

Challenging	+1	boring	-1
Good	+1	bad	-1
Valuable	+1	worthless	-1
Pleasant	+1	unpleasant	-1

In analysing the answers given in relation to the present question, an attempt is made to measure the subjects' attitudes towards EFL pronunciation learning. This is accomplished, as it is shown above, by giving each respondent (+1) for each positive perception of the task of English pronunciation learning and (-1) for each negative view about this task.

**Question 12:** According to me,

It is not important to improve my pronunciation of English.	-1
My own accent is good; I do not want to sound like English native speakers.	-1
Sounding like English native speakers is valuable.	+1

This question has the same goal as question 11 above. What is more, the answers brought by it are analysed in the same way, too.

**Question 13:** What do you think about the English people and culture?

Question 13 is meant to lead the subjects to further clarify the direction of their attitudes towards the English people and their culture, i.e., whether they perceive them negatively or positively. In accordance with the two previous questions, positive attitudes are marked with (+1) and negative ones with (-1.)

**Question 14:** Please justify your feeling (i.e., cite the reasons why you feel this way.)

By answering this question, the subjects would confirm the hints they provide within the answers they give to question 13. Hence, they would release more data about their attitudinal orientation towards the English people and culture. The system of analysis employed on the responses here is the same as the one adopted with the previous questions in this section; i.e., positive attitudes give (+1) and negative ones give (-1.)

### Section 4: Motivation for Learning English Pronunciation

**Question 15:** Studying English was:

A personal choice	A
Imposed by parents	B
Imposed by pedagogical authorities	C
Haphazard	D

The respondents' answers to question 15 are coded as: A: personal choice, B: imposed by parents, C: imposed by pedagogical authorities and D: haphazard.

**Question 16:** Do you want to learn English to:

Satisfy a personal interest in the English language and culture?	A
Use it to communicate with English people?	A
Use it as a means for worldwide communication?	B
Get the license degree?	B
Get a job in future?	B
Improve your social status and be a better educated person?	B

With regard to this question the intention is to identify the orientation of the subjects' motives to learn English, i.e., whether their motivation is integrative or instrumental. From the six drives given above, the two first ones are assumed to represent integrative reasons to learn and, thus, both are coded the same in appendix 3; as A. The rest motives are all coded as B because they are believed to reflect the respondents' instrumental motivation in taking the English course.

**Question 17:** Do you wish to travel to an English speaking country?

Yes	A
No	B

With the assumption that learners who want to travel to an English speaking country hold more integrative motives than those who do not, the students' responses are coded in the following way: yes: A and no: B (cf. Question 16.)

**Question 17-a:** If yes, which country?

England	A
USA	B
Others	C

The country(s) to which each student, from those who responded positively to the previous question, wishes to travel is/are identified in appendix 3 using the symbols identified above. Clearly, A stands for England, whereas, B refers to USA. On the other hand, C represents other countries, such as Canada, Australia and New Zealand.

**Question 17-b:** For what reason?

To know more about the English culture and people	A
To study	B
To work	B
To spend holiday	B

The coding system used in analyzing the answers given to questions 16 and 17 is also adopted here. Explicitly, the first reason for traveling suggested above is believed to reflect an

integrative motivation and, hence, it is coded A. The three following motives, however, are considered instrumental and accordingly they are represented in appendix 3 by B.

**Question 18:** Sincerely, how would you describe your motivation to learn the pronunciation of English at the moment?

Very high	5
High	4
Average	3
Low	2
Very low	1

The subjects' responses are ranked on a five point scale (5 being high,) in an attempt to rate them with reference to the strength of their motivation to learn the pronunciation of English.

**Question 19:** How do you feel about the following statement?

statement	Strongly agree	agree	undecided	disagree	Strongly disagree
Only those who start learning English during childhood can acquire its pronunciation without accent.	00	01	02	03	04

*Table 5.1: Five point scale to rate the subjects in relation to their expectations of success*

As it is shown in table 5.1, the students' responses are rated on a five point scale. The assumption is that learners who strongly disagree with the given statement have the highest degree of expectations of success. These are followed, in a descending order, by the respondents who disagree with the claim, those who are undecided, those who agree and finally those who strongly agree with it. Obviously, learners who belong to this last category are assumed to have the lowest degree of expectations of success.

**Question 20:** While reading an English text, if you encounter an unknown word do you:

	always	usually	sometimes	rarely	never
consult a dictionary to know its pronunciation?	04	03	02	01	00
ask your teacher about its pronunciation?	04	03	02	01	00
ask a colleague about its pronunciation?	04	03	02	01	00
not worry about it and just continue reading?	-04	-03	-02	-01	00

*Table 5.2: Five point scales to rate the subjects in relation to the strength of their motivation*

The subjects' responses in connection with each suggestion from those provided above are ranked on a five point scale following the way clarified in table 5.2. The idea is that students who always consult a dictionary, or ask a teacher or a colleague about the

pronunciation of unfamiliar words have the highest degree of motivation to acquire the pronunciation of English. By contrast, learners who do not worry about the way an unknown word is accurately pronounced are the least motivation in this field of study.

**Question 21:** What do you do after school to improve your pronunciation of English?

	always	usually	sometimes	rarely	never
Watch an English speaking channel.	04	03	02	01	00
Use the pronunciation guide in your dictionary.	04	03	02	01	00
Try to speak English as frequently as possible.	04	03	02	01	00
Talk on the phone to a native speaker.	04	03	02	01	00
Read about articulatory phonetics.	04	03	02	01	00
Listen to English songs.	04	03	02	01	00
Listen to English recorded texts.	04	03	02	01	00
Listen to any thing in English.	04	03	02	01	00
Nothing.	-04	-03	-02	-01	00

*Table 5.3: Five point scales to rate the subjects in relation to the frequency of their pronunciation practice*

The intention behind this question is to gather information about how frequently the subjects practice their pronunciation skill, either receptively or productively, directly or indirectly. As shown in table 5.3, the answers are ranked on five point scales. Learners who always watch English speaking channels, use the pronunciation guide in their dictionaries, try to speak in English as frequently as possible, talk on the phone to native speakers, read about articulatory phonetics, listen to English songs and recorded texts or to anything in English, are assumed to practice their pronunciation skill the most frequently. By contrast, those who have never performed any task from those just cited execute the least amount of practice in the area of pronunciation learning. In addition, students who always do nothing after school to improve their skill in using the phonological system of English are assumed to accomplish the least amount of practice, and vice versa. Logically, the subjects' answers fall in between these extremes without fully corresponding to them.

## **Section 5: Self-Awareness**

**Question 22:** In using English in conversation, do you feel,

Confident	+1	hesitant	-1
Comfortable	+1	uncomfortable	-1

Question 22 aims at inducing hints about the respondents' personality traits, in particular, their feelings while using English. The responses, as it is illustrated above, are coded by giving (+1) for each positive state and (-1) for each negative sensation.

**Question 23:** In using English in conversation, do you,

	always	usually	sometimes	rarely	never
try to express all your ideas even if you think you are going to make an error?	04	03	02	01	00
give up some of your ideas to avoid making errors?	-04	-03	-02	-01	00

*Table 5.4: Five point scales to rate the subjects in relation to their amount of self-confidence*

Aiming at measuring the subjects' amounts of self-confidence and willingness to make errors, the respondents' answers are ranked on two different five point scales as it is demonstrated in table 5.4. Clearly, students who are willing to express all their ideas even when they think they are going to produce errors are assumed to be more self-confident than those who give up some of their thoughts to avoid errors.

**Question 24:** In classroom discussion topics (e.g., in oral expression) do you:

	always	usually	sometimes	rarely	never
try to make many volunteer turns to participate?	04	03	02	01	00
just listen and avoid expressing your views unless the teacher calls you?	00	01	02	03	04

*Table 5.5: Five point scales to rate the subjects in relation to their degree of extroversion*

The goal here is to measure the respondents' degree of extroversion. The assumption is that learners who try to make many volunteer turns to participate in classroom discussions are more extroverted than those who just listen and avoid expressing their views. On the basis of this assumption, the subjects' answers are graded on a five point scale for each suggestion, as it is shown in table 5.5. Learners who always search for opportunities to speak in the classroom and who never prefer to just listen score the highest in the two scales, and vice versa.

**Question 24-a:** If you have chosen the second suggestion (just listen and...,) please justify your answer.

	always	usually	Sometimes	rarely	never
Other students precede in expressing ideas similar as yours.	00	01	02	03	04
You do not want to speak.	00	01	02	03	04
You are afraid from making errors.	00	01	02	03	04

*Table 5.6: Five point scales to rate the subjects in relation to their amount of self-confidence and degree of extroversion*

This question is, indeed, a continuation of the two previous ones. The purpose is still to measure the subjects' amounts of extroversion and self-confidence. The point is that learners who do not participate in classroom discussions because their classmates always

precede in expressing ideas similar as theirs, who do not want to speak, and who are afraid of making errors, have the lowest amounts of extroversion and self-confidence. Accordingly, they are ranked the lowest in the scales used to analyse the responses to question 24-a (cf. Table 5.6.)

**Question 25:** If, while discussing a particular topic, someone interrupts you and presents ideas that completely oppose your point of view, will you:

	certainly	perhaps	never
leave him continue speaking, listen to him carefully, try to understand his argument and to adopt it if he is right?	02	01	00
leave him finish then try to convince him with your point of view if he is mistaken?	02	01	00
interrupt him and try to show he is wrong?	-02	-01	+01
get angry and leave?	-02	-01	+01

*Table 5.7: Three point scale to rate the subjects in relation to their amount of sympathy*

The reason behind question 25 is to assess the subjects' amounts of sympathy. As illustrated in table 5.7, the answers are ranked on different scales. The assumption is that students who are willing to adopt others' views and who give others the opportunity to express ideas which contradict their own beliefs are more empathetic than those who interrupt any discussion of an idea that they do not share or who get angry because of hearing opinions which they do not accept. Hence, learners from the first category are ranked the highest in the scale, whereas those from the second group are put at the bottom.

**Question 26:** Please, tick the most appropriate column.

	always	usually	sometimes	rarely	never
I feel somewhat embarrassed in class when I am trying to speak.	00	01	02	03	04
In class, I prefer to say a sentence to myself before I speak it.	00	01	02	03	04
I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation in my class.	00	01	02	03	04
I am afraid that my English teacher is ready to correct every error I make.	00	01	02	03	04
I tremble when I know I am going to be called on in the class (e.g., in oral expression).	00	01	02	03	04
I get nervous when I do not understand every word I hear in class.	00	01	02	03	04
I feel frightened and blocked when I am asked a question in class.	00	01	02	03	04
When I speak, I fear I make many errors and be the laughing stock of the class.	00	01	02	03	04

*Table 5.8: Five point scale to rate the subjects in relation to their personality traits*

Question 26 is used to measure different personality traits of the respondents. A five point scale is used to rank the responses provided in relation to each suggestion. Generally, the more positive the subjects' personality characteristics are, the higher their rank will be, and vice versa.

## Section 6: Beliefs and Perceptions

**Question 27:** Do you think that your proficiency in learning English pronunciation is,

	absolutely yes	probably yes	do not know	probably no	not at all
within your own control?	02	01	00	-01	-02
within your teacher's control?	-02	-01	00	01	02
determined by external factors (e.g., opportunities of learning) ?	-02	-01	00	01	02

*Table 5.9: Five point scale to rate the subjects in relation to their locus of control*

The reason for requiring the subjects to answer question 27 is to know the direction of their locus of control. Table 5.9 illustrates how the provided answers are marked. The assumption is that the more a learner thinks his achievement in pronunciation learning is dependent on him, the higher his *internal* locus of control is. By contrast, the more he thinks his attainment is determined by some other people (e.g., teachers) or some other external factors (e.g., opportunities for learning,) the lower his internal locus of control is.

**Question 28:** If you have the opportunity to travel to an English speaking country, will you:

	certainly	perhaps	never
try to profit to the maximum to improve your pronunciation by getting involved in many conversations with natives?	02	01	00
stick to your own accent and avoid talking to native speakers except when you are obliged to?	-02	-01	00
try to improve your pronunciation individually, and will not try to be actively involved in many conversations with natives?	01	00	00

*Table 5.10: Scales to rate the subjects in relation to their attitudinal orientation*

The answers brought by this question are analysed along with those given to questions 11, 12, 13, and 14, in an attempt to gather information about the respondents' attitudinal orientation towards English and EFL pronunciation learning. The way the answers are scored is shown above. The idea is that learners with positive attitudes towards native speakers of English intend to come in touch with them if only they would have the opportunity to. On the other hand, students who hold negative attitudes towards English native speakers think of avoiding them, as much as possible, even if they are in an English speaking country.

## Section 7: Other Suggestions

**Question 29:** Are there any further points you would like to make about your experience in pronunciation learning?

Answered		Did not answered		Total	
13	56,52%	10	43,48%	23	100%

Table 5.11: Number of given suggestions

The subjects' suggestions emphasise different aspects of pronunciation learning. Some learners (17,39%) argue that their weaknesses would be overcome given *direct contact with native speakers*. Some others (17,39%) expressed a wish to receive *more instruction* about the pronunciation of English and to be given more *opportunities to speak in class*, so that they can practice their language formerly and gain *adequate feedback* on their pronunciation errors from teachers.

In addition, 13,04% of the respondents highlight the role of *practice*, mainly *listen and repeat* activities, in pronunciation learning. They think that FL learners should expose themselves to native speakers' talk as much as possible. More to the point, 08,70% of the subjects give importance to the crucial role of supportive media in creating valuable opportunities for pronunciation practice. Particularly, they cited the benefits of having access to English speaking channels, video cassettes recording native speakers' conversations in natural contexts, the internet, etc.

What is more, while one single student showed satisfaction with her pronunciation attainment, three others (13,04%) expressed their disappointment about their achievements. One of these latter attributed her failure to her lack of motivation and tiredness because of her involvement in many other tasks. Concerning the two other students, they believe that inhibition and the difficulty of the task of EFL pronunciation learning are the reasons behind their failure.

### 5.2.1.4 Final Results of the Questionnaire

As already stated the present questionnaire is intended to collect data about the subjects' attitudes, motivation, personality traits, amounts of practice, as well as the age levels at which they have started learning English. Information about each from these five variables is sought following the following procedure. Firstly, an assumption about the way each variable can be measured or identified is formulated (cf. Section 5.2.1.3.) Secondly, on the basis of this assumption, one question or more is/are put to assess the variable. In particular, question 4 is used to identify when the respondents have started learning English. Questions

5, 6, 8, 8-b, 9, 10 and 21 aim at measuring the frequency of the subjects' pronunciation practice. Questions 18, 19, and 20 are designed to know how much motivated the subjects are. On the other hand, the intention behind questions 11, 12, 13, 14 and 28 is to rate the subjects in relation to the strength of their positive attitudes towards English and EFL pronunciation learning. Finally, questions 22, 23, 24, 24-a, 25, 26 and 27 intend to examine the subject learners' personality traits.

The third step in the procedure adopted to investigate the five variables which form the focus of the present questionnaire is to obtain a total score for each subject in relation to each variable. This is accomplished by summing the values of each of the responses given with regard to the variable in question. The value attributed to each response in the questionnaire is provided in Section 5.2.1.3 within the analysis of each question. In addition, all the respondents' scores, together with the way they are obtained, are displayed below (Tables 5.12, 5.13, 5.14, 5.15 and 5.16.)

It ought to be clarified here that the obtained scores are not used to exactly define how much of a variable to attribute to one subject, but simply to place the subjects in a rank-order in respect to each other. In other words, the score 10, for example, is not two points worse than the score 12, nor it is three points better than the score 7. All what is meant is that the subject who scores 10 is worse than the one who scores 12, but better than the one who scores 7. In short, the learners' scores do not represent an interval or a rational scale, but rather an ordinal scale on the basis of which the subjects are ranked.

#### **5.2.1.4.1 Final Results Concerning the Age Variable**

As already mentioned, some of the respondents in this questionnaire have started learning English at the primary school, others at the middle school and one at the university level. Continuous research in the area of Second Language Acquisition concludes that what matters about the age effect is the benefit that could be gained from starting to learn before the end of *a sensitive period* extending from birth to puberty (cf. Section 1.1.) Consequently, the difference between initiating the task of EFL learning at the middle school or at the university is not considered significant. Accordingly, the subjects are divided into two subgroups only. The first subgroup (group A in table 5.12) consists of the six subjects who have started EFL learning at the primary school level, i.e., before the end of the sensitive period for FLL. The second group (group B in table 5.12,) by contrast, contains the rest of the subjects, i.e., those who have started learning English at the middle school and at the university level.

		Number of the subject																						
		01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23
The group category		B	A	B	A	B	B	A	A	B	B	A	B	A	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B

*Table 5.12: Final results concerning the age variable*

#### **5.2.1.4.2 Final Results: Frequency of Pronunciation Practice**

The values of the responses of each subject to questions 5, 6, 8, 8-b, 9, 10 and 21 are added together to obtain a total score assumed to reflect the respondent's frequency of pronunciation practice. This score could range from 0 to 50. The way each subject's final mark in relation to practice is obtained is statistically demonstrated in table 5.13.

#### **5.2.1.4.3 Final Results: Motivation Strength**

To rank the subjects in relation to the strength of their learning motives, an attempt is made to give each of them a score with reference to this variable. As clarified in table 5.14, this is done by summing up the values of the responses given to questions 18, 19 and 20. The obtained totals could range from 0 to 20.

#### **5.2.1.4.4 Final Results: Attitudes towards English**

The goal here is to measure the subjects' positive attitudes towards English and English pronunciation learning. For this reason, the respondents' answers to questions 11, 12, 13, 14 and 28 are valued and the values are added together. The final marks could range from 0 to 10 and are assumed to reflect the learners' ratings for positive attitudinal orientations. The results are displayed in table 5.15.

#### **5.2.1.4.5 Final Results: Personality Traits**

Questions 22, 23, 24, 24-a, 25, 26 and 27 in the questionnaire are designed to measure the subjects' personality traits. Thus, the values of the corresponding answers are summed and the obtained totals are used to rank the respondents in terms of how much positive their personality traits are. The final marks are provided in table 5.16, they could range from 0 to 70.

### **5.2.2 The Aptitude Test**

#### **5.2.2.1 Aim of the Test**

The goal behind this test is to arrive at a measure on the basis of which to rank the subjects with respect to their abilities in sound discrimination and recognition, i.e., their phonetic coding abilities. That is to say, the aim of this test is to gather information about the *aptitude* variable.

	Number of the subject																						
	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23
Question 5	3	4	3	4	2	4	2	2	1	3	4	2	4	2	3	2	1	3	3	1	2	4	4
Question 6	1	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	1
Question 8	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Question 8-b	3	5	5	4	3	4	5	2	/	5	3	1	4	1	3	4	3	2	3	1	3	4	4
Question 9	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	0
Question 10	4	5	4	4	3	5	4	3	3	5	3	3	4	2	3	4	3	3	3	3	3	4	3
Question 21	2	4	4	0	2	4	4	1	1	4	4	1	4	1	3	3	3	2	4	1	3	4	4
	3	2	2	2	2	4	3	3	2	4	3	1	2	0	1	2	2	1	2	4	3	3	3
	3	3	3	2	1	4	3	2	2	4	2	1	2	3	2	2	-2	2	2	2	4	3	4
	/	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	4	0	0	2	0	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
	3	1	/	0	1	4	2	0	0	3	2	0	1	0	1	2	0	1	0	2	1	2	2
	2	4	4	0	3	4	3	2	4	4	1	1	4	0	4	4	1	0	2	3	4	2	1
	2	2	3	2	2	2	2	0	0	4	2	1	4	0	3	3	3	1	2	3	4	2	1
	2	4	3	2	1	4	3	2	2	4	2	1	/	0	1	4	0	3	2	2	4	/	1
	/	0	0	0	0	0	/	0	0	/	0	-3	/	-4	0	0	2	/	0	0	/	0	/
Total score	30	37	33	23	21	44	33	20	16	47	29	10	34	05	29	31	19	21	24	23	33	30	29

Table 5.13: The subjects' total scores: frequency of pronunciation practice

	Number of the subject																						
	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23
Question 18	5	2	3	3	3	5	4	5	4	5	3	2	4	4	3	5	3	3	3	3	3	5	5
Question 19	4	1	1	2	4	4	1	1	2	4	1	0	2	2	0	0	3	3	1	1	0	1	4
Question 20	2	3	2	1	2	4	4	2	2	4	4	1	4	0	4	3	4	2	2	4	4	3	3
	1	0	1	2	3	/	4	0	1	3	2	1	0	0	4	2	2	0	0	4	4	2	
	/	2	2	0	1	1	3	1	2	1	2	1	0	2	0	4	0	1	1	2	4	0	2
	/	0	0	0	0	0	-2	0	-1	-1	0	-1	-2	-3	0	0	-2	-2	-2	0	-1	0	0
Total score	12	08	09	08	13	14	14	09	10	16	12	04	08	05	07	16	10	09	05	10	14	13	16

*Table 5.14: The subjects' total scores: motivation strength*

	Number of the subject																						
	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23
Question 11	+4	+3	+4	+3	+2	+3	+4	+4	+2	+2	+3	+4	+1	+4	+4	+4	+4	+2	+3	+4	+4	+4	+4
Question 12	+1	+1	+1	+1	+1	+1	+1	+1	+1	+1	+1	+1	0	+1	-1	+1	+1	-1	+1	+1	+1	+1	+1
Question 13	+1	+1	+1	+1	-1	+1	+1	-1	+1	+1	+1	+1	+1	-1	+1	+1	+1	+1	+1	+1	+1	+1	+1
Question 14	+1	+1	+1	+1	-1	+1	+1	-1	+1	+1	+1	+1	+1	-1	+1	+1	+1	+1	+1	+1	+1	+1	+1
Question 28	+2	+2	+2	+1	+2	+2	+2	+2	+2	+2	+2	+2	+2	+2	+2	+2	+2	+2	+2	0	+2	+2	+2
	0	0	0	-1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-1	0	0	-1	0	0	0
	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	+1	0	0	+1	0	0	0
Total score	09	08	09	06	03	08	09	05	07	07	08	09	05	05	07	09	09	05	08	07	09	09	09

