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An investigation of Pronunciation Difficulties of English Consonants and Vowels among Arts Students at Shendi University

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Dedication

To the soul of my beloved grandmother, the person who made me what I am now.

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Abstract

This study investigates the pronunciation problems of English consonants and vowels among Arts students at Shendi University for the academic year 2015 whose first language is Arabic, the study focuses on "Sudanese Spoken Arabic" that these students normally speak. The aim of the study is to find the problematic sounds and the factors that cause these problems and to suggest some techniques that will help those students who are majoring in English improve their pronunciation. The subjects for the study are thirty six students from Shendi University, Faculty of Arts for the academic year 2015. The instruments used for the data collection are observation, recordings and a questionnaire. The data collected was analyzed both statistically and descriptively. The findings of the study revealed that Sudanese Students of English whose language background is Sudanese Spoken Arabic, had problems with the pronunciation of these words (P**a**per/P**e**pper /**Th**ank/**S**ank /Ri**p**/Ri**b**/Brea**th**e/Bree**z**e /Hal**f**/Ha**v**e /M**a**rry/M**e**rry /Que**st**ion/R**o**b/R**o**pe /W**a**nt/W**on**'t /L**o**ck/L**u**ck /L**o**w/L**a**w /H**ear**t/H**ur**t /Eye**s**/I**c**e /Qu**ie**t/Q**ui**te /**Ea**r/**Y**ear/w**i**ll /W**e**ll) and four Arabic consonants sounds (ض/dˤ/ , (ظ/ðˤ/), (ط/tˤ/), (/sˤ/ص) , which means that a lot of other problems were not covered in this study. Based on the findings, the study concludes that factors such as mother tongue interference, the differences in the sound system in the two languages as well as inconsistency of English sounds and spelling contributed to incompetence in pronunciation for Sudanese students majoring in English.

Key words: Pronunciation, Vowels, Consonants, Errors, Substitution, Markedness.

مستخلص

تتناول هذه الدراسة مشاكل نطق الأصوات الساكنة و المتحركة لدي طلاب اللغة الانجليزية بكلية الآداب المستوى الرابع -جامعة شندي للعام الجامعي 2015-2016.علماً بأنَّ لغتهم الأساسية هي اللغة العربية،ركزت هذه الدراسة علي اللهجة العامية السودانية التي يتحدث بها أفراد هذه الدراسة.هدفت هذه الدراسة لإيجاد حلول واقتراح تقنيات من شأنها مساعدة هؤلاء الطلاب لتحسين نطقهم لهذه الأصوات.أما عينة الدراسة تكونت من أربعين طالباً وطالبة بقسم اللغة الانجليزية- كلية الآداب – وهم طلاب المستوى الرابع ، وتم تحليل البيانات التي تم جمعها إحصائياً ووصفياً. وتوصلت هذه الدراسة إلى عدة نتائج منها:

- أن الطلاب الذين يتحدثون باللهجة العامية السودانية لديهم مشاكل في نطق هذه الكلمات:

(Paper/Pepper /Thank/Sank /Rip/Rib/Breathe/Breeze /Half/Have /Marry/Merry /Question/Rob/Rope /Want/Won't /Lock/Luck /Low/Law /Heart/Hurt /Eyes/Ice /Quiet/Quite /Ear/Year/will /Well)

- بعض الأصوات في اللغة العربية تم إدخالها بدلاً عن أصوات انجليزية ساكنة وهي:

(ص/$s^ʕ$/), (ط/$t^ʕ$/), (ظ/$ð^ʕ$/), (ض/$d^ʕ$/) . لم تشمل الدراسة كل مشاكل النطق فهناك الكثير منها.

مما يعني أن هذه الدراسة قد انحصرت في الأصوات التي ذكرت أعلاه.

- هنالك عوامل تسببت في قلة كفاءة الطلاب في نطق أصوات اللغة الانجليزية بالطريقة الصحيحة منها: تدخل اللغة الأم(العربية) ، والاختلافات التي توجد في النظام الصوتي للغتين ، علاوة على ذلك التناقض الموجود في حروف و أصوات اللغة الانجليزية.

Chapter One

Introduction

1.1 Overview

Good pronunciation is the dream of most learners of English as a second or foreign language. In Sudan, there is a large number of interested groups in the subject; among them are the students of English language at Shendi University- Faculty of Arts. However, there are many obstacles that mind them to speak with good English pronunciation.