*Table 5.15: The subjects' total scores: strength of the learners' positive attitudinal orientations*

	Number of the subject																						
	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23
Question 22	+1	+2	+1	-1	+1	+1	-1	-2	-1	+2	-1	-2	+1	-2	+1	+1	-1	-1	-1	-1	+1	+1	0
Question 23	+4	+2	+1	+2	+3	+4	+3	+2	0	+3	+4	+1	+2	+1	+2	+4	+2	+2	+1	0	+4	+4	+3
	-1	-1	-4	-3	-2	-1	-3	-3	-3	-4	0	-3	-4	-4	-2	-3	-4	-2	-3	-4	-4	-1	-2
Question 24	4	1	1	3	3	/	/	1	0	4	4	2	4	4	2	2	1	2	1	1	2	4	4
	4	4	0	3	3	3	0	0	0	4	4	2	4	2	2	3	1	4	0	0	2	4	4
Question 24-a	2	1	1	2	1	3	1	2	2	3	2	2	2	2	3	1	1	/	1	2	2	/	/
	3	3	1	2	1	3	/	2	0	3	3	2	2	1	3	2	1	2	3	0	2	/	/
	3	4	0	3	2	4	/	0	0	4	2	1	4	0	2	3	1	/	0	0	1	/	/
Question 25	0	+2	+2	+1	+2	+1	+2	+2	+2	+2	+1	+2	+1	+1	+1	+1	+2	+1	+1	+2	+2	+2	+1
	+2	+2	+2	+2	+2	+2	+2	+2	+2	+2	+2	+2	+1	+2	+1	+2	+2	+1	+2	+1	+2	+2	+2
	+1	-1	+1	+1	+1	+1	-1	-1	-1	+1	-1	-1	-2	-1	-2	+1	+1	+1	-1	-1	-2	+1	+1
	+1	+1	+1	+1	+1	+1	+1	-1	-1	+1	/	+1	+1	+1	+1	+1	+1	+1	+1	+1	-1	+1	+1
Question 26	3	2	4	3	1	4	1	0	0	4	2	1	3	1	2	1	2	/	2	1	2	4	2
	2	0	0	0	0	/	0	0	0	2	0	0	2	1	3	0	0	2	0	0	0	3	2
	4	1	4	2	1	/	1	0	0	4	2	0	3	0	1	1	2	2	1	0	2	4	3
	3	2	1	4	2	4	3	2	0	4	3	2	4	2	1	4	3	4	1	0	4	4	4
	3	2	3	4	1	4	0	0	0	4	4	1	4	0	2	2	0	4	0	0	2	4	4
	2	4	3	0	1	3	0	0	2	0	4	2	0	2	3	2	2	3	3	2	0	0	3
	4	1	2	1	3	3	0	0	0	4	3	1	/	0	2	3	1	2	0	0	2	4	4
	4	4	2	4	3	4	4	0	0	4	4	2	4	0	3	2	4	3	3	1	4	4	4
Question 27	+1	+2	+2	+1	+1	0	+1	+2	+2	+1	+1	+1	+2	0	+1	0	+2	+1	+1	+1	0	+2	+2
	-1	-1	-1	+1	-1	0	-1	-1	0	-2	-2	-1	-1	0	-2	0	/	-2	-1	0	-1	0	-1
	-1	-2	-1	0	-1	-1	-2	-1	-1	0	-1	-2	-1	0	-1	0	-2	-1	-2	0	-1	-1	-2
Total score	48	35	26	36	29	43	13	06	03	50	40	16	36	13	29	33	22	29	13	06	25	46	39

Table 5.16: The subjects' total scores: personality traits

### **5.2.2.2 Description of the Test**

The test requires the subjects to listen to a seven minute tape recorded speech and to fill in the gaps in two paragraphs extracted from it. The speech is delivered by Martin Luther King and is entitled “*I have a dream*” (a transcript of the speech is provided in appendix 4.)

Luther King’s “I have a dream” was chosen to be the focus of the present test for many reasons. Firstly, as a real life speech, it would provide the learners with a reason to look forward for additional information and not simply to attend to sound discriminations in an artificial manner. Secondly, the text deals with a common topic, slavery, which had been, few weeks before the test was administered, the subject of the lectures the learners had attended in the *American Civilization* module. In other words, the subjects have rich background information about the topic of the speech. Conversely, none of the students had previously listened to the speech itself. Hence, the possibilities that the subjects may fail to get the missing words because of their lack of comprehension of the content, or that they may succeed in the task solely because of their familiarity with the speech itself, could be excluded.

One counterargument about the usefulness of the chosen speech, however, might consider the fact that Luther King’s speech patterns may not fall within the standards of either the British or the American English pronouncing systems; the two varieties from which the selection of a target for EFL pronunciation learning is usually made. Nevertheless, Luther’s speech has been intelligible to both British and American native speakers of English. Thus, it ought to be so to successful EFL learners, too. At this point, it should be reminded that the interest in this research work is pronunciation intelligibility. More importantly, the goal behind the test at issue is to define the subjects’ differences in sound discrimination abilities. Overtly, the objective is to rank the learners on the basis of how well they can distinguish between the speech’s sound patterns. In other words, all what is assumed here is that a student who scores higher in this test has also a better sound discrimination ability. That is to say, no implications are made about the subjects’ capacity to properly receive the features of the phonological system of a particular variety of English.

### **5.2.2.3 Administration of the Test**

The test was administered in a language laboratory in the presence of the subjects’ teacher of oral expression and the writer of this dissertation (who already had the habit of attending with the group in their oral expression sessions.) Unfortunately, two subjects were absent and it was not possible that they pass the test another time; other students could have

told them about the speech topic, the test requirement, or even the answers. Additionally, it could not have been reliable to direct another test for these two students. The goal is to compare the subjects' performances together and to rank them accordingly. Therefore, all the subjects had to pass exactly the same examination.

Explicitly, the test was administered as follows: Firstly, the teacher explained that the subjects were going to listen to a speech by Martin Luther King and, then, would have to answer questions about it. Subsequently, after they had listened to the speech once, the students were informed that they were required to fill in the gaps in two paragraphs extracted from the text to which they were listening. Afterwards, a sheet of the test paper (cf. Appendix 4) was given to each subject learner. The paper embodies the two paragraphs into consideration (the fifth and sixth paragraphs from the speech, they are written in bold letters in the transcript provided in appendix 4) with twelve gaps removed from them. After that, the teacher clarified that each learner was free to listen to the whole recording, or to any part of it, as much as he wanted (he had only to ask.) Additionally, she made it clear that the students were invited to take all the time they need to complete the task in a very relaxed manner. Next, the speech was played again and the subjects were given the opportunity to listen to the two paragraphs in question at least seven successive times. The subjects were of course forbidden from having any intercommunication between each other and from using any extra notes.

#### **5.2.2.4 Results of the Test**

The test was marked by the writer of this dissertation. Each student's performance on the test was scored by giving him half a point for each correctly identified word from the twelve missing in the text. That is to say, each subject's total score could range from 0 to 6. Spelling mistakes were not taken in consideration. The exact results of the test are displayed in table 5.17.

### **5.2.3 Test of Pronunciation Intelligibility**

#### **5.2.3.1 Aim of the Test**

The motivation for the present test is to examine the subjects' English pronunciation performances and to rank them for degrees of intelligibility. In other words, the target is to rate the learners according to how intelligible their English vocalizations are.

	Number of the subject																						
	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23
Total score	04,50	03,50	04	03	03,50	04	03	04	03,50	04,50	03,50	03	04,50	04	/	02,50	04	04	05	03	01,50	04	/

Note

/: the subject did not pass the test

*Table 5.17: The subjects' total scores: results of the aptitude test*

	Number of the subject																						
	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23
Total score	1	3	3	2	2	4	3	2	1	5	3	1	3	1	4	3	3	3	4	3	3	4	4

*Table 5.18: The subjects' ratings for pronunciation intelligibility*

### **5.2.3.2 Description of the Test**

The present test consists of two complementary parts. In the first part, each learner is asked to individually read a diagnostic passage. This latter is a text reading which is purposefully created to contain all or almost all the segmental and suprasegmental features of the pronunciation of English. In particular, the intention is to include those sound features (mainly suprasegmentals) which might not appear in a natural speech situation. The diagnostic passage used in the present test is extracted from Celce-Murcia et al. (1996: 398,) and a copy of which is provided in appendix 5. In the second part of the test, each student is required to spontaneously speak about a topic of his choice for approximately two minutes. The choice of the topic is left to each performer to augment the possibility that s/he would feel at ease while discussing it. The topics chosen by the subject students are indicated in appendix 6.

The two parts of the test are designed to complement each other in giving a thorough picture about the subjects' levels of pronunciation intelligibility. Openly, the diagnostic passage is used as an elicitation technique to put the subjects in a position where they have to produce all the sound features of English and thus to reveal their true ability in the area of pronunciation (cf. Section 3.6.2.) The usefulness of the diagnostic passage notwithstanding, no reading text can lead to a representation of the performers' spontaneous speech or to provide a fully reliable evidence about their pronunciation abilities. For these reasons, it was essential to obtain a more unstructured sample of the subjects' spoken English, and this formed the motive for the second part of the test being discussed. In their free English uses, the subjects would concentrate on meaning rather than on linguistic form. Hence, their performances here are assumed to represent their speeches in natural contexts of language use.

### **5.2.3.3 Administration of the Test**

Before the test was administered, the subjects were informed that, as an integral part of the research work in which they knew they were involved, they were required to take a pronunciation test the coming week. Then, after the writer of this dissertation had explained the test requirements to them, she gave a copy of the diagnostic passage to each participant. The intention was to give the subjects an opportunity to practice the text in advance. This measure was especially undertaken to reduce any amount of anxiety or inhibition that the students might feel if confronted with the reading passage for the first time during the duration of the test. In other words, the goal was to try, as much as possible, to create a situation in which the learners would perform in their natural way.

Each part of the test was administered in a separate day to avoid tiring the subjects. Both parts, however, were completed following the same procedure. The researcher sat in a

classroom wherein each subject was asked to enter individually, to perform the test requirement (reading aloud or free speech,) and then to leave to allow the other learners to take their turns. The learners' performances were recorded using an MP4 (an instrument used for recording sounds and other sorts of data) and the students were aware that they were being recorded.

Consequently, the test procedure ended with getting two types of recorded spoken production samples by the subjects: a sample of the learners' reading aloud (henceforth reading data) and a sample of their free speech (henceforth spontaneous data.) The whole recorded learners' performance takes one hour, thirty-eight minutes and nine seconds (01 h, 38 mn and 09 s.) Exactly, the reading data takes forty minutes and fifty-four seconds (40 mn and 54 s) and the spontaneous data extends over fifty-seven minutes and fifteen seconds (57 mn and 15 s.) Individual performances range from one minute and twenty-eight seconds (01 mn and 28 s) to two minutes and twenty-two seconds (02 mn and 22 s) for the reading data and from fifty seconds (50 s) to five minutes and twenty-one seconds (05 mn and 21 s) for the spontaneous data.

#### **5.2.3.4 Analysis and Results**

The subjects' recorded performances were analysed with the aid of a qualified informant. This informant is an Algerian native speaker of Arabic who has been living in London for twenty years. On the one hand, the informant's Arabic origins make him familiar with the problems that the native speakers of Arabic face in learning the pronunciation of English. On the other hand, his constant contact with literate English native speakers in London has helped him to acquire not only the sound patterns of the pronunciation of English, but also some of the intuitions English natives have about the phonological system of their mother tongue. Indeed, the two foregoing factors make the support of this informant crucial to increase the credibility of the present research work.

With the cooperation of this informant, the present researcher rated the subjects' performances on a scale of 1 to 5 (5 being high) for pronunciation intelligibility, i.e., from the least intelligible performance (rank 1) to the most intelligible one (rank 5.) To be precise, the speeches were evaluated on the basis of five criteria; clarity, speed, loudness, breath groups (pauses) and fluency. The subjects' final ranks are presented in table 5.18.

### **5.3 Analytical Procedures and Results**

Section 5.2 demonstrates the way data were collected about the subjects' individual characteristics under consideration. In particular, the focus was on the learners' *age* levels when they have started EFLL, their *attitudes* towards English and its native speakers, *motivation* to learn intelligible speech patterns, *personality traits*, amounts of *pronunciation*

*practice, abilities* in sound discrimination, as well as grades of *pronunciation intelligibility*. Now, the requirement is to use these data to investigate the effect of each from the six firstly cited factors on attainment in EFL pronunciation learning. Two methods of analysis are used for this sake. Firstly, *an independent groups t-test between means* is employed to examine the influence of age on the learners' final achievements in the area of pronunciation. Secondly, *Spearman's rank correlation coefficient rho* is used to indicate the degree of agreement between the subjects' ranks for pronunciation intelligibility and their ratings for each of the five remaining variables. Explicitly, the intention is to examine the relationship between each couple of variables to see if any particular variable affects attainment in pronunciation learning more than any other. Detailed information about the way these two analytical techniques are employed and the results they bring are displayed below.

### 5.3.1 Independent Groups T-Test between Means

As already clarified, the research subjects are divided into two groups with reference to the age variable. The first subgroup (group A henceforth) consists of six learners, all of whom have started English FLL at the primary school; before puberty. By contrast, the second group (group B henceforth) includes seventeen students, each of them has initiated English FLL thereafter; after puberty. Whereas the mean rating for pronunciation intelligibility of group A is 2,67, that of group B is 2,88. An independent groups t-test is performed to compare these two mean ratings to see whether they significantly differ from each other. The t-statistic is not found to be significant at the 0,05 critical alpha level,  $t(21)=0,399$ ,  $p=0,347$  (one-tailed test.) Therefore, we cannot reject the null hypothesis which states that the difference between the pronunciation performances of the two age subgroups is not significant. To clarify, the results of the t-test are further demonstrated in table 5.19.

Mean of group A	2,667
Unbiased standard deviation of group A	0,516
Sample size of group A	06
Mean of group B	2,882
Unbiased standard deviation of group B	1,269
Sample size of group B	17
t value	0,399
Degrees of freedom	21
One-tailed probability	0,347

*Table 5.19: Descriptive statistics table displaying the results of the t-test*

### 5.3.2 Spearman's Rank Correlation Coefficient rho

To measure the degree of association between two variables, correlation techniques of analysis are often used, and this study is not an exception. Since all the variables in this research are ordinal, Spearman's technique, rank correlation coefficient rho, is chosen. The subjects' ratings for pronunciation intelligibility, attitudes to English FLL, strength of motivation, personality traits, amount of practice and ability in sound discrimination are correlated with one another. The resulting coefficients are portrayed in a *correlation matrix* (table 5.20.) The correlation of 1,00 in the matrix represents the correlation of the variable with itself. The critical value of the correlation coefficients (the value required for significant correlations) is  $\rho \geq 0,351$  (N=23, p=0,05, one-tailed test.)

Variable	<b>pronunciation intelligibility</b>	practice	personality	motivation	aptitude	attitudes
<b>pronunciation intelligibility</b>	<b>1,00</b>	<b>0,62</b>	<b>0,45</b>	<b>0,40</b>	0,33	0,28
practice	<b>0,62</b>	<b>1,00</b>	<b>0,60</b>	<b>0,47</b>	0,15	0,33
personality	<b>0,45</b>	<b>0,60</b>	<b>1,00</b>	<b>0,41</b>	0,30	0,19
motivation	<b>0,40</b>	<b>0,47</b>	<b>0,41</b>	<b>1,00</b>	-0,17	<b>0,39</b>
aptitude	0,33	0,15	0,30	-0,17	<b>1,00</b>	-0,15
attitudes	0,28	0,33	0,19	<b>0,39</b>	-0,15	<b>1,00</b>

Note

Only the correlation coefficients written in bold letters are significant at the 0,05 critical alpha level

Table 5.20: The correlation matrix

The results in the correlation matrix clearly demonstrate that there are *positive significant relationships* between the subjects' grades for *pronunciation intelligibility* on the one hand and their amounts of *practice*, *personality traits* and *motivation* strengths on the other hand. The correlation coefficients range from  $\rho=0,62$  (N=23,  $p<0,05$ ) for practice to  $\rho=0,40$  (N=23,  $p<0,05$ ) for motivation. The correlation between pronunciation and personality is  $\rho=0,45$  (N=23,  $p<0,05$ .) On the other hand, the observed correlation coefficients for pronunciation and aptitude and for pronunciation and attitudes are  $\rho=0,33$  and  $\rho=0,28$ , respectively. Since each of these two coefficients is lower than the critical value ( $\rho \geq 0,351$ , N=23,  $p \leq 0,05$ ), we conclude that the two correlations in question are not significant at the 0,05 critical alpha level. That is to say, we fail to reject the null hypotheses which state that there are not significant correlations between aptitude and pronunciation attainment on the one hand, and between attitudes and pronunciation attainment on the other hand. For more clarification, each of the five degrees of correlations described above is diagrammatically shown in one of the graphs represented in the figures 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, 5.4 and 5.5.

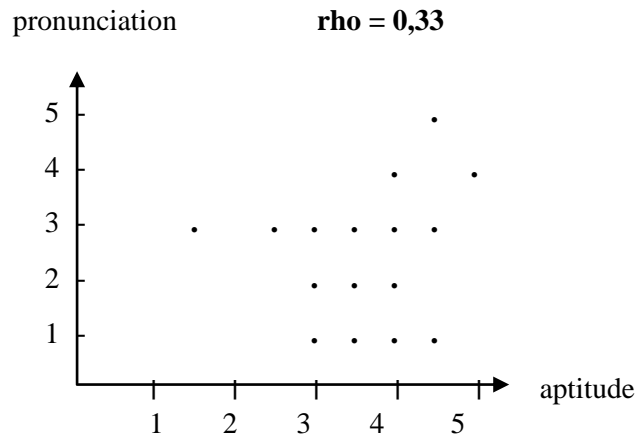


Figure 5.1: The degrees of correlation between the subjects' ranks for pronunciation intelligibility and their ratings for *aptitude in sound discrimination*

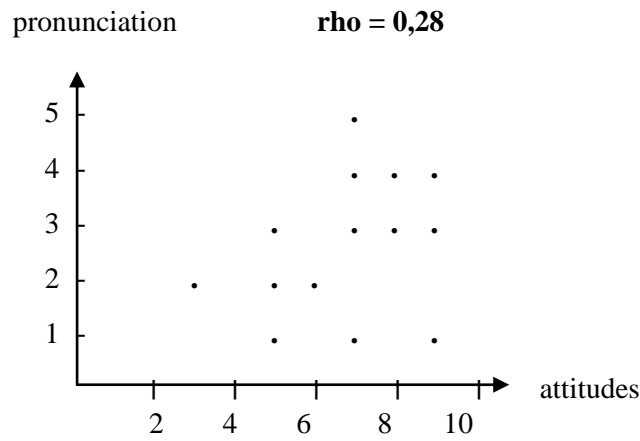


Figure 5.2: The degrees of correlation between the subjects' ranks for pronunciation intelligibility and their ratings for *attitudes to English FLL*

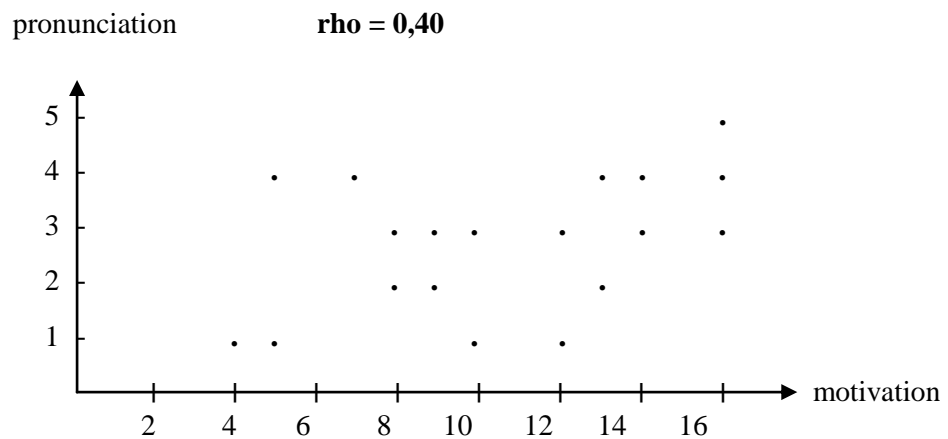


Figure 5.3: The degrees of correlation between the subjects' ranks for pronunciation intelligibility and their ratings for *the degree of motivation*

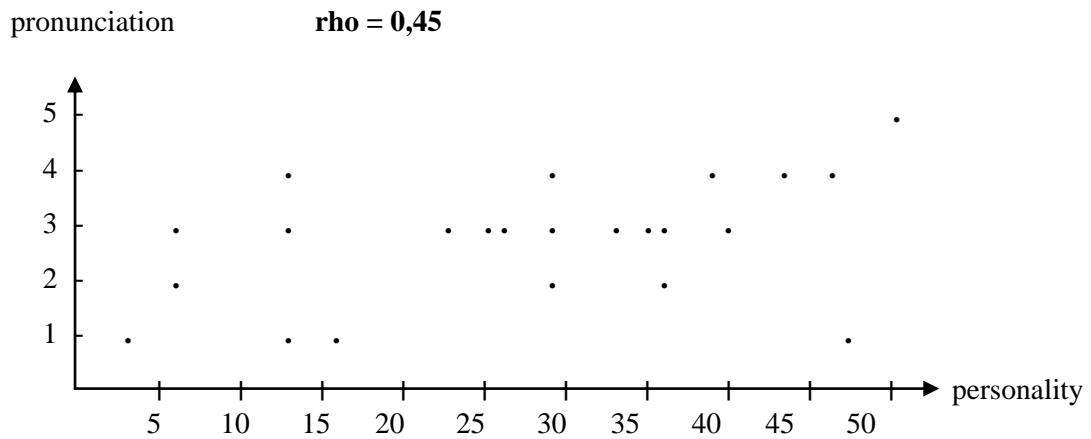


Figure 5.4: The degrees of correlation between the subjects' ranks for pronunciation intelligibility and their ratings for *favourable personality traits*

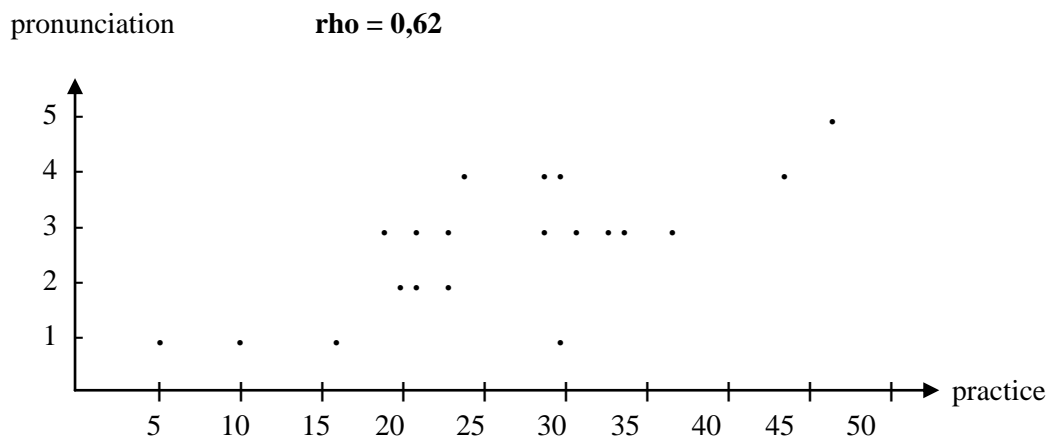


Figure 5.5: The degrees of correlation between the subjects' ranks for pronunciation intelligibility and their ratings for *amounts of practice*

In addition, the correlation matrix (table 5.20) displays other significant positive correlations between practice and personality ( $\rho=0,60$ ,  $N=23$ ,  $p<0,05$ ,) between practice and motivation ( $\rho=0,47$ ,  $N=23$ ,  $p<0,05$ ,) between personality and motivation ( $\rho=0,41$ ,  $N=23$ ,  $p<0,05$ ) and between motivation and attitudes ( $\rho=0,39$ ,  $N=23$ ,  $p<0,05$ .)

#### 5.4 Discussion

In the present research work, the comparison of the subjects' ranks for pronunciation intelligibility with those for pronunciation practice and motivation shows significant correlations providing empirical support for the hypotheses that attainment in FL pronunciation learning is positively related to the learners' amounts of practice and intensity of motivation. More to the point, the two variables just mentioned (motivation and practice) correlate significantly with one another (Table 5.20.) Explicitly, these results suggest that the more *motivated* the learners are, the more they are going to *practice* their pronunciation skill and conclusively the higher their level of *pronunciation intelligibility* will be. Additionally, it needs to be mentioned that from all the other variables, it is *practice* which correlates the most highly with pronunciation intelligibility ( $\rho=0,62$ .) Indeed, it overwhelmingly seems that amounts of practice are closely related to achievements in EFL pronunciation learning.

What is more, the investigated personality traits, namely self-confidence, empathy, extroversion, and locus of control (cf. Section 5.2.1.3) also correlate significantly with the learners' amounts of practice ( $\rho=0,60$ ,) pronunciation achievements ( $\rho=0,45$ ) and strengths of motivation ( $\rho=0,41$ .) Overtly, this finding validates the hypothesis that the more *self-confident*, *empathetic*, and *extroverted* the learners are, the more they are going to benefit from opportunities to *practice* their pronunciation skill and ultimately the better their *pronunciation proficiency* will be. Furthermore, these results also show that learners who have the highest amounts of *self-confidence*, *empathy*, *extroversion* and *internal locus of control* are as well the most *motivated* ones to learn the pronunciation of English.

In this study, however, the subjects' attitudes to English and its native speakers do not correlate significantly with their pronunciation achievements. The justification may be that learning the pronunciation of English in an FLL context, where students do not have a direct contact with English native speakers, is not significantly influenced by the learners' attitudes (cf. Section 1.3.) Nonetheless, a reliable correlation ( $\rho=0,39$ ,  $N=23$ ,  $p<0,05$ ) is found between attitudes and motivation to learn. Such a result, however, might not seem strange because of the close relationship reported in literature between the two variables (Sections 1.3 and 1.4.) Explicitly, the point may be that the effect of the subjects' attitudes on their

pronunciation learning was weakened due to the lack of interaction between them and English native speakers, but, even though, attitudes still have a modest impact especially by affecting the learners' motivation to learn.

Moreover, the correlation between aptitude measures and levels of pronunciation intelligibility does not reach statistical significance ( $\rho=0,33$ ,  $N=21$ ,  $p>0,05$ ), nor is it the case with the correlations of aptitude with the other variables (Table 5.20.) No dependable explanations appear to account for such low correlations except for the drawback that the aptitude test, for administrative purposes, was held in the afternoon, a fact that might have influenced the reliability of the test results.

In addition, the difference between the pronunciation performances of the two age subgroups is not found to be significant at the 0,05 critical alpha level (Section 5.3.1.) To be cautious, no trustworthy conclusions could be safely drawn from such a finding, mainly because of the small sample size (only six learners form the population of group A.) Nevertheless, given the great divergence of the result from the required value for a significant finding ( $p=0,347$ , one-tailed test) some inferences could be justifiable. In particular, the effect of the environment of learning can be considered to be a due justification for this insignificant result. The majority of the empirical studies which support the *Critical Period Hypothesis (CPH)* are carried in natural acquisition environments, where the use of the TL is not limited to one setting or context such as in the case of English at the University of Guelma. To be precise, in this study, the subjects who have started English FLL in the primary school, when compared to the other learners, may have the benefit of having learned English in an earlier and longer period of their lives. Nonetheless, the rate and kind of their exposure to English during this period might not be really beneficial (cf. Section 1.1.2.)

## **5.5 Pedagogical Implications**

A comparison – that is just superficial – of the findings brought by the statistical treatment of data in this chapter with the results obtained from the analysis of the teachers' questionnaire in the previous chapter can reveal that empirical evidence supports practical experience to highlight that *large amounts of practice, supportive personality traits and high degrees of motivation are distinguishably the attributes of successful EFL pronunciation learners*. This result can be used to infer some important implications for the teachers of English pronunciation, as well as for the learners. In what follows is an attempt to clarify these implications together with some suggestions on how they can be met.

### **5.5.1 The Benefit of Pronunciation Practice**

Many of the subjects in this research complain about the fact that they spend most of their time at the university listening to their teachers and that they are not given sufficient opportunities to practice their English orally neither inside, nor outside the classroom. The abovementioned findings, however, suggest that amounts of practice are the variable which most evidently distinguishes successful learners from underachievers in the area of pronunciation. Therefore, the time allocated for pronunciation practice should be reconsidered and learners must be given more appropriate, varied and adequate opportunities to use their English orally and to rehearse their pronunciation.

Inside the classroom, pronunciation practice can take a wide variety of forms; from structural exercises to more communicative activities and from oral to aural tasks. To cite only a few, suggestions include dictation, transcribing written or spoken texts, filling in the gaps, sound discrimination exercises, reading aloud tasks, deciphering transcribed sentences or texts, listen and repeat drills, language games, role plays, simulations, discussions, debates, etc. Besides, exposing learners to authentic English is generally held crucial. Students must be familiarized with native speakers' speech patterns in a variety of natural contexts. In the absence of a direct contact with English natives, these listening tasks, in addition to formal descriptive instruction about the English phonological system, serve as the primary input to the learners' pronunciation learning. Moreover, students can support this input by searching for occasions to talk with some native speakers of English, on the phone or more favourably, for economical reasons, from one PC to another PC using the internet.

The role of the classroom and the pronunciation teacher notwithstanding, authorities in the field (Avery and Ehrlich, 1992: 215-219; Celce-Murcia, Brinton and Goodwin, 1996: 348-351; Harmer, 2001: 335-336) suggest that the most efficient undertaking in pronunciation teaching is to build learner autonomy by helping students develop self-correcting and self-monitoring strategies. This activity is highly preferable because it can extend pronunciation practice beyond the classroom. In particular, teachers may require their students to record their speeches and to try to monitor them afterwards concentrating on particular aspects of pronunciation accuracy; such as the articulation of vowels and consonants, clusters, stress and prominence, intonation patterns or adjustments in connected speech. Students may also benefit from speaking in front of a mirror paying attention to the movements of their articulators. In addition, as a continuation to their receptive practice at school, they may establish the habit of watching English TV programs to get their ears accustomed with the English language and its phonological features. For advanced levels of practice, reading about

phonetics and the phonological system of English can be very effective. Teachers may help by providing their learners with lists of reference books appropriate to their levels.

More to the point, establishing opportunities for cooperative learning can have an efficient role in increasing chances for pronunciation practice. For instance, instructing learners to work in groups can create opportunities where they discuss the task before they present it in front of the class. Additionally, group work can provide creative opportunities for interaction where peers may give each other valuable bits of feedback on their errors. Besides, cooperative learning nourishes competitive feelings between students and consequently can increase their motivation to learn.

### **5.5.2 The Contribution of Motivation**

Enhancing students' motivation to improve their levels of pronunciation intelligibility can be most guaranteed by raising their awareness about the importance of pronunciation in communicating effectively. For example, asking a student to dictate a passage to his classmates, then to compare the text's sample he has with those they are going to write can help him recognize the need to improve his pronunciation performance more than an observation from his teacher that he ought to. Similarly, structuring activities in which learners are asked to discuss some topics of mutual interest can boost the interaction between them and create a natural context for language exchange, where the desire to understand and to be understood can highly raise the participants' desire to improve their pronunciation performance, as well as their overall production and comprehension skills. In brief, a communicative natural context for pronunciation practice can make it both interesting and entertaining for the students and consequently elevate their motivation to learn.

In addition, the teachers' attempts at raising their students' expectations of success can have significant effects on motivation. Explicitly, learners' preconceptions about their possible levels of attainment in pronunciation learning can considerably affect their desire and readiness to make efforts in this area. Accordingly, it is important that teachers convince students that their English pronunciation learning is principally their own responsibility. In sum, if all students come to recognize the importance of pronunciation in communicating effectively, the possibility to achieve fairly good results in their pronunciation learning and their determinative roles in arriving at this outcome, the problem of motivation will be greatly lessened, if not totally solved.

### **5.5.3 The Effect of Personality Traits**

The findings in section 5.3.2 suggest that the learners' personality traits are related to their pronunciation achievements, as well as to how much practice they perform and how much motivated they are. Consequently, it is concluded that the students' personality characteristics are worth attention in any pronunciation class. In particular, the teachers should make trials at relaxing students and raising their self-confidence by using some warming-up activities. As a warming-up activity, some scholars (Celce-Murcia, Brinton and Goodwin, 1996: 306-308) advise using relaxation techniques adapted from psychology, such as breathing exercises, to help learners feel relaxed during sessions of pronunciation practice. Relieving the students' anxieties by showing that their errors are inevitable, will be accepted and will not be laughed out in class can also bring valuable results. In addition, if highly anxious learners can be convinced to participate in some primary tasks wherein they can communicate successfully, the resulting self-confidence can help them to be more adventurous in future, and ultimately this can augment their opportunities for practice and learning, too. More to the point, the language laboratory, as it is further clarified below, can create crucial chances for practice for those students who feel uncomfortable or embarrassed when speaking in front of a group.

### **5.5.4 The Role of the Language Laboratory**

Today's language laboratory with its updated technological capabilities and wide variety of software materials can be a precious tool at the disposal of the pronunciation teacher. Firstly, it is usable to create sophisticated levels of practice wherein learners can get exposed to various samples of native speaker talks. The facilities provided by the language lab can also help students to record, reply, self-monitor and compare their own speech samples with a model with great easiness. The learners' recorded performances can also be used as a basis for providing the performers with adequate feedback on different aspects of pronunciation accuracy by their teachers, as well as by their peers. What is more, the language lab is useful to increase the learners' motivation and to lower their affective filters by building an entertaining game-like atmosphere for learning and a supportive stress-free environment for mimicry.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter embodies an attempt to empirically find which factors from six learner-based variables significantly correlate with success in achieving an intelligible pronunciation

of English by EFL students at the University of Guelma. The results show that pronunciation practice, personality traits and motivation are the most important variables. Eventually, this finding is used to suggest some implications for those involved in the task of EFL pronunciation teaching. To be precise, the most important recommendations can be summarized into the following:

- ❖ Building learner-centered, teacher-guided classrooms where students are provided with authentic language materials and are engaged in a meaningful interchange of English,
- ❖ Developing self-correcting and self-monitoring strategies to create learner autonomy and consequently to extend pronunciation practice beyond the classroom,
- ❖ Keeping the learning process interesting and creative,
- ❖ Increasing learners' interest in acquiring intelligible speech patterns by raising their awareness about the importance of pronunciation in communicating effectively,
- ❖ Raising learners' expectations of success and encouraging them to take responsibility for their pronunciation learning,
- ❖ Encouraging cooperation and meaningful interaction between classmates as a basis for pronunciation practice,
- ❖ Setting up conference groups so that peers can interact and give feedback to each other,
- ❖ Using warming-up activities and encouraging errors to create a supportive environment for practice and learning, and
- ❖ Improving the quality of pronunciation practice and feedback by using instructional technologies, such as computer software programs, audio-recorders, etc.

The foregoing points are, of course, only suggestions. Pronunciation teachers may find other techniques on how to *increase opportunities for practice, build self-confidence and motivate learners.*

## CHAPTER SIX

### AN ANALYSIS OF THE LEARNERS' SEGMENTAL PRONUNCIATION ERRORS

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## **Introduction**

After identifying the factors that correlate with learners' success in EFL pronunciation learning in Chapter 5, an attempt is made in this chapter to arrive at the nature and the sources of their weaknesses in this area of study. Explicitly, this chapter reports an error analysis of the English oral performances of the same subjects whose individual characteristics in relation to English pronunciation learning were investigated in the previous chapter. In particular, the segmental pronunciation errors the collected corpus contains are identified, described in terms of their linguistic structure and their superficial form, and ultimately explained with the goal of detecting their causes. Subsequently, the identified errors are classified with reference to the recognized sources and the frequencies are counted to arrive at an exact statement about the most problematic influences on the students' pronunciation performances. Finally, the main findings are discussed and a number of pedagogical implications are suggested.

### **6.1 Data**

The learners' recorded performances in the pronunciation intelligibility test described in Chapter 5 (Section 5.2.3) are adopted as data for the error analysis in this chapter, too. As already clarified, these performances are delivered by twenty-three third year university students of English (Section 5.1) and they fall into two different categories (Section 5.2.3.3): a sample of the learners' readings aloud (reading data) and another of their free speeches (spontaneous data.) In view of that, the whole corpus can be considered as an instance of a limited massive sample of the learners' oral English (cf. Section 3.5.1.)

### **6.2 Identification of the Learners' Segmental Pronunciation Errors**

The examined subject learners' oral performances include a wide variety of linguistic errors. This analysis, however, is confined to serious segmental pronunciation errors solely, in particular, to those which are likely to induce unintelligibility or unfavourable estimations about the performers or their overall abilities. As stated in the dissertation's general introduction, the pronunciation variety adopted as a model in this study is the one of British Standard English; that is, Received Pronunciation (RP.) Hence, emphasis here is put on the subjects' serious pronunciation deviancies from the RP model; explicitly, those pronunciation errors which interfere with the comprehensibility of the messages, which significantly deviate from the norms of RP and consequently cause the speeches to sound remarkably foreign or which tend to reappear in the production samples of several learners. Despite their significant frequency throughout the performances, errors in the use of the redundant features in the

phonology of English, such as aspiration, are not taken in consideration because of their unlikelihood to affect the intelligibility of the utterances wherein they occur.

In Sections 5.2.3.2 and 5.2.3.3, it is clarified that the learners were given sufficient time and freedom to prepare for the pronunciation intelligibility test; the diagnostic passage was given to them in advance and they had the opportunity to individually select the topics of their free speeches, as well. What is more, the two types of performances (readings and free speeches) were recorded with ample time in between to avoid tiring the subjects. Specifically, these two measures were taken in an attempt to exclude as many non-structural factors, such as the learners' discomfort, anxiety or exhaustion, as possible. Consequently, it can be assumed that the resulting performances include only errors, not mistakes, following Corder's terminology (cf. Section 3.5.2.) Similarly, because of the subjects having reached an advanced level in their English course (third year at the university,) the corpus under consideration is believed to contain no developmental errors. In other words, all the pronunciation idiosyncrasies the subjects produce are regarded as fossilised pronouncing habits (cf. Section 3.3.2.)

The learners' serious segmental pronunciation errors were identified by the writer of this dissertation after many detached attempts to carefully examine the samples of their reading and free performances. Specifically, the errors were identified by comparing the subjects' utterances with the RP reconstructed forms (cf. Section 3.5.2.) Fortunately, the learners' free performances include only very few instances of covert errors (cf. section 3.5.2.) These were recognised by the consideration of the linguistic and situational contexts of the utterances wherein they occur. On the other hand, the written version of the diagnostic passage ensures that no errors in the reading data can pass unnoticed because they resemble other RP accepted forms. Table 6.1 below illustrates the subjects' covert errors together with the linguistic contexts wherein they appear and the RP reconstructed forms.

<b>The learners' original utterances</b>	<b>The RP reconstructed forms</b>
I need to work hard /η□÷δ/ (heard.)	/ηα÷δ/
...and through / ρ□U/ (throw) time...	/ ρυ÷/
...someone who throw / ρυ÷/ (through) himself from...	/ ρ□U/
I need to do many things / □vκσ/ (thinks)... many things / □vκσ/ are...	/ □□ξ/
The place where you fall /φυ÷l/ (fool) down ... your fall /φυ÷l/...	/φ□÷l/

*Table 6.1: The recognized covert errors*

The identified segmental pronunciation errors which form the end result in this stage are further examined in the coming sections in an attempt to describe their nature and to discern their origins.

### **6.3 Description of Errors**

Based on the points on which the learners' recognized erroneous utterances differ from the RP reconstructed forms, the identified errors are classified according to different criteria. Firstly, following a linguistic category taxonomy, the subjects' idiosyncrasies at issue are categorized into errors of vowels, of consonants and of clusters. The category "vowels" here is used to include English pure vowels, as well as diphthongs and triphthongs. Likewise, both of English consonants and semi-vowels are treated under the title "consonants." Secondly, in reference to a surface strategy taxonomy, the learners' errors are divided into three different categories: substitutions, additions and omissions. Finally, they are further organized according to whether they belong to the reading or to the spontaneous data.

In appendix 7, the above descriptive categories are illustrated by citing examples from the learners' original utterances written firstly using letters of the English alphabet then transcribed phonetically. At the maximum, three erroneous articulations are used to exemplify each error category. In case where an utterance used to exemplify a given descriptive category of error contains more than one single deviant form, it is transcribed as it was produced by its performer(s,) but with only the erroneous pronunciation features in question demonstrated in bold type. On the other hand, to exemplify the presence of an omission error, a space is left between the two neighbouring sounds of the omitted phoneme. For instance, the omission of the vowel /ε/ in articulating the word "develop" /δ□ϖεl□π/ is illustrated by the transcription \*/δ□ϖ l□π/. In addition, appendix 7 also displays the errors' frequencies in each descriptive category, along with the number of students who produced them.

Generally speaking, the majority of the learners' segmental pronunciation errors are found to be substitutions of the vowel type. Overtly, as it is revealed in Table 6.3, from a maximum of 394 recognized error, 248 errors (62,94%) are wrong selections of vowel sounds. What is more, this type of pronunciation deviancies form 66,67% of the overall errors identified in the reading data, and 57,83% from those in the spontaneous data.

From the overall wrong selections of vowel sounds, substitutions of the English short vowel /□/ are, particularly, very numerous. To cite few examples, the /□/ phoneme is substituted by /U/ seventeen times (for example in the articulation \*/σUl□÷♥v/ produced for

the RP /σ□lυ÷♥v/ to mean *solution*.) by /□/ sixteen times (for example in the articulation \*/ρ□σπQnσ□β□□ti/ produced for the RP /ρ□σπQvσ□β□□ti/ to mean *responsibility*) and by /ε/ ten times (for example in the articulation \*/εδρεσ/ produced for the RP /□δρεσ/ to mean *address*.) Other substitutions for the /□/ vowel detected from the learners' verbal performances include /←-/ , /□÷/, /□÷/, /ε□/, /□□/, /Q/ and /□÷/. Similarly, /□/ is recorded to be wrongly used for /ε/, /←-/ , /□/ and /ε□/. Appendix 7 illustrates these vowels' errors together with others, such as the use of /□÷/ for /ε□/ and /Q/ for /□U / which appear seventeen and eighteen times, respectively, in the reading data alone.

In addition, substitutions and additions of consonants are also quite widespread throughout the data. To be exact, they account for 17,51% and 12,18% of the total 394 errors. Examples mainly include the substitutions of /↓/ for /δ↓/ and /v□/ for /□/, along with the additions of post-vocalic and final /p/. On the other hand, the learners' verbalizations include relatively few, but not less serious, errors of clusters. This last category of errors consists exclusively of vowel insertions in between adjacent consonants (such as in the articulation \*/σεκ□vδ□÷pi/ produced for the RP /σεκ□vδpi/ to mean *secondary*.)

As it was predicted, Tables 6.2 and 6.3 show that the reading data include far more errors than the learners' free speeches, especially with reference to some error categories. On the whole, errors from the reading corpus consist of 228 erroneous articulations, i.e., they form 57,87% of the totality 394 errors. Simply, the point is that the diagnostic passage, being intentionally prepared to test the students' pronunciation abilities, includes more features of the phonology of English in different phonetic contexts than the learners' free verbalizations (Section 5.2.3.2.) Hence, it reasonably elicits more errors. All the above mentioned statistical findings are further demonstrated, along with others, in tables 6.2 and 6.3.

	Reading data			Spontaneous data			Total
	substitutions	additions	omissions	substitutions	additions	omissions	
Vowels	152 60,56%	01 0,40%	01 0,40%	96 38,25%	00	01 0,40%	251 63,70%
Consonants	39 31,20%	18 14,40%	08 06,40%	30 24%	30 24%	00	125 31,73%
Clusters	00	09 50%	00	00	09 50%	00	18 04,57%
Total	191 48,48%	28 07,11%	09 02,28%	126 31,98%	39 09,90%	01 0,25%	<b>394</b>

Table 6.2: Frequencies of errors classified by linguistic categories

	Vowels			Consonants			Clusters			Total
	substitutions	additions	omissions	substitutions	additions	omissions	substitutions	additions	omissions	
Reading data	152 66,67%	01 0,44%	01 0,44%	39 17,10%	18 07,89%	08 03,51%	00	09 03,95%	00	228 57,87%
Spontaneous data	96 57,83%	00	01 0,60%	30 18,07%	30 18,07%	00	00	09 05,42%	00	166 42,13%
Total	248 62,94%	01 0,25%	02 0,51%	69 17,51%	48 12,18%	08 02,03%	00	18 04,57%	00	<b>394</b>

*Table 6.3: Frequencies of errors classified by type of data*

## 6.4 Explanation of Errors

At this level, an attempt is made to understand the underlying processes which stand behind the occurrence of the learners' deviant pronunciations described above. In particular, two distinguishable sources of errors are identified. These are *intralingual*, or *internal interference*, causes of errors and *interlingual*, or *external interference*, causes of errors.

Specifically, intralingual sources of errors account for those idiosyncratic forms which have roots in the phonological system of English itself or in the intersections of this system with other areas of English such as orthography and lexis. Accordingly, the errors attributed to this broad source of interference are further classified into errors due to *inherent difficulty*, *spelling pronunciation errors*, *letter-sound confusion induced errors*, and *lexical confusion induced errors*. By contrast, interlingual causes represent the interfering effects that the learners' languages other than English, mainly, Arabic and French, have on their English pronunciation learning and performances. Despite the subjects claim that they basically know other languages; Spanish, Italian and German in particular (Section 5.2.1.3), the elementary levels they have in these foreign languages have not encouraged transfer from the corresponding phonological systems to that of English. On the basis of the forms in which the external interferences on the students' pronunciation performances are manifested, the resulting errors are subdivided into *substitutions*, *calques* and *hypercorrections*. Besides, as they allow both intralingual and interlingual explanations, some errors are said to result from *miscellaneous causes*. Some others, however, being unique in character and not readily traceable to either source, are attributed to *other causes*.

In view of the aforementioned explanatory categories, the eighteen tables below display the segmental pronunciation errors identified in Section 6.2 and described in Section 6.3 classified by origin. In these tables, the words the learners intend to produce are presented to provide hints about the phonetic contexts wherein the errors occur. These are firstly written in the English alphabet and then transcribed phonetically according to the RP accepted norms. Next, the subjects' erroneous articulations are also presented in the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) with the errors in question highlighted in bold type. Furthermore, the tables below list the frequencies of the errors and the number of students who produce them. Some of the illustrated errors occur only once throughout the data. Nevertheless, they are considered worth being mentioned given that they are seen as superficial forms that can add insights into the deep-rooted problems the learners have with the pronunciation of English.

## 6.4.1 Intralingual Causes of Errors

### 6.4.1.1 Inherent Difficulty

The cause “inherent difficulty” accounts for those pronunciation errors which stem from naturally difficult features of the phonological system of English, and which are, consequently, problematic for most its learners, foreign learners and young native speakers alike. In our case, errors from this category are exclusively of the vowel type (cf. tables 6.4 and 6.5.)

English has a large number of vowel sounds: seven short vowels /ɪ/, /e/, /æ/, /ɜ/, /ʊ/, /Q/ and /U/; five long vowels /i:/, /e:/, /æ:/, /ɜ:/ and /u:/; eight diphthongs /eɪ/, /ɛɪ/, /Uɪ/, /ɛʊ/, /αʊ/, /ɔɪ/, /ɔU/ and /αU/; in addition to five triphthongs /ɛəʊ/, /αəʊ/, /ɔəʊ/, /ɔUə/ and /αUə/. More to the point, the differences in the tongue positioning between many of these phonemic sounds are very slight and confusing indeed. In particular, confusions between the RP /ɪ/ and /e/, /e/ and /æ/, /ɜ/ and /ɜ/, /ɜ/ and /e/, /ɜ/ and /ɪ/, /ɜ/ and /ɜ/, /ɜ/ and /e/, /ɜ/ and /ɜ/, /ɜ/ and /e/ as well as between /i:/ and /e:/ are reported in literature to be common to different groups of EFL learners (Avery and Ehrlich, 1992: 95-100; O’Connor, 1980: 138-146.) These errors are also quite constant in the recordings of the subjects of this study, as it is demonstrated in tables 6.4 and 6.5. Additionally, the RP triphthongs, being marked and cross-linguistically rare, are a common area of difficulty for nearly all English foreigners at both articulatory and auditory levels (Roach, 1991: 23.) The students whose English pronunciation performances are under consideration are not an exception to this last statement.

### 6.4.1.2 Spelling Pronunciation Errors

In addition to the complexity of its vowel system, the non-correspondences between English spelling forms and the ways they are pronounced further complicate the task of its pronunciation learning. In the corpus being analysed, 104 errors (56 from the reading data + 48 from the spontaneous data) from the overall 394 recognized errors are of this type. Explicitly, the learners’ familiarity with written rather than accurately spoken English has caused them to base their pronunciation performances on the target words’ spelling forms. Conclusively, they say \*/στQμ□÷τ♥/, for the RP /στQμ□κ/, to mean *stomach*; \*/ω□÷ρδ/, for the RP /ω□÷δ/, to mean *word*; and \*/ηQvεστι/, for the RP /Qv□στι/, to mean *honesty*. The other erroneous pronunciation listed in tables 6.6 and 6.7 are similar instances.

The words learners intend to produce	The RP pronunciation	The learners' pronunciation	Number of learners who made the error (N=23)	Error frequency
listening	/lɪsənɪŋ/	/lɛsənɪŋ/	01	01
applied	/ɪplɑɪd/	/ɛplɑɪd/	01	01
address	/ɪdres/	/ɛdres/	02	03
foreign	/fɔːrɪn/	/fɔːrɪn/	01	01
accent	/ɪkˈsɛnt/	/ɛkˈsɛnt/	01	02
France	/frʌːns/	/frɛns/	01	01
manage	/mænɪʒ/	/mɛnɛʒ/ /mɛnɛʒ/	03 01	03 02
country	/kʌntri/	/kɪntri/ /kɛntri/	01 01	01 01
hard	/hɑːd/	/hɪd/	01	01
<b>Total</b>			<b>10</b>	<b>17</b>

*Table 6.4: Reading data: intralingual causes: inherent difficulty*

The words learners intend to produce	The RP pronunciation	The learners' pronunciation	Number of learners who made the error (N=23)	Error frequency
pregnant	/πρɛvvt/	/πρvεvt/	01	02
level	/lɛvl/	/lɔvl/	01	01
well	/wɛl/	/wɔl/	01	01
destiny	/dɛstvi/	/dɔstvi/	01	02
ethnic	/ɛ   vɔk/	/ɔ   vɔk/	01	01
supported	/sɔpɔtɔd/	/sɔpɔtɔd/	01	01
restaurant	/rɛstɔrɔnt/	/rɔstɔrɔnt/	01	01
comfortable	/kɔmfortɔbl/	/kɔmfortɔbl/	01	01
instead	/ɪnstɛd/	/ɛnstɔd/	01	02
equal	/i:kwɔl/	/i:kwɛl/	01	01
again	/əgeɪn/	/əgeɪv/	01	01
cover	/kɔvɔr/	/kɛvɔr/	01	01
difficulties	/dɪfɪkɪlti:z/	/dɪfɪkɔlti:z/	01	03
charm	/tʃɔrm/	/tʃɔrm/	01	01
hard	/hɔrd/	/hɔrd/	01	03
betray	/brɛɪ/	/brɔɪ/	01	01
violence	/vaɪələns/	/vaɪələns/	01	01
<b>Total</b>			<b>11</b>	<b>24</b>

Table 6.5: Spontaneous data: intralingual causes: inherent difficulty

The words learners intend to produce	The RP pronunciation	The learners' pronunciation	Number of learners who made the error (N=23)	Error frequency
your native...	/fɒð/	/fɒðp/	02	02
over the...	/ʊtə/	/ʊtəp/	04	04
hard	/hɑːd/	/hɑːpδ/	01	01
another country	/vəˈnɒtri/	/vəˈnɒtri/	01	01
noticed	/nɒtɪst/	/nɒtɪstδ/	08	08
learn	/lɜːn/	/lɜːnp/	01	02
appears	/pɪˈɪəz/	/pɪˈiːpɪz/	01	02
carefully	/kɛəfʊli/	/kɜːpʊli/	03	09
		/kɜːfʊli/	01	02
individuals	/vɪdʌˈwɪdʒl̩z/	/vɪdʌˈwɪdʒl̩z/	03	08
cases	/keɪsɪz/	/keɪsɪs/	01	01
desire	/dɪˈzɪə/	/dɪˈsɪə/	01	01
manage	/mænɪʒ/	/mænɪs/	02	02
		/mænɪs/	02	02
foreign	/fɔːrɪn/	/fɔːrɪs/	01	01
		/fɔːrɪn/	01	01
ear	/ɪə/	/ɛə/	03	03
		/iːp/	01	02
country	/kʌntri/	/kʌntri/	03	03
		/kʌntri/	01	01
<b>Total</b>			<b>21</b>	<b>56</b>

Table 6.6: Reading data: intralingual causes: spelling pronunciation errors

The words learners intend to produce	The RP pronunciation	The learners' pronunciation	Number of learners who made the error (N=23)	Error frequency
Asked	/ɪ ÷ σ κ τ/	/ɪ ÷ σ κ □ δ/	01	01
liked	/l α □ κ τ/	/l α □ κ □ δ/	01	01
honesty	/Q v □ σ ti/	/η Q v ε σ ti/	01	02
talk	/τ □ ÷ κ/	/τ □ ÷ l κ/	01	05
culture	/κ ← l τ ♥ □/	/κ U l τ □/	01	02
stomach	/σ τ Q μ □ κ/	/σ τ Q μ □ ÷ τ ♥/	01	03
cover her...	/κ ← ω □/	/κ ε ω □ ρ/	01	01
orders	/ɪ ÷ δ □ ζ/	/ɪ ÷ ρ δ □ ρ ζ/	01	02
charm	/τ ♥ □ ÷ μ/	/τ ♥ □ ÷ ρ μ/	01	01
writer	/ρ α □ τ □/	/ρ α □ τ □ ρ/	01	01
served	/σ □ ÷ ω δ/	/σ □ ÷ ρ ω δ/	01	01
card	/κ □ ÷ δ/	/κ □ ÷ ρ δ/	01	01
supported	/σ □ π □ ÷ τ □ δ/	/σ □ π □ ÷ ρ τ □ δ/	01	01
farewell	/φ ε □ ω ε l/	/φ □ ÷ ρ ω ε l/	01	02
first	/φ □ ÷ σ τ/	/φ □ ρ σ τ/	01	01
responsibility	/ρ □ σ π Q v σ □ β □ l □ ti/	/ρ □ σ π Q v σ □ β □ l □ ti/	02	04
enrich	/□ v ρ □ τ ♥/	/ε v ρ □ ♥/	01	01
religion	/ρ □ l □ δ ↓ □ v/	/ρ ε l □ ↓ □ v/	01	01
parent	/π ε □ ρ □ v τ/	/π □ ÷ ρ □ v τ/	01	01
breath	/β ρ ε   /	/β ρ i ÷   /	01	01
wear when...	/ω ε □/	/ω i ÷ ρ/	01	08
love	/l ← ω/	/l Q ω/	01	01
other	/← □ □/	/Q □ □/	01	01
word	/ω □ ÷ δ/	/ω □ ÷ ρ δ/	01	02
world	/ω □ ÷ l δ/	/ω □ ÷ l δ/	01	01
solution	/σ □ l v ÷ ♥ v/	/σ U l v ÷ ♥ v/	01	01

discover	/δ□σκ←ϖ□/	/δ□σκ□Uϖ□/	01	01
<b>Total</b>			<b>13</b>	<b>48</b>

*Table 6.7: Spontaneous data: intralingual causes: spelling pronunciation errors*

### 6.4.1.3 Letter-Sound Confusion Induced Errors

In addition to being able to induce incorrect pronunciations, the lack of a one-to-one correspondence between orthography and phonology in English creates additional confusion in the learners' minds about how some letters can be realized phonemically. The letter "o" and the digraph (two-letter sequence) "th" in English, for example, have two equally frequent pronunciations each; /ɒ/ and /o/ for "o" and /θ/ and /ð/ for "th." This fact, along with the students' lack of exposure to native speakers' spoken English, cause them to be unaware about how to appropriately articulate some letters in given contexts. For instance, they produce \*/kɒvli/ for only /ɒvli/ and \*/kɪθ|σ/ for clothes /kɪθ|z/.

The recordings of the learners' speeches prove that the errors cited above are not articulatory in nature; the same students who produce these errors are also recorded to correctly pronounce the wrongly articulated phonemes here in different phonetic contexts elsewhere, either appropriately or inappropriately. For example, they say /ɒθ|σ/ for "over," /vɒθ|σ/ for "notice" and \*/|pɒθ|σ/ for "through". Equally, the learner who pronounces "clothes" as \*/kɪθ|σ/ is found to be able to articulate the voiced fricative /ð/ in quite different contexts, such as in the following instances: "they," "this," "then," "another," "without," etc. Concerning the erroneous substitution of /σ/ for /z/ in \*/kɪθ|σ/, it is only induced by the wrong selection of /θ/ for /ð/ and the performer's elsewhere verbalizations prove that she can readily correct it, if /ð/ is again substituted for /θ/.

Clearly, the errors at issue could not be attributed to the cause "spelling pronunciation" since both of the learners' erroneous articulations and the RP reconstructed phonemes are equally common verbal realizations for the concerned letters in English. Explicitly, the errors' performers are not indeed misled by the spelling forms, but rather confused by the infirm relationship existing between letters and phonemes in English; many letters have more than one frequent articulation in RP, and vice versa.

More to the point, the errors listed in tables 9.8 and 9.9 also demonstrate that the subjects have a general tendency to prefer pure vowels over diphthongs. Peter Roach argues that errors of this type (substitutions of vowels for diphthongs) are "of the most common pronunciation mistakes that result in a learner of English having a 'foreign' accent" (Roach, 1991: 20.) Moreover, in our case these mispronunciations seem explicable in terms of an interlingual interference; that is, the relative rarity of diphthongs in Arabic and their absence in French. This explanation, however, is disregarded because of the fairly frequent occurrences of diphthongs throughout the subjects' English verbal performances, in

appropriate as well as inappropriate contexts. To exemplify this point, the word “foreign” is incorrectly pronounced as \*/fɔɪrɛn/, for the RP /fɔɪn/, in fourteen instances (cf. Appendix 7.) Diphthong /ɔɪ/ is also wrongly selected for /ɔɪ/ two times, not to include appropriate uses; particularly, the words “discover” and “country” are, respectively, pronounced as \*/dɪskʌvɪ/ and \*/kʌntri/. Indeed, these instances significantly testify that the learners’ problems with the English diphthongs stem from the confusing nature of its orthography, rather than from an articulatory difficulty due to negative influences from the learners’ other languages.

#### 6.4.1.4 Lexical Confusion Induced Errors

In addition to being confused by the spelling forms of English in their pronunciation performances, the learners’ inability to distinguish between some vocabulary terms can cause them to originate additional errors of pronunciation. Two from the research subjects, for instance, are recorded to use each of the RP articulations of the words *through* /θruː/ and *throw* /θrəʊ/ to signify the meaning acceptably expressed by the other (Table 6.11.)

A third learner pronounces the word *things* /θɪŋz/ as \*/θɪŋz/ in two successive examples. Although the performer of this last error has a general difficulty to articulate the RP nasal consonant /ŋ/, the error at hand is not simply articulatory in nature because, given the learner’s habitual pronunciation performances, he might produce the word as \*/θɪŋz/, rather than \*/θɪŋz/ (cf. tables 6.18 and 6.19.) Additionally, given the fact that this error occurs repeatedly in the performer’s speech, Corder’s hypothesis that it is simply a mistake (a slip of the tongue) is not likely. Hence, the only plausible explanation seems to be that the learner intends to produce “thing”, but has “think” in mind, even though his articulation is not exactly the RP required form /θɪŋk/. Other lexical items that the subjects confuse and which consequently induce pronunciation faults are listed in table 6.10; these are, *belief* vs. *believe* and *over* vs. *ever*.

The words learners intend to produce	The RP pronunciation	The learners' pronunciation	Number of learners who made the error (N=23)	Error frequency
changed	/tʰeɪŋdʒ/	/tʰeɪŋdʒ/	03	03
identify	/aɪdɪfaɪ/	/aɪdɪfaɪ/	03	03
only	/oʊnli/	/oʊnli/	08	08
old	/oʊld/	/oʊld/	04	06
noticed	/nɒtɪst/	/nɒtɪst/	04	04
<b>Total</b>			<b>12</b>	<b>24</b>

Table 6.8: Reading data: intralingual causes: letter-sound confusion induced errors

The words learners intend to produce	The RP pronunciation	The learners' pronunciation	Number of learners who made the error (N=23)	Error frequency
gown	/gaʊn/	/gaʊn/	01	07
clothes	/klaʊz/	/klaʊz/	01	02
throat	/rəʊt/	/rəʊt/	01	01
dowry	/daʊri/	/daʊri/	01	01
<b>Total</b>			<b>03</b>	<b>11</b>

Table 6.9: Spontaneous data: intralingual causes: letter-sound confusion induced errors

The words learners intend to produce	The RP pronunciation	The learners' pronunciation	Number of learners who made the error (N=23)	Error frequency
belief (vs. believe)	/βli:ϕ/	/βli:ɔ/	01	01
over (vs. ever)	/ɔUɔ/	/ɛɔ/	01	01
<b>Total</b>			<b>02</b>	<b>02</b>

*Table 6.10: Reading data: intralingual causes: lexical confusion induced errors*

The words learners intend to produce	The RP pronunciation	The learners' pronunciation	Number of learners who made the error (N=23)	Error frequency
things (vs. thinks)	/ θiŋz/	/ θiŋks/	01	04
through (vs. throw)	/ pʊ:ð/	/ pʊ:U/	01	01
throw (vs. through)	/ pʊ:U/	/ pʊ:ð/	01	01
<b>Total</b>			<b>03</b>	<b>06</b>

*Table 6.11: Spontaneous data: intralingual causes: lexical confusion induced errors*

## 6.4.2 Interlingual Causes of Errors

### 6.4.2.1 Substitutions

One additional category of pronunciation errors the learners produce consists of substitutions of RP phonemes due to external interference from the phonological systems of the learners' languages other than English, namely, Arabic and French. In particular, the subjects constantly substitute /ʁ/ and /ʒ/ for the RP /tʃ/ and /dʒ/, respectively; in consequence of the relative rarity of affricates in their two firstly learned languages. The vowels /Q/ and /ɔ̃/, being missing in the phonological system of the subjects' mother tongue, are also occasionally replaced by /U/ and /ʊ̃/.

In addition, despite the fact that the phonological system of Standard Arabic contains only one single bilabial plosive: the voiced phoneme /β/; errors with /β/ substituted for /π/ in tables 6.12 and 6.13 are common to one subject only: the student from Western Sahara (cf. Section 5.1.) The point may be that, unlike this learner, the Algerian subjects are able to overcome the contrastive difficulty associated with producing the /π/ phoneme due to the different sociolinguistic contexts involved in each case. To be exact, the /π/ sound can be easily articulated by the Algerian students in this study owing to its existence in Algerian colloquial Arabic, mainly in some borrowed words, and the extensive societal use of French, whose phonological system includes the sound contrast between /β/ and /π/, in everyday life in Algeria.

What is more, the problem the subject from Western Sahara has in articulating the RP voiceless plosive /π/ is not totally handicapping. On the contrary, this learner is recorded to accurately produce the /π/ sound in diverse phonetic contexts; such as in the words: "people," "Spanish," "speciality," "appears," "exposure," "develop," "give up," etc. Thus, it can be confidently said that the learners' wrong selections for /π/ do not really reflect a defect in his articulatory abilities, but rather an inadequate habit formation. In other words, the performer can readily articulate the sound in question, but by reason of his lack of familiarity (non-existence in the phonology of the native language) with it he cannot get it automatically.

### 6.4.2.2 Calques

By calques, we refer to the learners' errors which very closely reflect the structure of one of their languages other than English. Specifically, faulty cognate pronunciations and pronunciation deviances induced by the application of the phonological rules of another language fall in this category (cf. Section 3.5.4.1.) Errors from this kind are quite recurrent

throughout the data. They mainly consist of cognate pronunciations due to negative transfer from French. The erroneous articulations of the words “France,” “identify,” “marriage,” “religion,” “speciality,” “separateness,” “separated,” “generally,” “develop” and “method” illustrated in tables 6.14 and 6.15 are the relevant examples.

Some word final syllables are also wrongly pronounced by the students in analogy with the French corresponding phonological realizations. For instance, the word final syllable “-age” is repeatedly verbally produced by the learners as \*/ɛ↓/ instead of the RP /ɪd↓/ (cf. table 6.14.) Likewise, despite it regularly correspond to the RP short vowel /ɪ/, the agent suffix “-er,” such as in the word “speaker,” is pronounced \*/ʊp/ in analogy with the French articulation of the corresponding form “-eur,” such as in “acteur” meaning “actor” in English. The English definite article “the” is as well erroneously articulated as \*/ɪU/ in analogy with the way the equivalent French “le” is pronounced.

What is more, the learners seem to respect the phonological rules of French in their English performances, too. For instance, they pronounce intervocalic “s” as /ʒ/ even when the RP required form is /s/ (table 6.14.) Moreover, as demanded in French, one of the subjects is recorded to pronounce the digraph “gn” by a glide from the consonant /v/ to the short vowel similar to the semivowel /ɥ/, /ɥ/ in particular (table 6.14.) Indeed, the sound she produced was not identical, but very close to the French voiced palatal stop /j/, such as in the word “vigne” /viʒ/ which means “vine” in English.

### 6.4.2.3 Hypercorrections

Hypercorrections are errors which result from interlingual transfer, but which do not clearly reflect the structure of the source language. In essence, they are overreactions to transfer effects. Only two from the maximum 394 identified pronunciation errors are attributable to this cause. Nevertheless, these two errors are considered worth of attention for the reason that they can provide additional evidence for the pronunciation problems the performers are elsewhere reported to have.

Clearly, one of the subjects, being a proficient speaker of French and aware of the quite noticeable French accent in her English verbalizations, overreacted by trying to avoid resembling the French articulation of the word “universel,” and ultimately pronounces “universal” in English as \*/pʊ÷vɪwɜ÷ɪl/. This error is typically encouraged by the performer’s belief that the substitution of /ɪ/ for /ɜ/ is peculiar to English in contrast with French. Similarly, another learner, to avoid her common errors inserting a vowel sound in

between adjacent consonants in RP, as a result of negative transfer from Arabic and French (cf. Section 6.4.3), pronounces “noticed” /nɒʊtɪst/ as \*/nɒʊt sɪd/.

The words learners intend to produce	The RP pronunciation	The learners' pronunciation	Number of learners who made the error (N=23)	Error frequency
example	/□□ζ□÷μπl/	/□□ζ□÷μβl/	01	01
pronunciation	/πρ□v←vσ□ε□♥v/	/βρQv←vσ□ε□♥v/	01	01
applied	/□πlα□δ/	/εβlα□δ/	01	01
manage	/μ□v□δ↓/	/μ□vε□↓/	04	04
just	/δ↓←στ/	/↓←στ/	02	02
changed	/τ♥ε□vδ↓δ/	/♥□v↓δ/	02	04
reported	/ρ□π□÷τ□δ/	/ρ□πU÷τ□δ/	01	01
common	/κQμ□v/	/κUμ□v/	01	01
an accent	/□v/	/□÷v/	01	02
<b>Total</b>			<b>08</b>	<b>17</b>

Table 6.12: Reading data: interlingual causes: substitutions

The words learners intend to produce	The RP pronunciation	The learners' pronunciation	Number of learners who made the error (N=23)	Error frequency
improve	/□μπρυ÷ϖ/	/□μβρρυ÷ϖ/	01	01
experience	/□κσπ□□ri□vσ/	/□κσβ□ri□vσ/	01	01
religion	/ρ□l□δ↓□v/	/ρελ□↓□v/	01	01
enrich	/□vρ□τ♥/	/εvρ□♥/	01	01
important	/□μπ□÷τvτ/	/□μπU÷τ□vτ/	01	02
fall	/φ□÷l/	/φU÷l/	01	02
because	/β□κQζ/	/β□κU÷ζ/	01	02
<b>Total</b>			<b>05</b>	<b>10</b>

Table 6.13: Spontaneous data: interlingual causes: substitutions

The words learners intend to produce	The RP pronunciation	The learners' pronunciation	Number of learners who made the error (N=23)	Error frequency
cases	/kε□σ□ζ/	/kε□ζ□ζ/	03	03
foreign	/φQρ□v/	/φQρ□v□/	01	01
manage	/μ□v□δ↓/	/μεvε↓/	04	08
France	/φρA:vσ/	/φρQvσ/	04	04
identify	/α□δεvτ□φα□/	/□δQvτ□φα□/	02	04
speakers	/σπι÷κ□ζ/	/σπι÷κUρζ/	03	06
the English / end	/□i/	/□U/	01	02
<b>Total</b>			<b>11</b>	<b>28</b>

Table 6.14: Reading data: interlingual causes: calques

The words learners intend to produce	The RP pronunciation	The learners' pronunciation	Number of learners who made the error (N=23)	Error frequency
marriage	/μ□ρ□δ↓/	/μ□ρφ□÷↓/	01	03
		/μ□ρφε↓/	02	12
		/μ□ρφεδ↓/	01	04
religion	/ρ□l□δ↓□v/	/ρUl□↓□v/	01	02
speciality	/σπε♥□□l□ti/	/σπ□σφελ□ti/	01	05
separateness	/σεπ□ρ□tv□σ/	/σ□π□÷ρ□tv□σ/	01	02
separated	/σεπ□ρε□τ□δ/	/σ□π□÷ρε□τ□δ/	01	02
generally	/δ↓εvρ□li/	/↓□v□ρeli/	01	04
develop	/δ□ωελ□π/	/δ□ω lQπ/	01	02
method	/με   □δ/	/μ□   Qδ/	01	02
the woman/ home/unknown	/□□/ or /□i/	/□U/	03	04
<b>Total</b>			<b>08</b>	<b>42</b>

Table 6.15: Spontaneous data: interlingual causes: calques

The words learners intend to produce	The RP pronunciation	The learners' pronunciation	Number of learners who made the error (N=23)	Error frequency
noticed	/vɪʊtɪst/	/vɪʊt sɪst/	01	01
<b>Total</b>			<b>01</b>	<b>01</b>

*Table 6.16: Reading data: interlingual causes: hypercorrection*

The words learners intend to produce	The RP pronunciation	The learners' pronunciation	Number of learners who made the error (N=23)	Error frequency
universal	/fʊnɪvɜːsəl/	/fʊnɪvɜːsəl/	01	01
<b>Total</b>			<b>01</b>	<b>01</b>

*Table 6.17: Spontaneous data: interlingual causes: hypercorrection*

### 6.4.3 Miscellaneous Causes of Errors

Errors under this category are of a complex nature; they have roots in more than one single source. The substitutions of the two-consonant sequence /vŋ/ for the RP /ŋ/ in words which end with the digraph “ng,” for example, is encouraged by both the orthography of English and the phonological system of Arabic (the nonexistence of phonemic /ŋ/ in Arabic.) It should be noted, however, that in rapid connected speech, it might be difficult to pronounce the alveolar-velar combination and, consequently, students may alter to pronounce /ŋŋ/ for the RP /ŋ/ instead of /vŋ/.

Likewise, the subjects’ tendency to insert vowel sounds within English clusters allows both intralingual and interlingual explanations. Openly, this type of pronunciation errors produced by Arab EFL learners is generally explained in terms of negative transfer from Arabic (the relative rarity of clusters in Arabic, as well as in French.) Nonetheless, internal interference from the orthography of English is an equally likely justification. In fact, though their mother tongue and French might have an influence, none of the subjects is recorded to produce a cluster error where no vowel letter exists in the spelling form of the target word. For instance, they say \*/σεκvδri/ for the RP /σεκvδri/ to mean “secondary,” \*/vδri/ for the RP /vδri/ to mean “asked” and \*/κμφrtβl/ for the RP /κμφrtβl/ to mean “comfortable.” By contrast, they do not violate any of the clusters in the words: “example” and “applied,” as well as in “study,” “strong,” “throw,” “clothes,” etc, despite the extreme rarity of initial clusters in Arabic.

In addition, some of the learners’ apparently erroneous pronunciations due to the inherent difficulty involved in learning the pronunciation of English (e.g., the confusion between the vowels /ε/ and /i/) or the negative influence of its orthography are also regarded as superficial manifestations of a miscellaneous source as they are also encouraged by the phonological system of French (cognate pronunciations.) Except for the errors of clusters and the substitutions for the phoneme /ŋ/, all the other deviant articulations listed in tables 6.18 and 6.19 are from this last class.

### 6.4.4 Other Causes of Errors

About a fifth of the subjects’ pronunciation errors (69 errors out of the total 394 identified mispronunciations) seem to result from sources other than those listed above. For instance, except for six students who can get the word “accurate” pronounced RP like, all the other subjects (seventeen students) are recorded to produce different articulations instead, as it

is shown in table 6.20. Although the inherent difficulty associated with making distinctions between some RP sounds and the confusing nature of the English spelling forms are plausible explanations, the pronunciation deviances at hand seem to be related with the word “accurate” itself, rather than with the production of the segmental features involved in its articulation. In other words, the learners do not seem to have difficulties articulating the sounds in question, as their elsewhere performances testify, but to be unaware about how the word in question can be accurately pronounced in RP. Possible sources of this unawareness include: a defect in the kind of pronunciation teaching the students receive at school, a lack of exposure to accurately RP spoken English and a lack of motivation on the part of the learners to go and check how the word is pronounced in a reliable dictionary.

The learners’ errors pronouncing the word “afraid” form a similar case to the one just described. Explicitly, even though they do not have any difficulties in producing the diphthong /εɪ/ (as the pronunciation idiosyncrasies of the word “accurate” listed in table 6.20 exemplify,) seventeen of the subjects produce \*/ɔpɪð/, and one \*/εpɪð/, for the RP required /ɔpɛð/. This instance is clearly a reflection of a deficiency in the kind of English and the pronunciation teaching instruction to which the subjects are exposed; the deviance of their teachers’ pronunciations, for example.

Similarly, despite neither diphthong /ɔU/ nor consonant /ɹ/ cause any articulatory complications for one of the subjects, he pronounces *exposure* /ɔkspɔUɹ/ as \*/ɔkspɔU/. Indeed, by doing so, the learner further complicates his performance by altering an RP articulation, /ɔkspɔUɹ/, which would raise no difficulties for him (in view of his elsewhere verbalizations) to a more demanding articulatory movement, \*/ɔkspɔU/. Actually, the learner showed signs for this articulatory difficulty by producing the faulty articulation in question after two trials. At first, he produced only the first part /ɔksp/ without fully releasing the air compressed for the production of the plosive /p/. Then, he made the whole /ɔkspɔU/ noticeably slowly.

More to the point, the substitution of the voiced plosive /β/ for the voiceless /p/ is also found in the recorded speech of a subject other than the learner from Western Sahara, but only in one single instance. The learner to whom we refer here pronounces “people,” “progress,” “speak,” “appear,” “express,” “accept,” for example, with accurately articulated instances of the /p/ sound, but gets “campus” /kɪmɪp/ as \*/kɪmɪβ/. Accordingly, it is concluded that her problem substituting /β/ for /p/ is only related to this word. In fact, maybe due to an

acoustic or, less likely, an auditory problem, the learner is not aware that “campus” is written with the letter “p” and pronounced with the phoneme /π/.

The words learners intend to produce	The RP pronunciation	The learners' pronunciation	Number of learners who made the error (N=23)	Error frequency
<b>strong</b>	/stɹŋ/	/stɹŋv/	03	03
<b>listening</b>	/lɪsən/	/lɛsən /lɪsən/	01 01	01 01
<b>noticed</b>	/nɔʊtɪst/	/nɔʊtɪstɔ/	08	08
<b>pronunciation</b>	/pɹɒnʌnsɪəns/	/βɹɒnʌnsɪəns/	01	01
<b>influence</b>	/ɪnfluəns/	/ɛnfluəns/	01	01
<b>Total</b>			<b>12</b>	<b>15</b>

*Table 6.18: Reading data: miscellaneous causes*

The words learners intend to produce	The RP pronunciation	The learners' pronunciation	Number of learners who made the error (N=23)	Error frequency
sing	/σ□□/	/σ□v□/	01	01
studying	/στ←δ□φ□□/	/στ←δ□φ□v□/	01	01
beginning	/β□□□v□□/	/β□□□v□v□/	01	01
coming	/κ←μ□□/	/κ←μ□v□/	01	01
among	/□μ←□/	/□μ←v□/	01	01
long	/lQ□/	/lQv□/	01	01
asked	/□÷σκτ/	/□÷σκ□δ/	01	01
liked	/lα□κτ/	/lα□κ□δ/	01	01
universal	/φυ÷v□ϖ□÷σl/	/φυ÷v□ϖ□÷♥□l/	01	01
level	/lεϖl/	/l□ϖ□l/	01	01
secondary	/σεκ□vδpi/	/σεκ□vδ□÷pi/	01	01
important	/□μπ□÷τvτ/	/□μπυ÷τ□vτ/	01	02
comfortable	/κ←μφτ□βl/	/κQμφ□÷ρτ□βl/	01	02
restaurant	/ρεστ□ρ□vτ/	/ρ□στQρ□vτ/	01	01
conditions	/κ□vδ□♥vζ/	/κQvδ□♥vζ/	01	01
effort	/εφ□τ/	/□φ□÷ρτ/	01	03
segregation	/σε□ρ□□ε□♥v/	/σ□□ρ□□ε□♥v/	01	01
president	/πρεζ□δ□vτ/	/πρ□ζ□δ□vτ/	01	01
insist	/□vσ□στ/	/εvσ□στ/	01	01
<b>Total</b>			<b>12</b>	<b>23</b>

Table 6.19: Spontaneous data: miscellaneous causes

The words learners intend to produce	The RP pronunciation	The learners' pronunciation	Number of learners who made the error (N=23)	Error frequency
accurate	/kəʔrəteɪ/	/kəʔrɛteɪ/	08	21
		/kəʔrɛteɪ/	02	04
		/kəʔrɛteɪ/	01	03
		/kəʔrɛteɪ/	03	11
		/kəʔrɛteɪ/	02	06
		/kəʔrɛteɪ/	01	03
		/ɛkəʔrɛteɪ/		
afraid	/əfrɛɪd/	/əfrɛɪd/	17	17
		/ɛfrɛɪd/	01	01
exposure	/kɒspəʊʔr/	/kɒspɒʔr/	01	02
<b>Total</b>			<b>22</b>	<b>68</b>

Table 6.20: Reading data: other causes

The words learners intend to produce	The RP pronunciation	The learners' pronunciation	Number of learners who made the error (N=23)	Error frequency
campus	/kəmpʌs/	/kəmpβs/	01	01
<b>Total</b>			<b>01</b>	<b>01</b>

Table 6.21: Spontaneous data: other causes

	Intralingual causes				Interlingual causes			Miscellaneous causes	Other causes	Total
	Inherent difficulty	Spelling pronunciation errors	Orthographic confusion induced errors	Lexical confusion induced errors	Calques	Substitutions	Hypercorrection			
Reading data	17 07,46%	56 24,56%	24 10,53%	02 0,88%	28 12,28%	17 07,46%	01 0,44%	15 06,58%	68 29,82%	228
Spontaneous data	24 14,46%	48 28,92%	11 06,63%	06 03,61%	42 25,30%	10 06,02%	01 0,60%	23 13,85%	01 0,60%	166
Total	41 10,41%	104 26,40%	35 08,88%	08 02,03%	70 17,77%	27 06,85%	02 0,51%	38 09,64%	69 17,51%	<b>394</b>

*Table 6.22: Relative frequencies of the errors induced by particular causes*

#### 6.4.5 Relative Frequencies of the Identified Errors Classified by Cause

Table 6.22 displays the relative frequencies of the errors attributed to each of the explanatory categories described above. It can be easily noticed that *spelling pronunciation* errors are the most frequent from all. They form 26,40% of the maximum 394 errors. *Calques* and the errors induced by *other causes* are also quite common; they respectively form 17,77% and 17,51% of the whole total. Then, in a descending order of frequency, come the errors ascribed to *inherent difficulty* (10,41%,) *miscellaneous causes* (09,64%,) *letter-sound confusion* (08,88%,) *interlingual substitutions* (06,85%,) *lexical confusion* (02,03%) and at last *hypercorrections* (0,51%.)

Reasonably, *spelling pronunciation* and *letter-sound confusion* induced errors are more recurrent in the reading than in the spontaneous data. Equally, the relative frequency of errors resulting from *other causes* greatly changes from the reading to the free data. Specifically, they form 29,82% (the highest percentage) of the reading data, but only 0,60% (the lowest percentage) of the spontaneous data. The reason is simply that errors of this type – being word-related (Section 6.4.4) – are inclined to occur more often in the reading data, where each word is produced at least twenty-three times (the number of the participating subjects,) than in the learners' free speeches.

By contrast, understandably, calques are more common in the spontaneous data. The point is that, being a result of interlingual interference that is generally subconscious, these errors are more likely to appear in free rather than in reading focused performances. Errors due to *inherent difficulty*, *lexical confusion* and *miscellaneous causes* are also more numerous in the learners' free speeches than in their reading performances. Explicably, the more demanding nature of spontaneous language use, where the performers are asked to exhibit their overall linguistic capabilities, distracts them from attending solely to the correctness of their speech patterns, and as so, it brings out more pronunciation errors.

In addition to the frequencies reported so far, Table 6.23 below is created to arrive at a clearer indication of the relative strengths of intralingual and interlingual effects on the learners' pronunciation performances. Overtly, it is assumed that by considering the rate of occurrence of the English internal interference caused errors in opposition to that of those stemming from external negative transfer the most hindering influences on the learners' English pronunciation verbalizations will be revealed.

In accordance with the initiating hypotheses, intralingual sources of interference are significantly found to be the most problematic in the learners' pronunciation performances. Specifically, they account for 47,72% of the maximum 394 errors; that is, nearly half of the

learners' overall errors and approximately double the errors caused by interlingual sources. The new clue, however, is with reference to the subjects' errors ascribed to *other causes*. Although they come in third order of frequency, these errors are considered significant attention because they raise questions about the nature of the pronunciation teaching instruction to which the learners are exposed.

	Intralingual causes	Interlingual causes	Miscellaneous causes	Other causes	Total
Reading data	99 43,43%	46 20,17%	15 06,58%	68 29,82%	228
Spontaneous data	89 53,62%	53 31,93%	23 13,85%	01 0,60%	166
Total	188 47,72%	99 25,13%	38 09,64%	69 17,51%	<b>394</b>

*Table 6.23: Relative frequencies of the errors due to interlingual, intralingual, miscellaneous and other causes*

## 6.5 Discussion

As it was hypothesized, the error analysis of the subjects' verbal performances in English revealed that the majority of their segmental pronunciation errors are substitutions of the vowel type. In particular, about two thirds (62,94%) of the identified 394 errors fall in this category (cf. Table 6.3.) The learners are also recorded to produce fewer but serious (likely to cause unintelligibility or a noticeably foreign accent) errors of consonants and clusters. For example, despite the fact that it has no double in the data being analyzed, the idiosyncratic articulation of the word "secondary" /σɛκvδρi/ as \*/σɛκvδϙri/ has greater resonance than many other errors which are recurrent throughout the data.

As far as the errors' sources are concerned, intralingual causes, as already stated, seem to be the primary source of difficulty in the learners' pronunciation performances. Particularly, the notoriously confusing nature of the orthography of English along with the inherent difficulty involved in attaining mastery over its phonological system, mainly due to the large number and slight articulatory differences of the available sound contrasts, greatly complicate the demands raised on the learners and cause them to produce many pronunciation errors. Moreover, the learners' confusion between some lexical terms elicits further erroneous articulations.

Negative transfer from the other languages the students speak is also proved to be significantly present in their English pronunciation performances due to the considerable number and the negative effects of the errors it causes on the quality of the learners'

vocalizations. For example, some RP sounds, namely /ɹ/, /tʰ/, /ð/, /Q/ and /ɹ:/, are constantly substituted in the learners' speeches by reason of their unfamiliarity with these sounds as they are either totally absent or rare in Arabic and French; the students' two firstly learned languages. Additionally, the learners are recorded to produce some other RP apparently deviant articulations in analogy with the French pronunciations of some cognate and borrowed words. In doing so, the learners may be either subconsciously influenced by the French forms with which they have more familiarity (inadequate habit formation,) or totally unaware that the two languages' pronunciations of the words in question are different (a defect in knowledge.) Conversely, the absence of some articulatory difficulties of the consonant type which are reported in literature to be common to different groups of EFL learners, such as those in relation to the RP fricatives /ʃ/, /ʒ/ and /w/ (Avery and Ehrlich, 1992: 101-103), gives evidence of the presence of positive effects of transfer from Arabic and French on the subjects English pronunciation learning and performances, as well.

As they can result from an intralingual or an interlingual source of interference, the data under consideration testifies that errors due to wrong analogies can be also encouraged by both of these interfering factors. That is to say, they can originate from a miscellaneous source. For instance, the English spelling form, the French corresponding pronunciation and the rarity of adjacent consonants in Arabic are all plausible influences that can cause the learners to say \*/kQμφ□÷pτ□βl/ rather than /k←-μφτ□βl/ for "comfortable."

Furthermore, some other faulty pronunciations by the learners; being associated with particular words, common to the majority of the subjects, and inexplicable in terms of the abovementioned interfering affects, give evidence about a defect in the kind of English and the pronunciation instructional materials to which the learners are exposed. To illustrate this point, although their overall performances prove their ability to accurately articulate the diphthong /ε□/ with great easiness, seventeen of the twenty-three subjects pronounce the word "afraid" as \*/□φρ□÷δ/. More to the point, instances of this erroneous articulation were detected from the subjects' reading performances of a diagnostic passage which had been given to them a week before their readings were recorded to allow them to prepare it adequately (cf. Sections 5.2.3.3 and 6.1.) Overtly, because of some non-linguistic effects such as imperfect classroom experiences, the performers of the error being considered seem to be convinced that what they produce is the RP required form for "afraid."

Besides, the large number of spelling pronunciation errors the learners are found to produce (104 errors out of the totality 394 identified errors) also reflects the poor quality of the

kind of pronunciation teaching they have received. Undeniably, it is true that the orthography English provides confusing hints about its pronunciation. Nevertheless, students of English at such an advanced level (third year at the university) should have developed an awareness about the untrustworthiness of the spelling forms of English as guides to pronunciation performances. To cite only few examples, it is not accepted from a third year university student of English having RP as a model for his pronunciation learning to constantly add /p/ where it exists in the spelling form of the target word but it is not required by RP or to pronounce “stomach” as \*/στQμ□÷τ♥/! Similarly, even though the various cognate pronunciations the learners are recorded to produce seem to be caused by negative transfer from French, these same errors also signify the performers’ lack of exposure to RP English as opposed to French.

In short, though the pronunciation errors examined so far appear to result from diverse sources, many of them may also have roots in one common origin; that is, inadequate inputs for adequate pronunciation learning and performances. This stance is mainly adopted because of the learners having proved their ability to articulate the great majority of RP sounds quite correctly. Indeed, a detailed examination of the participating subjects’ English oral performances can reveal that, with only few exceptions, their pronunciation problems do not result from a defect on how to articulate the concerned sound features, but rather from a lack of understanding where to appropriately use these phonological features. That is to say, the subjects generally produce the right articulations but in inappropriate contexts. To exemplify this point, despite being able to accurately produce the RP short vowel /□/ in different phonetic contexts such as the ones represented by the words: *afraid* /□φρε□δ/, *over* /□Uϖ□/ and *second* /σεκ□vδ/; one subject turned to produce /ε/, /ε□/, and /U/ instead in the same piece of performance. Particularly, she says \*/πρ□□vεvτ/, for the RP /πρε□v□vτ/, to mean pregnant; \*/φQρε□v/, for the RP /φQρ□v/, to mean foreign; and \*/□κφUρε□τ/, for the RP /□κφ□ρ□τ/, to mean accurate.

Consequently, it is concluded that the subjects’ real handicap in learning and performing the pronunciation of English originates from their lack of exposure to authentic RP language use. Spelling pronunciation errors, calques, and many of their other sorts of faulty articulations are only ultimate results of their subsequent resort to base their pronunciation performances on the English spelling forms, the French corresponding pronunciations and even their own pure assumptions on how the target words can be pronounced in English. Finally, it needs to be stated that the lack of familiarity the learners have with accurately spoken English

is not only the blame of teachers and teaching alone. On the contrary, the learners, themselves, share an equal or even a larger amount of responsibility, too.

## 6.6 Pedagogical Implications

The error analysis performed in this chapter was undertaken with the goal of identifying the sources of the difficulties the twenty-three participating subjects have with the pronunciation of English. The results notably show that, despite the fact that they appear as simple manifestations of some intralingual and interlingual effects, the learners' pronunciation errors mainly result from their unfamiliarity with RP English and their consequential remedy to adopt other, inadequate, inputs as models for their pronunciation performances. These latter mainly include the English spelling structures, the French corresponding pronouncing forms, other FL learners', such as their teachers', faulty articulations, and their own guesses about the possible pronunciations of the intended words. In consequence of the random procedure adopted in selecting the subjects who participated in this study, these findings are assumed to also account for the pronunciation learning and performances of the other students of English at the University of Guelma.

As it is usually the case in FLL literature, error analysis has a role in determining the concern of remedial teaching. Accordingly, the results of the error analysis adopted in this chapter are also used to provide some suggestions on how to improve the pronunciation performances of the students in question. In general, it is proposed that given sufficient exposure to accurately spoken English, together with adequate types and amounts of pronunciation practice by the students, they would be able to overcome the great majority of the pronunciation problems they have. The most pervasive from all would be errors due to inherent difficulty or substitutions under interlingual interference. Fortunately, in view of the performances of this study's subjects, errors from these two types are found to be relatively uncommon; they together form less than one fifth ( $17,26\% = 10,41\% + 06,85\%$ ) of the total number of the identified errors (cf. Table 6.22.) What is more, with the support of adequate pronunciation feedback and intensive practice the learners can eradicate, or at least remodel, many of their pronunciation errors of these types.

To be exact, it is our belief that if the below suggestions will be met, the overall pronunciation proficiencies of the students will significantly increase. In particular, teachers are invited to:

- ❖ increase learners' exposure to authentic RP English, especially in communicative everyday life contexts of language use;

- ❖ give students numerous opportunities to practice the different aspects of the English sound system in both listening-imitative and productive activities;
- ❖ create meaningful contexts for pronunciation practice because it is common that students can produce some sounds correctly in isolation but not in connected spontaneous speech;
- ❖ provide learners with informative pronunciation teaching sessions where they get acquainted with adequate articulatory descriptions, along with relevant contrastive information;
- ❖ raise learners' awareness about the non-correspondences between the English phonological and spelling forms and the non-similarities between the English and French pronunciations of cognate words by practicing different relevant examples;
- ❖ introduce learners to the use of the phonetic alphabet (IPA) as the only reliable written version of the pronunciation of English;
- ❖ base descriptive instructional feedback and intensive practice on the pronunciation problems the learners actually have; and
- ❖ encourage learners to adopt more appropriate speech habits, if their articulatory difficulties are so persistent to be totally overcome. For example, to avoid substituting /v/ for /v̄/, the performers can be promoted to produce the nasal phoneme /v̄/ instead for this would sound less foreign and more acceptable.

On their part, students are required to cooperate with their teachers to carry the above suggestions through. Of course, no matter how effective the teaching instruction is, uninterested or uncooperative students will not learn. Mastering the pronunciation of English is, especially, highly demanding. Without motivated learners, teachers cannot really do many things, if ever. What is more, the time and situational limitations the classroom creates makes the teacher's contribution at best insufficient. Explicitly, as already stated, students are recommended to go on with their pronunciation learning besides the classroom. They are asked to search for good models to listen to. Likewise, they are required to attend to the quality of their own speech performances; because once developed, fossilized pronunciations are very hard to eradicate.

## **Conclusion**

In this chapter, the verbal performances of a group of EFL students from the University of Guelma are examined. Explicitly, the segmental pronunciation errors involved in these data

are identified, described and explained in an attempt to discover the sources from which they arise. Contrary to what would be revealed by a pure contrastive analysis, and even though some linguistic interfering effects are recognized, the principal cause of the pronunciation difficulties the learners are found to have seems to result from their unfamiliarity with RP English. Certainly, learning the pronunciation of English as a foreign language might be difficult for anyone. The inherent difficulty involved in the task, however, will be even more problematic where generations of non-native speakers teach each other with little exposure to the accents of native English users, as it is the case at the University of Guelma.

In view of the final findings, some suggestions on how to boost the concerned students' skill in pronouncing English are provided. Globally speaking, teachers are advised to supplement analytic linguistic pronunciation teaching techniques by intuitive practice activities, wherein learners get exposed to the target speech variety in authentic contexts of language use. The supplied proposals in this chapter, along with those provided in the previous one, are believed to create more contributing contexts for English foreign language pronunciation teaching at the University of Guelma.

## CONCLUSION

The present research work is set up with the aim of exploring the English foreign language pronunciation learning at the University of Guelma. Particularly, the interest is to examine the relationship between the ability to pronounce English intelligibly and a set of learner-based variables. In addition, it is intended to discover the sources of the problems the participating students have with the sound system of English.

The statistical procedures adopted, namely quantitative analysis of questionnaire data and Spearman's rank correlation coefficient  $\rho$ , prove the hypothesized significant positive correlations between the learners' levels of *pronunciation intelligibility* on the one hand, and the amounts of *practice* they exhibit, the *personality traits* they reveal and the degrees of *motivation* they demonstrate, on the other hand. Specifically, learners with large amounts of practice, lots of self confidence and high degrees of motivation are found to be the most successful in acquiring an intelligible articulation of English.

Additionally, the error analysis of the subjects' English verbal performances shows that, as it was hypothesized, their major causes of difficulty in pronouncing English are *intralingual*, mainly due to the non-correspondences between English spelling structures and pronouncing forms. Moreover, the students are also found to produce fewer, but not less serious, pronunciation errors stemming from *interlingual*, *miscellaneous* and *other* causes. Nonetheless, the advanced examination of all the identified errors and sources reveals the new hint that nearly all the problems the subjects have with the pronunciation of English are an indirect result of their lack of exposure to the native speakers' verbal language. Explicitly, the students' unfamiliarity with accurately spoken English have caused them to base their pronunciation performances on misleading inputs, particularly, the orthography of English, the French corresponding pronunciations, their teachers' sometimes erroneous articulations, and their own assumptions about how the target words can be properly pronounced.

The findings of the present study bear important implications for both pronunciation teachers and students at the English department at the University of Guelma. In particular, teachers are invited to increase their learners' exposure to, and practice of, RP accurately pronounced speech patterns. Promoting students' motivation to learn can also be remarkably helpful as it can multiply their chances of benefiting from teaching and practice sessions. This could be ensured by raising the learners' awareness about the importance of pronunciation to communicate effectively and by building enjoyable communicative contexts for pronunciation

teaching and practice. On their part, the students are asked to positively cooperate with their teachers to realise the maximum amounts of benefit. They are equally required to take responsibility for their own learning, to search for good models to listen to, to maximise their opportunities for productive pronunciation practice, and to carefully attend to the quality of their own speech patterns to avoid developing fossilised pronunciations.

Finally, it needs to be clarified that the significant correlations the present research has established between levels of pronunciation intelligibility and amounts of practice, degrees of motivation as well as certain types of personality traits do not imply a causality relationship between the involved variables. All what is meant here is that the variables in question go together and that where one is present the others are also likely to be there. A cause-effect relationship is only a plausible supposition that can serve as a hypothesis for further research in future.

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## APPENDIX 1

### Teachers' Questionnaire

#### An Investigation of the Different Factors Affecting Achievement in English Foreign Language Pronunciation Learning

Dear Madam or Sir,

This questionnaire is part of a Magistère Dissertation. It mainly deals with the pronunciation learning and achievements of the students of English at the University of Guelma. In particular, the intention is to identify the different factors that affect the process of pronunciation acquisition in an attempt to help students do better in their learning.

Your points of view will be of great help to this research work which would contribute to English foreign language pronunciation learning at the University of Guelma. Be sure that this questionnaire is anonymous and confidential. Your cooperation is deeply appreciated. Thank you very much in advance.

**Please tick (✓) the appropriate box or give full answers where necessary.**

#### I. Teaching Experience Background

1 How many years have you spent teaching English? .....years

2 What are the module(s) you teach at the university? .....

#### II. Opinions

The following statements are controversial. Please indicate your agreement or disagreement by ticking the column with the heading that best describes your opinions.

##### 2.1 The effect of *age* on pronunciation achievement

statement	strongly agree	agree	undecided	disagree	strongly disagree
1 Children acquire native-like pronunciation of a foreign language more readily than adults.					
2 For the great majority of adolescent and adult English foreign language learners, an accurate pronunciation is not a realistic pedagogical goal.					
3 After childhood, it is impossible to change a learner's fossilized pronunciation.					
4 The earlier the learner's exposure to English, the better his acquisition of pronunciation.					
5 With adequate exposure to English, adolescents and adults can achieve advanced levels in English foreign language pronunciation learning.					

## 2.2 The effect of *aptitude* (the learner's innate ability for foreign language learning)

statement	strongly agree	agree	undecided	disagree	strongly disagree
1 Some students have a better "ear" for language sounds than others, and are, thus, more gifted in the area of pronunciation.					
2 Some students have a better ability to mimic foreign sounds than others, and are, thus, more gifted in the area of pronunciation.					
3 Some students have a better memorizing ability than others, and are, thus, more gifted in the area of pronunciation.					
4 The different degrees of success experienced by different learners in English foreign language pronunciation learning are due to the learners' different abilities.					
5 Every normal human being has the potential to successfully learn the pronunciation of English.					

## 2.3 The effect of *students' attitudes*

Statement	strongly agree	agree	undecided	disagree	strongly disagree
1 Negative attitudes towards English native speakers create internal barriers against accepting their speech as a model for pronunciation learning.					
2 Students' attitudes towards their teachers and teaching materials influence the degree of English pronunciation proficiency they can achieve.					
3 If they wish, learners who hold negative attitudes towards English native speakers and the English culture can achieve a high level of proficiency in the area of pronunciation.					

## 2.4 The effect of *students' motivation*

statement	strongly agree	agree	undecided	disagree	strongly disagree
1 Motivation is quite necessary in English foreign language pronunciation learning.					
2 The more motivated the student is, the more efforts he will make while learning, the longer he will persist in difficult tasks, and, thus, the more successful he will be.					
3 Motivation plays a larger role in determining success in the area of pronunciation than aptitude.					
4 Regardless of the state of teaching instruction, students who do not want to improve their English pronunciations do not improve it.					
5. The higher the learners' expectations of success, the higher their motivation and the higher their achievements.					

## 2.5 Integrative and instrumental motives

statement	strongly agree	agree	undecided	disagree	strongly disagree
1 A learner's desire to socially integrate into the English society determines his level of accuracy in pronouncing English.					
2 Successful English foreign language pronunciation learning necessitates a strong desire to sound like English native speakers by the learner.					
3 Students will acquire English pronunciation to the degree they want to integrate in the English culture and society.					
4 A desire to learn English for a utilitarian reason is not enough, no matter how strong it is, to motivate learners make the hard efforts needed to accurately acquire its pronunciation.					
5 Learners who have a strong external reason to learn may outperform those who have an internal desire to integrate in the English society and culture.					
6 The stronger a student's motivation to learn English pronunciation, the more successful he will be, regardless of whether his motives are integrative or instrumental.					

## 2.6 The effect of *students' personality traits*

statement	strongly agree	agree	undecided	disagree	strongly disagree
1 Students' success in the area of pronunciation depends on their personality characteristics.					
2 Extroverted (sociable) students will learn to pronounce English better than introverted students.					
3 Empathetic students are able to identify themselves more easily with foreigners than unsympathetic students, and, thus, they are readier to accept English native speakers' speeches as a model in their learning.					
4 Students with strong ego boundaries (i.e., who are enclosed on their selves) have more difficulty to learn English pronunciation than those with permeable ego boundaries.					
5 The higher the student's self-confidence, the higher his oral participation in the classroom and the more positively he is going to accept his teacher's feedback on his pronunciation errors, and, thus, the more successful he will be.					
6 A high degree of anxiety about success handicaps learners and hinders learning.					
7 A moderate amount of anxiety can push learners to work harder, and, thus, to experience more success.					
8 The more learners think their success is not dependent on them, but on external factors (e.g., efficacy of teaching, opportunities of learning), the less they can achieve in the area of pronunciation.					

## 2.7 The effect of *social and environmental factors*

statement	strongly agree	agree	undecided	disagree	strongly disagree
1 The social and environmental opportunities of learning available to each learner affect his degree of attainment in English pronunciation.					
2 The degree of success in English foreign language pronunciation learning depends on the amount of exposure to authentic English the learners have.					

### III. Personal Perceptions

Please tick the appropriate column.

A good pronunciation learner is someone who,

Statement	very important	quite important	important	not very important	not at all important
1 has started learning at an early age.					
2 has an "ear" for foreign sounds.					
3 is endowed with an ability to mimic foreign sounds.					
4 has a large memory capacity.					
5 has strong motives to learn.					
6 is dominated by a drive, a strong desire, to succeed in every thing he does.					
7 values English foreign language learning.					
8 has a sincere personal interest in the English language and culture.					
9 has willingness to be like English natives.					
10 admires English native speakers.					
11 wants to sound like English natives.					
12 expects success.					
13 makes volunteer efforts to learn.					
14 has a good self-image and a lot of confidence.					
15 has a high degree of sociability.					
16 is sympathetic with English natives, their cultural values and their ways of thinking.					
17 lacks inhibition.					
18 likes change.					
19 is a risk taker.					
20 is willing to make mistakes.					
21 is permanently involved in classroom discussions and debates.					
22 practices his language skills as often as possible.					
23 takes responsibility for his own learning and does not completely rely on his teacher.					

### IV. Other Suggestions

1 Are there any further points you would like to make about pronunciation learning and teaching?

.....  
 .....

Thank you very much for your cooperation.

## APPENDIX 2

### Students' Questionnaire

#### An Investigation into the Learners' Variables Related to Levels of Achievement in English Foreign Language Pronunciation Learning and Performance

Dear student,

This questionnaire is part of a Magistère Dissertation. It is a way for me to come to know you better. I want to ask you some questions about your background, your attitudes towards English and English people, your motivation and other things. My aim is to know the factors that have affected your English pronunciation learning throughout your period of study. Please answer as completely as you can and with the maximum of objectivity and honesty. Your views would be of great help to this work which is designed to help you improve your English pronunciation. Be sure that this questionnaire is anonymous and confidential. Your cooperation is deeply appreciated. Thank you very much in advance.

**Please tick (✓) the appropriate box (if necessary, you can tick *more* than one single box,) or give full answers where required.**

#### I. General Background

- 1 What is your name? .....
- 2 What is your native language? .....
- 3 What are the other languages you can speak (not including English)?
  - a).....  
Proficiency level: basic  intermediate  advanced
  - b).....  
Proficiency level: basic  intermediate  advanced
  - c).....  
Proficiency level: basic  intermediate  advanced

#### II. English Study Background

- 4 At what level have you started learning English?  
 Primary school  Middle school  Secondary school  University
- 5 In general, how often do you speak English?  
 too often  often  sometimes  rarely  too rarely
- 6 Do you speak English outside the classroom?  
 yes  no

- a) If yes, with whom?  
 English teachers    classmates    native speakers  
 others (please specify).....
- 7 Have you had more experience with British English or American English?  
 British English    American English
- 8 Do you have the access to any media that you use to improve your pronunciation of English?  
 yes    no
- a) If yes, please specify.  
 easy access to an English speaking channel    personnel computer (or family computer)  
 multimedia equipments (e.g., tapes, CDs, internet)    teaching pronunciation books  
 others (please specify).....
- b) How frequently do you use these tools?  
 too often    often    sometimes    rarely    too rarely
- 9 Are there any people who know English in the environment where you live?  
 yes    no
- a) If yes, please specify.  
 parents    brothers/sisters    friends    neighbors    relatives  
 others (please specify).....
- 10 In general how can you describe your exposure to English? (inside and outside the classroom.)  
 very frequent    frequent    average    rare    very rare

### III. Attitudes towards the Study of English

In the following, try to explain your attitude towards English learning, in general, and English foreign language pronunciation learning, in particular, by ticking (✓) the appropriate box or by giving a full answer where required.

- 11 Learning the pronunciation of English is: (you can tick more than one box.)  
 challenging    boring  
 good    bad  
 valuable    worthless  
 pleasant    unpleasant  
 others (please specify).....
- 12 According to me,  
 it is not important to improve my pronunciation of English.  
 my own accent is good, I do not want to sound like English native speakers.  
 sounding like English native speakers is valuable.  
 other attitudes (please specify).....

13 What do you think about the English people and culture?  
 .....  
 .....

14 Please justify your feeling (i.e., cite the reasons why you feel this way).  
 .....  
 .....

**IV. Motivation for Learning English Pronunciation**

15 Studying English was:  
 a personal choice     imposed by parents     imposed by pedagogical authorities  
 haphazard

16 Do you want to learn English to:  
 satisfy a personnel interest in the English language and culture?  
 use it to communicate with English people?  
 use it as a means for worldwide communication?  
 get the license degree?  
 get a job in future?  
 improve your social status and be a better educated person?  
 others (please specify).....

17 Do you wish to travel to an English speaking country?  
 yes     no  
 a) If yes, which country?  
 England     USA  
 others (please specify).....

b) For what reason?  
 to study     to work     to know more about the English culture and people  
 to spend holyday  
 others (please specify).....

18 Sincerely, how would you describe your motivation to learn the pronunciation of English at the moment?  
 very high     high     average     low     very low

19 How do you feel about the following statement? (Please tick (✓) the appropriate answer.)

statement	strongly agree	agree	undecided	disagree	strongly disagree
Only those who start learning English during childhood can acquire its pronunciation without accent.					

20 While reading an English text, if you encounter an unknown word do you: (please tick (✓) the column with the most appropriate heading in each case.)

	always	usually	sometimes	rarely	never
consult a dictionary to know its pronunciation?					
ask your teacher about its pronunciation?					
ask a colleague about its pronunciation?					
not worry about it and just continue reading?					

21 What do you do after school to improve your pronunciation of English?

	always	usually	sometimes	rarely	never
Watch an English speaking channel.					
Use the pronunciation guide in your dictionary.					
Try to speak English as frequently as possible.					
Talk on the phone to a native speaker.					
Read about articulatory phonetics.					
Listen to English songs.					
Listen to English recorded texts.					
Listen to any thing in English.					
Nothing.					
Others (please specify) .....					

**V. Self-awareness**

22 In using English in conversation, do you feel, (you can tick more than one box)

- confident                       hesitant
- comfortable                       uncomfortable
- other (please specify).....
- .....

23 In using English in conversation, do you,

	always	usually	sometimes	rarely	never
try to express all your ideas even if you think you are going to make an error?					
give up some of your ideas to avoid making errors?					

24 In classroom discussion topics (e.g., in oral expression) do you:

	always	usually	sometimes	rarely	never
try to make many volunteer turns to participate?					
just listen and avoid expressing your views unless the teacher calls you?					

a) If you have chosen the second suggestion (just listen and...), please justify your answer.

	always	usually	Sometimes	rarely	never
The topic does not appeal to you.					
Other students precede in expressing ideas similar as yours.					
You do not want to speak.					
You are afraid from making errors.					
Other reasons (please specify).....					

25 If, while discussing a particular topic, someone interrupts you and presents ideas that completely oppose your point of view, will you:

	certainly	perhaps	never
leave him continue speaking, listen to him carefully, try to understand his argument and to adopt it if he is right?			
leave him finish then try to convince him with your point of view if he is mistaken?			
interrupt him and try to show he is wrong?			
get angry and leave?			
other possibilities (please specify).....			

26 Please, tick the most appropriate column.

	always	usually	sometimes	rarely	never
I feel somewhat embarrassed in class when I am trying to speak.					
In class, I prefer to say a sentence to myself before I speak it.					
I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation in my class.					
I am afraid that my English teacher is ready to correct every error I make.					
I tremble when I know I am going to be called on in the class (e.g., in oral expression).					
I get nervous when I do not understand every word I hear in class.					
I feel frightened and blocked when I am asked a question in class.					
When I speak, I fear I make many errors and be the laughing stock of the class.					

**VI. Beliefs and Perceptions**

27 Do you think that your proficiency in learning English pronunciation is,

	absolutely yes	probably yes	do not know	probably no	not at all
within your own control?					
within your teacher's control?					
determined by external factors (e.g., opportunities of learning) ?					

28 If you have the opportunity to travel to an English speaking country, will you:

	certainly	perhaps	never
try to profit to the maximum to improve your pronunciation by getting involved in many conversations with natives?			
stick to your own accent and avoid talking to native speakers except when you are obliged to?			
try to improve your pronunciation individually, and will not try to be actively involved in many conversations with natives?			

**VII. Other Suggestions**

29 Are there any further points you would like to make about your experience in pronunciation learning?

.....

.....

.....

Thank you very much for your cooperation.

Please return your completed questionnaire.

### APPENDIX 3

#### Detailed Results of the Students' Questionnaire

Q 1	Sub 01	Sub 02	Sub 03	Sub 04	Sub 05	Sub 06	Sub 07	Sub 08	Sub 09	Sub 10	Sub 11	Sub 12	Sub 13	Sub 14	Sub 15	Sub 16	Sub 17	Sub 18	Sub 19	Sub 20	Sub 21	Sub 22	Sub 23
Q 2	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
Q 3	B-2	B-3	B-2 & C-3	B-1	B-2	B-2 & D-1	B-1	B-2	D-3	B-2 & E-1	B-2	B-2 & C-2	B-2	B-1	B-2 & E-1	B-1	B-2	B-2	B-3	B-2	B-2	B-2	B-3
Q 4	B	A	B	A	B	B	A	A	D	B	A	B	A	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B
Q 5	3	4	3	4	2	4	2	2	1	3	4	2	4	2	3	2	1	3	3	1	2	4	4
Q 6	1	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	1
Q 6-a	A & D	B & D	B & D	B	/	C	/	B	/	C	A & B	/	C & D	/	B & D	/	/	B & D	/	/	A	/	A & B
Q 7	A	B	B	A	A	A	B	A	A	A	B	A	A	/	B	A	/	A	B	A	A	B	A
Q 8	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Q 8-a	C	A&B & C	A & C	A	A	B & D	A	A	/	A & C	A & C	C	B&C & D	/	B	A	B	A	A & B	D	A&B & C & D	D	A & D
Q 8-b	3	5	5	4	3	4	5	2	/	5	3	1	4	1	3	4	3	2	3	1	3	4	4
Q 9	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	0
Q 9-a	B	B&C & D & E	/	D	/	B	C & E	B	C	A & B	C	/	B&C & E	/	B	/	B & C	B	/	/	/	B	/
Q 10	4	5	4	4	3	5	4	3	3	5	3	3	4	2	3	4	3	3	3	3	3	4	3
Q 11	+4	+3	+4	+3	+2	+3	+4	+4	+2	+2	+3	+4	+1	+4	+4	+4	+4	+2	+3	+4	+4	+4	+4

Q 1	Sub 01	Sub 02	Sub 03	Sub 04	Sub 05	Sub 06	Sub 07	Sub 08	Sub 09	Sub 10	Sub 11	Sub 12	Sub 13	Sub 14	Sub 15	Sub 16	Sub 17	Sub 18	Sub 19	Sub 20	Sub 21	Sub 22	Sub 23	
Q 12	+1	+1	+1	+1	+1	+1	+1	+1	+1	+1	+1	+1	0	+1	-1	+1	+1	-1	+1	+1	+1	+1	+1	
Q 13	+1	+1	+1	+1	-1	+1	+1	-1	+1	+1	+1	+1	+1	-1	+1	+1	+1	+1	+1	+1	+1	+1	+1	
Q 14	+1	+1	+1	+1	-1	+1	+1	-1	+1	+1	+1	+1	+1	-1	+1	+1	+1	+1	+1	+1	+1	+1	+1	
Q 15	A	A&B	A	A	A	A	A	A	C	A	A	A	A	A	B	A	A	A	B	A	A	A	A	
Q 16	1 A & 3 B	2 A & 3 B	2 B	1 B	1 A & 4 B	2 A & 2 B	1 A & 3 B	4 B	3 B	1 A & 1 B	1 A & 4 B	1 A & 4 B	2 A & 1 B	2 B	1 B	1 A & 1 B	4 B	1 A & 1 B	3 B	4 B	6 B	1 A	2 A & 3 B	
Q 17	A	A	A	B	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	B	A	A	A	B	A	A	B	A	A	
Q 17-a	A	A & C	B	/	A	A	B	A & B	A & B	A&B&C	A	A & C	A & C	/	B	A	C	/	A	A	/	B	A	
Q 17-b	A	1 A & 2 B	1 B	/	2 B	1 A & 3 B	1 A & 3 B	3 B	1 A & 1 B	2 A & 2 B	1 A & 1 B	1 A & 1 B	1 A & 1 B	/	B	2B	2B	/	1 A & 1 B	2B	/	2B	1 A & 1 B	
Q 18	5	2	3	3	3	5	4	5	4	5	3	2	4	4	3	5	3	3	3	3	3	5	5	
Q 19	4	1	1	2	4	4	1	1	2	4	1	0	2	2	0	0	3	3	1	1	0	1	4	
Q 20	2 1 / /	3 0 2 0	2 1 2 0	1 2 0 0	2 3 1 0	4 / 1 0	4 4 3 -2	2 0 1 0	2 1 2 -1	4 3 1 -1	4 2 2 0	1 1 1 -1	4 0 0 -2	0 0 2 -3	4 0 0 0	3 4 4 0	4 2 0 -2	2 2 1 -2	2 0 1 -2	4 0 2 0	4 0 4 -1	4 4 0 0	3 4 0 0	3 2 2 0

Q 1	Sub 01	Sub 02	Sub 03	Sub 04	Sub 05	Sub 06	Sub 07	Sub 08	Sub 09	Sub 10	Sub 11	Sub 12	Sub 13	Sub 14	Sub 15	Sub 16	Sub 17	Sub 18	Sub 19	Sub 20	Sub 21	Sub 22	Sub 23
Q 21	2	4	4	0	2	4	4	1	1	4	4	1	4	1	3	3	3	2	4	1	3	4	4
	3	2	2	2	2	4	3	3	2	4	3	1	2	0	1	2	2	1	2	4	3	3	3
	3	3	3	2	1	4	3	2	2	4	2	1	2	3	2	2	-2	2	2	2	4	3	4
	/	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	4	0	0	2	0	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
	3	1	/	0	1	4	2	0	0	3	2	0	1	0	1	2	0	1	0	2	1	2	2
	2	4	4	0	3	4	3	2	4	4	1	1	4	0	4	4	1	0	2	3	4	2	1
	2	2	3	2	2	2	2	2	0	0	4	2	1	4	0	3	3	3	1	2	3	4	2
	2	4	3	2	1	4	3	2	2	4	2	1	/	0	1	4	0	3	2	2	4	/	1
	/	0	0	0	0	0	0	/	0	0	/	0	-3	/	-4	0	0	2	/	0	0	/	0
Q 22	+1	+2	+1	-1	+1	+1	-1	-2	-1	+2	-1	-2	+1	-2	+1	+1	-1	-1	-1	-1	+1	+1	0
Q 23	+4	+2	+1	+2	+3	+4	+3	+2	0	+3	+4	+1	+2	+1	+2	+4	+2	+2	+1	0	+4	+4	+3
	-1	-1	-4	-3	-2	-1	-3	-3	-3	-4	0	-3	-4	-4	-2	-3	-4	-2	-3	-4	-4	-1	-2
Q 24	4	1	1	3	3	/	/	1	0	4	4	2	4	4	2	2	1	2	1	1	2	4	4
	4	4	0	3	3	3	0	0	0	4	4	2	4	2	2	3	1	4	0	0	2	4	4
Q 24-a	2	1	1	2	1	3	1	2	2	3	2	2	2	2	3	1	1	/	1	2	2	/	/
	3	3	1	2	1	3	/	2	0	3	3	2	2	1	3	2	1	2	3	0	2	/	/
	3	4	0	3	2	4	/	0	0	4	2	1	4	0	2	3	1	/	0	0	1	/	/
Q 25	0	+2	+2	+1	+2	+1	+2	+2	+2	+2	+1	+2	+1	+1	+1	+1	+2	+1	+1	+2	+2	+2	+1
	+2	+2	+2	+2	+2	+2	+2	+2	+2	+2	+2	+2	+1	+2	+1	+2	+2	+1	+2	+1	+2	+2	+2
	+1	-1	+1	+1	+1	+1	-1	-1	-1	+1	-1	-1	-2	-1	-2	+1	+1	+1	-1	-1	-2	+1	+1
	+1	+1	+1	+1	+1	+1	+1	-1	-1	+1	/	+1	+1	+1	+1	+1	+1	+1	+1	+1	-1	+1	+1
Q 26	3	2	4	3	1	4	1	0	0	4	2	1	3	1	2	1	2	/	2	1	2	4	2
	2	0	0	0	0	/	0	0	0	2	0	0	2	1	3	0	0	2	0	0	0	3	2
	4	1	4	2	1	/	1	0	0	4	2	0	3	0	1	1	2	2	1	0	2	4	3
	3	2	1	4	2	4	3	2	0	4	3	2	4	2	1	4	3	4	1	0	4	4	4
	3	2	3	4	1	4	0	0	0	4	4	1	4	0	2	2	0	4	0	0	2	4	4
	2	4	3	0	1	3	0	0	2	0	4	2	0	2	3	2	2	3	3	2	0	0	3
	4	1	2	1	3	3	0	0	0	4	3	1	/	0	2	3	1	2	0	0	2	4	4
	4	4	2	4	3	4	4	0	0	4	4	2	4	0	3	2	4	3	3	1	4	4	4

Q 1	Sub 01	Sub 02	Sub 03	Sub 04	Sub 05	Sub 06	Sub 07	Sub 08	Sub 09	Sub 10	Sub 11	Sub 12	Sub 13	Sub 14	Sub 15	Sub 16	Sub 17	Sub 18	Sub 19	Sub 20	Sub 21	Sub 22	Sub 23	
Q 27	+1 -1 -1	+2 -1 -2	+2 -1 -1	+1 +1 0	+1 -1 -1	0 0 -1	+1 -1 -2	+2 -1 -1	+2 0 -1	+1 -2 0	+1 -2 -1	+1 -1 -2	+2 -1 -1	0 0 0	+1 -2 -1	0 0 0	+2 / -2	+1 -2 -1	+1 -1 -2	+1 0 0	0 -1 0	-1 0 -1	+2 0 -1	+2 -1 -2
Q 28	+2 0 0	+2 0 0	+2 0 0	+1 -1 0	+2 0 0	+2 0 0	+2 0 0	+2 0 0	+2 0 0	+2 0 0	+2 0 0	+2 0 0	+2 0 0	+2 0 0	+2 0 0	+2 0 0	+2 -1 +1	+2 0 0	+2 0 0	0 -1 +1	+2 0 0	+2 0 0	+2 0 0	+2 0 0
Q 29	B	A	B	B	A	B	B	A	B	A	A	A	A	A	B	A	B	B	A	B	A	A	A	A

## Notes on the Used Symbols

Q: question

Sub: subject

/: the subject has not answered the question

Q 1: What is your name?

Q 2: What is your native language?

A: Arabic

Q 3: What are the other languages you can speak?

B: French                      1: basic  
C: Chaouia                      2: intermediate  
D: Spanish                      3: advanced  
E: Italian  
F: German

Q 4: At what level have you started learning English?

A: Primary school  
B: Middle school  
D: University

Q 5: In general, how often do you speak English?

4: Often  
3: Sometimes  
2: Rarely  
1: Too rarely

Q 6: Do you speak English outside the classroom?

1: Yes  
0: No

Q 6-a: If yes, with whom?

A: English teachers  
B: Classmates  
C: Native speakers  
D: Others

Q 7: Have you had more experience with British or American English?

A: British English  
B: American English

Q 8: Do you have the access to any media that you use to improve your pronunciation of English?

1: Yes  
0: No

Q 8-a: If yes, please specify.

A: Easy access to an English speaking channel  
B: Personnel computer (or family computer)  
C: Multimedia equipments (e.g., tapes, CDs, internet)  
D: Teaching pronunciation books

Q 8-b: How much frequently do you use these tools?

5: Too often  
4: Often  
3: Sometimes  
2: Rarely  
1: Too rarely

Q 9: Are there any people who know English in the environment where you live?

1: Yes                              2: No

Q 9-a: If yes, please specify.

- A: Parents
- B: Brothers/sisters
- C: Friends
- D: Neighbors
- E: Relatives

Q 10: In general how can you describe your exposure to English?

- 5: Very frequent
- 4: Frequent
- 3: Average
- 2: Rare

Q 11: Learning the pronunciation of English is:

- |                 |                |
|-----------------|----------------|
| Challenging: +1 | boring: -1     |
| Good: +1        | bad: -1        |
| Valuable: +1    | worthless: -1  |
| Pleasant: +1    | unpleasant: -1 |

Q 12: According to you,

- |   |    |
|---|----|
| It is not important to improve your pronunciation of English:                   | -1 |
| Your own accent is good; you do not want to sound like English native speakers: | -1 |
| Sounding like English native speakers is valuable:                              | +1 |

Q 13: What do you think about the English people and culture?

- +1: positive attitude
- 1: negative attitude

Q 14: Please justify your feeling.

- +1: positive attitude
- 1: negative attitude

Q 15: Studying English was:

- A: A personal choice
- B: Imposed by parents
- C: Imposed by pedagogical authorities

Q 16: You want to learn English to:

- A: Satisfy a personal interest in the English language and culture?
- A: Use it to communicate with English people?
- B: Use it as a means for worldwide communication?
- B: Get the license degree?
- B: Get a job in future?
- B: Improve your social status and be a better educated person?

Q 17: Do you wish to travel to an English speaking country?

- A: Yes
- B: No

Q 17-a: If yes, which country?

- A: England
- B: USA
- C: Others

Q 17-b: For what reason?

- A: To know more about the English culture and people
- B: To study
- B: To work
- B: To spend holiday

Q 18: Sincerely, how would you describe your motivation to learn English pronunciation?

- 5: Very high
- 4: High
- 3: Average
- 2: Low

Q 19: How do you feel about the statement: only those who start learning English during childhood can acquire its pronunciation without accent?

Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree
00	01	02	03	04

Q 20: While reading an English text, if you encounter an unknown word do you:

- ✓ consult a dictionary to know its pronunciation?
- ✓ ask your teacher about its pronunciation?
- ✓ ask a colleague about its pronunciation?
- ✓ not worry about it and just continue reading?

always	usually	sometimes	rarely	never
04	03	02	01	00
04	03	02	01	00
04	03	02	01	00
-04	-03	-02	-01	00

Q 21: What do you do after school to improve your pronunciation of English?

- ✓ Watch an English speaking channel.
- ✓ Use the pronunciation key or guide in your dictionary.
- ✓ Try to speak English as frequently as possible.
- ✓ Talk on the phone to a native speaker.
- ✓ Read about articulatory phonetics.
- ✓ Listen to English songs.
- ✓ Listen to English recorded texts.
- ✓ Listen to any thing in English.
- ✓ Nothing.

always	usually	sometimes	rarely	never
04	03	02	01	00
04	03	02	01	00
04	03	02	01	00
04	03	02	01	00
04	03	02	01	00
04	03	02	01	00
04	03	02	01	00
04	03	02	01	00
-04	-03	-02	-01	00

Q 22: In using English in conversation, do you feel,

- Confident: +1                      hesitant: -1
- Comfortable: +1                      uncomfortable: -1

Q 23: In using English in conversation, do you:

- ✓ try to express all your ideas even if you think you are going to make an error?
- ✓ give up some of your ideas to avoid making errors?

always	usually	sometimes	rarely	never
04	03	02	01	00
-04	-03	-02	-01	00

Q 24: In classroom discussion topics (e.g., in oral expression) do you:

- ✓ try to make many volunteer turns to participate?
- ✓ just listen and avoid expressing your views except the teacher calls you?

always	usually	sometimes	rarely	never
04	03	02	01	00
00	01	02	03	04

Q 24-a: If you have chosen the second suggestion (just listen and...), please justify your answer.

- ✓ Other students precede in expressing ideas similar as yours.
- ✓ You do not want to speak.
- ✓ You are afraid from making errors.

always	usually	Sometimes	rarely	never
00	01	02	03	04
00	01	02	03	04
00	01	02	03	04

Q 25: If, while discussing a particular topic, someone interrupts you and represents ideas that completely oppose your point of view, will you:

- ✓ leave him continue speaking, listen to him carefully, try to understand his argument and to adopt it if he is right?
- ✓ leave him finish then try to convince him with your point of view if he is mistaken?
- ✓ interrupt him and try to show he is wrong?
- ✓ get angry and leave?

certainly	perhaps	never
02	01	00
02	01	00
-02	-01	+01
-02	-01	+01

Q 26: Please, tick the most appropriate column.

- ✓ I feel somewhat embarrassed in class when I am trying to speak.
- ✓ In class, I prefer to say a sentence to myself before I speak it.
- ✓ I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation in my class.
- ✓ I am afraid that my English teacher is ready to correct every error I make.
- ✓ I tremble when I know I am going to be called on in the class (e.g., in oral expression).
- ✓ I get nervous when I do not understand every word I hear in class.
- ✓ I feel frightened and blocked when I am asked a question in class.
- ✓ When I speak, I fear I make many errors and be the laughing stock of the class.

always	usually	sometimes	rarely	never
00	01	02	03	04
00	01	02	03	04
00	01	02	03	04
00	01	02	03	04
00	01	02	03	04
00	01	02	03	04
00	01	02	03	04
00	01	02	03	04

Q 27: Do you think that your proficiency in learning English pronunciation is:

- ✓ within your own control?
- ✓ within your teacher's control?
- ✓ determined by external factors (e.g., opportunities of learning)?

absolutely yes	probably yes	do not know	probably no	not at all
02	01	00	-01	-02
-02	-01	00	01	02
-02	-01	00	01	02

Q 28: If you have the opportunity to travel to an English speaking country, will you:

- ✓ try to profit the maximum to improve your pronunciation by getting involved in many conversations with natives?
- ✓ stick to your own accent and avoid talking to native speakers except when you are obliged to?
- ✓ try to improve your pronunciation individually; and will not try to be actively involved in many conversations with natives?

certainly	perhaps	never
02	01	00
-02	-01	00
01	00	00

Q 29: Are there any further points you would like to make about your experience in pronunciation learning?

A: answered

B: did not answered

## APPENDIX 4

### The Aptitude Test

#### I. The Transcript

##### **Martin Luther King, Jr.: “*I Have a Dream*”**

I am happy to join with you today in what will go down in history as the greatest demonstration for freedom in the history of our nation.

Five score years ago, a great American, in whose symbolic shadow we stand today, signed the Emancipation Proclamation. This momentous decree came as a great beacon light of hope to millions of Negro slaves who had been seared in the flames of withering injustice. It came as a joyous daybreak to end the long night of their captivity.

But one hundred years later, the Negro still is not free. One hundred years later, the life of the Negro is still sadly crippled by the manacles of segregation and the chains of discrimination. One hundred years later, the Negro lives on a lonely island of poverty in the midst of a vast ocean of material prosperity. One hundred years later, the Negro is still languished in the corners of American society and finds himself an exile in his own land. And so we've come here today to dramatize a shameful condition.

In a sense we've come to our nation's capital to cash a check. When the architects of our republic wrote the magnificent words of the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence, they were signing a promissory note to which every American was to fall heir. This note was a promise that all men, yes, black men as well as white men, would be guaranteed the “unalienable Rights” of “Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.” It is obvious today that America has defaulted on this promissory note, insofar as her citizens of color are concerned. Instead of honoring this sacred obligation, America has given the Negro people a bad check, a check which has come back marked “insufficient funds.”

**But we refuse to believe that the bank of justice is bankrupt. We refuse to believe that there are insufficient funds in the great vaults of opportunity of this nation. And so, we've come to cash this check, a check that will give us upon demand the riches of freedom and the security of justice.**

**We have also come to this hallowed spot to remind America of the fierce urgency of Now. This is no time to engage in the luxury of cooling off or to take the tranquilizing drug of gradualism. Now is the time to make real the promises of democracy. Now is the**

**time to rise from the dark and desolate valley of segregation to the sunlit path of racial justice. Now is the time to lift our nation from the quicksands of racial injustice to the solid rock of brotherhood. Now is the time to make justice a reality for all of God's children.**

It would be fatal for the nation to overlook the urgency of the moment. This sweltering summer of the Negro's legitimate discontent will not pass until there is an invigorating autumn of freedom and equality. Nineteen sixty-three is not an end, but a beginning. And those who hope that the Negro needed to blow off steam and will now be content will have a rude awakening if the nation returns to business as usual. And there will be neither rest nor tranquility in America until the Negro is granted his citizenship rights. The whirlwinds of revolt will continue to shake the foundations of our nation until the bright day of justice emerges.

But there is something that I must say to my people, who stand on the warm threshold which leads into the palace of justice: In the process of gaining our rightful place, we must not be guilty of wrongful deeds. Let us not seek to satisfy our thirst for freedom by drinking from the cup of bitterness and hatred. We must forever conduct our struggle on the high plane of dignity and discipline. We must not allow our creative protest to degenerate into physical violence. Again and again, we must rise to the majestic heights of meeting physical force with soul force.

The marvelous new militancy which has engulfed the Negro community must not lead us to a distrust of all white people, for many of our white brothers, as evidenced by their presence here today, have come to realize that their destiny is tied up with our destiny. And they have come to realize that their freedom is inextricably bound to our freedom.

We cannot walk alone. And as we walk, we must make the pledge that we shall always march ahead. We cannot turn back.

There are those who are asking the devotees of civil rights, "when will you be satisfied?" We can never be satisfied as long as the Negro is the victim of the unspeakable horrors of police brutality. We can never be satisfied as long as our bodies, heavy with the fatigue of travel, cannot gain lodging in the motels of the highways and the hotels of the cities. We cannot be satisfied as long as the negro's basic mobility is from a smaller ghetto to a larger one. We can never be satisfied as long as our children are stripped of their self-hood and robbed of their dignity by a sign stating: "For Whites Only." We cannot be satisfied as long as a Negro in Mississippi cannot vote and a Negro in New York believes he has nothing

for which to vote. No, no, we are not satisfied, and we will not be satisfied until “justice rolls down like waters, and righteousness like a mighty stream.”

I am not unmindful that some of you have come here out of great trials and tribulations. Some of you have come fresh from narrow jail cells. And some of you have come from areas where your quest -- quest for freedom left you battered by the storms of persecution and staggered by the winds of police brutality. You have been the veterans of creative suffering. Continue to work with the faith that unearned suffering is redemptive. Go back to Mississippi, go back to Alabama, go back to South Carolina, go back to Georgia, go back to Louisiana, go back to the slums and ghettos of our northern cities, knowing that somehow this situation can and will be changed.

Let us not wallow in the valley of despair, I say to you today, my friends. And so even though we face the difficulties of today and tomorrow, I still have a dream. It is a dream deeply rooted in the American dream.

I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal.” I have a dream that one day on the red hills of Georgia, the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slave owners will be able to sit down together at the table of brotherhood.

I have a dream that one day even the state of Mississippi, a state sweltering with the heat of injustice, sweltering with the heat of oppression, will be transformed into an oasis of freedom and justice. I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character. I have a *dream* today!

I have a dream that one day, down in Alabama, with its vicious racists, with its governor having his lips dripping with the words of “interposition” and “nullification” -- one day right there in Alabama little black boys and black girls will be able to join hands with little white boys and white girls as sisters and brothers.

I have a *dream* today!

I have a dream that one day every valley shall be exalted, and every hill and mountain shall be made low, the rough places will be made plain, and the crooked places will be made straight; “and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed and all flesh shall see it together.” This is our hope, and this is the faith that I go back to the South with.

With this faith, we will be able to hew out of the mountain of despair a stone of hope. With this faith, we will be able to transform the jangling discords of our nation into a beautiful symphony of brotherhood. With this faith, we will be able to work together, to pray

together, to struggle together, to go to jail together, to stand up for freedom together, knowing that we will be free one day. And this will be the day -- this will be the day when all of God's children will be able to sing with new meaning:

*My country 'tis of thee, sweet land of liberty, of thee I sing.*

*Land where my fathers died, land of the Pilgrim's pride,*

*From every mountainside, let freedom ring!*

And if America is to be a great nation, this must become true. And so let freedom ring from the prodigious hilltops of New Hampshire. Let freedom ring from the mighty mountains of New York. Let freedom ring from the heightening Alleghenies of Pennsylvania. Let freedom ring from the snow-capped Rockies of Colorado. Let freedom ring from the curvaceous slopes of California. But not only that: Let freedom ring from Stone Mountain of Georgia. Let freedom ring from Lookout Mountain of Tennessee. Let freedom ring from every hill and molehill of Mississippi. From every mountainside, let freedom ring.

And when this happens, when we allow freedom ring, when we let it ring from every village and every hamlet, from every state and every city, we will be able to speed up that day when *all* of God's children, black men and white men, Jews and Gentiles, Protestants and Catholics, will be able to join hands and sing in the words of the old Negro spiritual:

*Free at last! Free at last!*

*Thank God Almighty, we are free at last!*

## II. The Test Paper

University of GUELMA  
Department of English  
Aural Expression  
Third Year

Group: 05  
First name: .....  
Family name: .....

Listen to the speech carefully and fill in the following gaps

But we refuse to believe that the bank of justice is <sup>1</sup>. We refuse to believe that there are <sup>2</sup> <sup>3</sup> in the great vaults of <sup>4</sup> of this nation. And so, we've come to <sup>5</sup> this <sup>6</sup>, a check that will give us upon demand the riches of freedom and the security of justice.

We have also come to this hallowed spot to remind America of the fierce urgency of Now. This is no time to engage in the <sup>7</sup> of cooling off or to take the <sup>8</sup> drug of gradualism. Now is the time to make real the promises of democracy. Now is the time to rise from the dark and <sup>9</sup> valley of <sup>10</sup> to the sunlit path of racial justice. Now is the time to lift our nation from the quicksands of racial injustice to the solid rock of <sup>11</sup>. Now is the time to make justice a reality for all of God's <sup>12</sup>.

## APPENDIX 5

### The Diagnostic Passage

If English is not your native language, people may have noticed that you come from another country because of your “foreign accent.” Why do people usually have an accent when they speak a second language? Several theories address this issue. Many people believe that only young children can learn a second language without an accent, but applied linguists have reported cases of older individuals who have mastered a second language without an accent. Another common belief is that your first language influences your pronunciation in a second language. Most native speakers of English can, for example, recognize people from France by their French accents. They may also be able to identify Spanish or Arabic speakers over the telephone, just by listening carefully to their pronunciation. Does this mean that accents can’t be changed? Not at all! But old habits won’t change without a lot of hard work, will they? In the end, the path to learning to speak a second language without an accent appears to be a combination of hard work, a good ear, and a strong desire to sound like a native speaker. You also need accurate information about the English sound system and lots of exposure to the spoken language. Will you manage to make progress, or will you just give up? Only time will tell, I’m afraid. Good luck, and don’t forget to work hard!

## APPENDIX 6

### The Topics Discussed by the Subjects

**Subject 1:** English Language Learning Experience

**Subject 2:** Plastic Surgery

**Subject 3:** Algerian Customs and Traditions

**Subject 4:** The Islamic Veil

**Subject 5:** Algerian Hospitals

**Subject 6:** Immigration

**Subject 7:** Marriage

**Subject 8:** An Incidence of Death

**Subject 9:** English Language Learning Experience

**Subject 10:** The Iranian Conflict

**Subject 11:** Friendship between Men and Women

**Subject 12:** Earnest Hemingway

**Subject 13:** English Language Learning Experience

**Subject 14:** English Language Learning Experience

**Subject 15:** Suicide

**Subject 16:** English Language Learning Experience

**Subject 17:** Racism

**Subject 18:** Cheating in Exams

**Subject 19:** English Language Learning Experience

**Subject 20:** Immigration

**Subject 21:** The Effect of TV Musical Programs on Teenagers' School Attainment

**Subject 22:** A Summary of an African Story

**Subject 23:** Women's Rights

## APPENDIX 7

### The Learners' Segmental Pronunciation Errors Classified by Descriptive Categories

#### 1 Reading data: Vowels' errors: Substitutions

Category	Examples	Number of subjects who made the error (N=23)	Error frequency
/ε/ for /□/	applied /εβλα□δ/ address /εδρεσ/	02	04
/□/ for /□/	foreign / φQρ□v□/ accurate /□κφUρ□τ/; /εκ□ρε□τ/	06	07
/□÷/ for /□/	an /□÷v/ accent	01	02
/ε□/ for /□/	accurate /εκIρε□τ/ foreign /φ□÷ρε□v/	13	14
/□□/ for /□/	foreign /φ□÷ρ□□v/	01	01
/U/ for /□/	carefully /κ□÷ρφUli/ accurate /□κφUρε□τ/ speakers / σπι÷κUρζ/	14	16
/Q/ for /□/	pronunciation /βρQv←vσ□ε□♥v/	01	01
/ε/ for /□/	listening /Iεσv□v□/ manage /μ□vε↓/ influence /εvφIU□vσ/	06	06
/ε□/ for /□/	manage /μ□vε□↓/	04	04
/U/ for /□/	the /□U/ end the /□U/ English	01	02
/Q/ for /ε/	identify /□δQvτIφα□/	02	02
/□/ for /←/	country /κ□vτρι/	01	01
/ε/ for /←/	country /κεvτρι/	01	01
/□U/ for /←/	country /κ□Uvτρι/	01	01
/Q/ for /←/	country /κQvτρι/	03	03
/ε/ for /□/	accurate /εκφUρε□τ/ accent /εκσεντ/	03	04
/□/ for /□/	accurate /□κφUρε□τ/	09	14

	manage /μ□vε□↓/		
--	-----------------	--	--

Category	Examples	Number of subjects who made the error (N=23)	Error frequency
/Q/ for /□÷/	France /φρQvσ/	04	04
/□÷/ for /□÷/	hard /η□÷ρδ/	01	01
/Ir/ for /□÷/	learn /l□ρν/	01	02
/v÷/ for /□÷/	report /ρ□πv÷τ/	01	01
/U/ for /Q/	common /κUμ□v/	01	01
/□/ for /ε□/	afraid /εφρ□δ/	01	01
/□/ for /ε□/	change /♥□v↓/	03	03
/□÷/ for /ε□/	afraid /□φρ□÷δ/	17	17
/□÷/ for /ε□/	carefully /κ□÷ρφU□/	04	04
/ε□/ for /□□/	ear /ε□/	03	03
/i÷/ for /□□/	ear /i÷ρ/ appears / □πi÷ρζ/	02	02
/□/ for /α□/	identify /□δεvτIφ□/	05	05
/ε/ for /□U/	over /ε□/	01	01
/Q/ for /□U/	only /Qvli/ old /QIδ/ noticed /vQτ□σ□δ/	11	18
/φU/ for /□U/	exposure /□κσπφU□/	01	02
/φU/ for /U□/	individuals /□vδ□□δφU□/	03	04
<b>Total</b>		<b>23</b>	<b>152</b>

## 2 Spontaneous data: Vowels' errors: Substitutions

Category	Examples	Number of subjects who made the error (N=23)	Error frequency
/ε / for /□/	equal /i÷κωεl/ honesty /ηQvεστι/ pregnant /πρ□□vεvτ/	06	06
/□/ for /□/	destiny /δ□στ□vi/ supported /σ□π□÷ρτ□δ/ responsibility /ρ□σπQvσ□β□l□ti/	07	09
/←- / for /□/	difficulties /δ□φ□κ←-lτι÷ζ/	01	03
/□:/ for /□/	stomach /στQμ□÷τ♥/ separated /σlπ□÷ρε□τ□δ/	02	03
/U/ for /□/	solution /σUl□÷♥v/	01	01
/Q/ for /□/	condition /κQvδ□♥v/ develop /δ□ωlQπ/ restaurant /ρ□στQρ□vτ/	05	05
/□÷/ for /□/	effort /□φ□÷ρτ/	01	01
/ε/ for /□/	insist /εvσ□στ/ instead /εvστ□δ/ enrich /εvρ□♥/	03	04
/□÷/ for /□/	marriage /μ□ρφ□÷↓/	02	03
/U/ for /□/	religion /ρUl□↓□v/ the /□U/ out the /□U/ unknown	03	03
/□/ for /ε/	President /πρ□ζ□δεvτ/ ethnic /□   v□κ/ method /μ□   Qδ/	07	16
/i÷/ for /ε/	breath /βρi÷   /	01	01
/□/ for /ε/	instead /εvστ□δ/	01	01
/□÷/ for /ε/	again /□□□÷v/	01	01
/ε/ for /←- /	cover /κεω□ρ/	01	01

/□U/ for /←-/	discover /δ□σκ□Uω□/	01	01
/Q/ for /←-/	love /lQω/ other /Q□□/ comfortable /κQμφ□÷ρτ□βl/	04	04
/U/ for /←-/	culture /κUlτ□/	01	01

Category	Examples	Number of subjects who made the error (N=23)	Error frequency
/□÷/ for /□÷/	charm /τ♥□÷ρμ/ hard /η□÷δ/	02	04
/Ir/ for /□÷/	first /φIρστ/	01	01
/□÷/ for /□÷/	world /ω□÷lδ/ word /ω□÷ρδ/	02	02
/□U/ for /v÷/	through / ρ□U/	01	01
/α□/ for /ε□/	betray /β□τρα□/	01	01
/i÷/ for /ε□/	wear /ωi÷ρ/	01	04
/□÷/ for /ε□/	farewell /φ□÷ρωελ/	01	01
/□÷/ for /ε□/	parent /π□÷ρ□vτ/	01	01
/α□/ for /α□□/	violence /π□□l□vσ/	01	01
/v÷/ for /□U/	throat / ρv÷τ/ throw / ρv÷/	02	02
/v÷/ for /Q/	because /β□κv÷ζ/	01	02
/v÷/ for /□÷/	fall /φv÷l/ important /□μπv÷τ□vτ/	02	04
/□÷/ for /αU/	dowry /δ□÷ρi/	01	01
/□U/ for /αU/	gown /□□Uv/	01	07
<b>Total</b>		<b>21</b>	<b>96</b>

### 3 Reading data: Vowels' errors: Additions

Category	Examples	Number of subjects who made the error (N=23)	Error frequency
/I/ for Ø	foreign /φQρIvi/	01	01
<b>Total</b>		<b>01</b>	<b>01</b>

### 4 Reading data: Vowels' errors: Omissions

Category	Examples	Number of subjects who made the error (N=23)	Error frequency
Ø for /□/	noticed /v□Uτ σ□δ/	01	01
<b>Total</b>		<b>01</b>	<b>01</b>

### 5 Spontaneous data: Vowels' errors: Omissions

Category	Examples	Number of subjects who made the error (N=23)	Error frequency
Ø for /ε/	develop /δ□ϖ IQπ/	01	01
<b>Total</b>		<b>01</b>	<b>01</b>

## 6 Reading data: Consonants' errors: Substitutions

Category	Examples	Number of subjects who made the error (N=23)	Error frequency
/β/ for /π/	applied /εβlα□δ/ example /□□ζ□÷μβl/ pronunciation /βρQv←vσ□ε□♥v/	01	03
/δ/ for /τ/	noticed /v□Uτ□σ□δ/	08	08
/σ/ for /ζ/	cases /κε□σ□σ/ desire /δ□σ□□□/	02	02
/ζ/ for /σ/	cases /κε□ζ□ζ/	03	03
/ϖ/ for /φ/	belief /β□li÷ϖ/	01	01
/♥/ for /τ♥/	change /♥□v↓/	02	02
/↓/ for /δ↓/	manage /μ□vε↓/ just /↓←στ/ change /♥□v↓/	09	12
/δ/ for /δ↓/	individuals /□vδ□ϖ□δφU1ζ/	03	04
/v□/ for /□/	listening /lεσv□v□/ strong /στρQv□/	04	04
<b>Total</b>		<b>15</b>	<b>39</b>

## 7 Spontaneous data: Consonants' errors: Substitutions

Category	Examples	Number of subjects who made the error (N=23)	Error frequency
/β/ for /π/	improve /□μβρυ÷ω/ experience /□κσβ□ρ□□νσ/ campus /κ□μβ□σ/	02	03
/δ/ for /τ/	asked /□÷σκ□δ/ liked /λα□κ□δ/	02	02
/σ/ for /ζ/	things / □νκσ/ clothes /κλ□U σ/	02	03
/♥/ for /σ/	universal /φυ÷ν□ω□÷♥□l/	01	01
/σ/ for /♥/	speciality /σπ□σφελ□τι/	01	01
/ / for /□/	clothes /κλ□U σ/	01	01
/τ♥/ for /κ/	stomach /στQμ□÷τ♥/	01	01
/♥/ for /τ♥/	enrich /ενρI♥/	01	01
/τ/ for /τ♥/	culture /κU τ□/	01	01
/↓/ for /δ↓/	generally /↓□ν□ρ□li/ religion /ρUI□↓□v/ change /♥□v↓/	05	07
/v□/ for /□/	sing /σ□v□/ among /□μ←v□/ coming /κ←μ□v□/	04	07
/vκ/ for /□/	thing / □vκσ/	01	02
<b>Total</b>		<b>11</b>	<b>30</b>

### 8 Reading data: Consonants' errors: Additions

Category	Examples	Number of subjects who made the error (N=23)	Error frequency
/p/ for Ø	carefully /κ□÷ρφUli/ over /□Uϖ□ρ/ the ... hard /η□÷ρδ/	12	18
<b>Total</b>		<b>12</b>	<b>18</b>

### 9 Spontaneous data: consonants' errors: additions

Category	Examples	Number of subjects who made the error (N=23)	Error frequency
/p/ for Ø	charm /τ♥□÷ρμ/ orders /□÷ρδ□ρζ/ support /σ□π□÷ρτ/	07	17
/φ/ for Ø	marriage /μ□ρφ□÷↓/	04	07
/l/ for Ø	talk /τ□÷lk/	01	05
/η/ for Ø	honesty /ηQvεσti/	01	01
<b>Total</b>		<b>10</b>	<b>30</b>

### 10 Reading data: Consonants' errors: Omissions

Category	Examples	Number of subjects who made the error (N=23)	Error frequency
Ø for /φ/	accurate /εκ Ιρε□τ/	07	07

Ø for /↓/	exposure /□κσπφU □/	01	01
<b>Total</b>		<b>08</b>	<b>08</b>

### 11 Reading data: Clusters' errors

Category	Examples	Number of subjects who made the error (N=23)	Error frequency
/□/ for Ø	noticed /v□Uτ□σ□δ/ listening /l□σ□v□□/	09	09
<b>Total</b>		<b>09</b>	<b>09</b>

### 12 Spontaneous data: clusters' errors

Category	Examples	Number of subjects who made the error (N=23)	Error frequency
/□/ for Ø	universal /φυ÷v□ω□÷♥□l/ asked /□÷σκ□δ/ important /□μπυ÷τ□vτ/	05	06
/□/ for Ø	generally /↓□v□ρ□li/	01	01
/□÷/ for Ø	secondary /σεκ□vδ□÷ri/	01	01
/□÷p/ for Ø	comfortable /κQμφ□÷pτ□βl/	01	01
<b>Total</b>		<b>07</b>	<b>09</b>



## RÉSUMÉ

La prononciation intelligible est considérée un des plus grand défi pour les apprenants de l'anglais. Ceci est dû non seulement au système phonologique complexe de cette langue mais aussi à la nature confuse de son orthographe. Les deux exigent un effort remarquable de la part des étrangers qui vise la maîtrise de l'anglais orale.

Cette vérité, avec la baisse continue du niveau de performance orale des étudiants de l'anglais à l'université de Guelma, nous a poussé à faire cette étude. Un motif à la recherche dans le processus d'apprentissage de la prononciation anglaise pour discerner les moyens d'améliorer la performance des apprenants.

Pour réaliser cet objectif, on a procédé à une étude descriptive d'un cas de vingt trois étudiants de troisième année anglais à l'université de Guelma ou trois procédures statistiques ont été utilisés : une analyse quantitative d'un questionnaire destiné aux enseignants, l'échelle de rho du coefficient de corrélation de Spearman et un t-test entre moyenne de groupes indépendants pour découvrir les caractéristiques des apprenants qui ont acquis une bonne performance. On a, aussi, analysé les erreurs de performance orale des étudiants membres du cas d'étude afin d'identifier les sources de leur faible performance.

Comme estimé, les résultats montrent que la pratique intensif, la haute motivation, la confiance en soi ainsi que le niveau bas de l'anxiété sont les principales caractéristiques des apprenants qui ont oralement bien performé. L'observation de la performance orale des membres sujets de l'étude prouve que leurs erreurs sont à source intralinguistique dérivant de la nature complexe du système phonologique de l'anglais et de son intersection avec les autres aspects de la langue tel que l'orthographe et le lexique. On a aussi détecté d'autres sources inter-linguistiques comme le transfert négatif du français et de l'arabe.

L'analyse profonde a, également, révélé que presque tous les problèmes de prononciation que les apprenants trouvent sont dus au manque d'exposition à l'anglais parlée native et leur dépendance sur des procédés inconvenables pour apprendre tels que l'orthographe des mots, la prononciation de leurs enseignants qui peut dévier des normes préconisés ou sur leur imagination de la prononciation des mots peu utilisés. Enfin, on jugé utile de présenter quelques suggestions pour une éventuelle amélioration de la performance orale des étudiants d'anglais.

## ملخص

يعتبر النطق الصحيح احد التحديات الكبرى التي تواجه المتعلمين الأجانب للغة الإنجليزية. فالنظام الفونولوجي المعقد بالإضافة إلى طبيعة الإملاء المحيرة يتطلبان جهدا معتبرا من المتعلمين الذين يحاولون إتقان مهارة النطق الصحيح. هذه الحقائق مع الانخفاض المستمر لمستوى الأداء النطقي لطلبة الانجليزية بجامعة قلمة شكلت الدافع الأساسي لهذه الدراسة. على وجه الخصوص يسعى هذا البحث لاستكشاف مسار تعلم نطق الانجليزية كلغة أجنبية بغية كشف السبل التي بإمكانها تحسين أداء الدارسين. للوصول لهذا الهدف، قمنا بدراسة وصفية لحالة ثلاث و عشرين من طلبة السنة الثالثة انجليزية بجامعة قلمة؛ حيث استعملنا ثلاث أساليب إحصائية: تحليل كمي لاستبيان الأساتذة، سلم سبيرمان لمعامل التوافق و اختبار ما بين المعدلات لكشف خصائص المتعلمين التي تتوافق مع القدرة على النطق السليم. بالإضافة إلى هذا قمنا بتحليل الأخطاء الفونولوجية للطلبة قصد التعرف على مصادر الضعف في هذه المهارة.

كما افترضنا، أظهرت النتائج أن الممارسة المكثفة، ارتفاع الحافز الذاتي للتعلم، الثقة بالنفس وانخفاض مستوى التوتر هي الخصائص التي يتميز بها الناطقون المجيدون للانجليزية. كما أثبتت الملاحظة أن مصدر الأخطاء -أساسا - داخل لغوي أي أنها ناتجة عن طبيعة النظام الصوتي للغة الانجليزية، بالإضافة إلى تقاطعه مع مظاهر اللغة الأخرى كالإملاء و المفردات. تم، أيضا، التعرف على بعض المصادر البين لغوية كالتحويل السلبي من الفرنسية و العربية. بالإضافة أظهر التحليل المعمق لأسباب الأخطاء المرصودة أن غالبية المشاكل النطقية التي يواجهها الطلبة ناتجة أساسا من نقص العرض على اللغة المنطوقة من طرف المتحدثين الأصليين للغة الانجليزية واعتماد المتعلمين على مداخل غير مناسبة لتعلم النطق و أدائه كإملاء الكلمات و طريقة نطق المعلمين التي قد تنحرف عن المقاييس المقبولة أو على تصورهم لنطق الكلمات الأقل تداولاً.

على ضوء النتائج المتوصل إليها تم تقديم جملة من المقترحات بغية تحسين الأداء النطقي

لدارسي اللغة الانجليزية.