Many studies have demonstrated that the errors made by the speakers of other languages, who speak English, are something systematic rather than random. Moosa (1972) and Homeidan (1984) proved that Arab students face problem in the pronunciation of sounds which the students are not familiar with e.g. /v/, /p/, /ŋ/ Carter and Nunan(2001) O'Connor(2003) noted that the errors of pronunciation that learners of English from different language backgrounds make are systematic and not accidental. So they concluded that the main problem of the speakers of other languages who speak English, is substitution of sounds i.e. they substitute the sounds that they don't have in their native language, with other sounds which are close to them in the place of articulation e.g. they replace /p/ with /b/, /θ/ with /s/ etc. Although the same problem exists in the pronunciation of most of the Sudanese Students of English, all the studies above were done outside Sudan e.g. for speakers of German, Italian, Spanish...etc. On the other hand, some studies have been conducted as mentioned above, but on the Arab student's e.g. for the students of English in Saudi Arabia .So that is why this research was intended to fill a certain gap.

1.2 Statement of the problem

A close observation of students at Shendi University brought about that students confuse the pronunciation of some set of words e.g. most of the English words that have sounds, which do not exist in Sudanese Spoken Arabic e.g. /p/ in "rip" /θ/ in "thank" and /ð/ in "breathe". It was also observed that students pronounced pair of words the same. The researcher spent many days at the Faculty observing the pronunciation of English words by the students at Shendi University and the results of this observation made the researcher to come out with the following hypotheses:

1.3 Hypotheses of the study

1- Students of English at the faculty of Arts 2015 pronounce /p/ as /b/, /ei/ as /e/ in Paper/p**e**pə/, / f / is replaced by / v /.

2-Students of English at the faculty of Arts 2015 pronounce /stʃ/ as /tʃ/ in the word "que**st**ion", they leave out the /s/ and pronounced it as /kwetʃən/.

3- Students of English at the faculty of Arts 2015 pronounce **Thank** as **sank** and **rib** as **rip**, **breathe** is pronounced like **breeze**, **marry** as **merry**, **rob** as **rope**, **want** as **won't**, **lock** as **luck**, **law** as **low**, **hurt** as **heart**, **eyes** as **ice, quiet** as **quite**, **year** as **ear**, and **well** as **will.**

4- Students of English at the faculty of Arts 2015substitute the English consonants in these words (**d**one, fa**th**er, **t**alk, **s**ummary) with the Arabic consonants sounds: (ض/dˤ/ , (ظ/ðˤ/), (ط/tˤ/), (/sˤ/ص) .

1.2 Aims of the Study

This study aims to:

1- Explore problems of pronunciation e.g. the mispronunciation of some sounds and the shifting of particular sounds with others.
2- Try to find the possible reasons for such errors i.e. are these errors related to the mother tongue interference, sound system differences between the native and the foreign language? moreover to study the influence of spelling on the pronunciation.
3- To what extent the inconsistency of some English sounds affects on the pronunciation.
4- Helping the Sudanese students of English improve their pronunciation using the modern techniques and aids in learning language e.g. internet, audio aids such as (CDs, tapes, and TV).

1.4 Significance of Study

The importance of this study comes from the perspective that all the previous studies, addressed the problem among speakers of European languages such as German, Spanish, Italian, Portuguese etc. and Asian languages e. g. Chinese and Thai. There are also some studies on pronunciation errors among speakers of Arabic. So this study focuses on the same problem, but the participants were speakers of Sudanese Spoken Arabic as a form of Arabic in Sudan. Thus, may be mispronunciation of sounds replacements of problematic sounds is explored.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

2.0. Overview

Many linguists such as O'Connor (2003) , Yule (2003) and researchers on (SLA) believe that the English pronunciation problems among speakers of other languages, including Arabic, are the same but that depends on each language background. Arabic language is among them. So in this study,the researcher will look into some of the factors that have impact on learning second language (L2) in general and English pronunciation in particular and also try to identify the possible reasons behind such errors and finally try to find the suitable techniques and strategies that help the students improve their English pronunciation.

2.1 Factors that influence learning English in general

Many studies in the field of (SLA) discussed the factors that hinder achieving native-like pronunciation among foreign languages learners in general and among Sudanese learners in particular O'Connor(2003), Yule (2003). Researchers and linguists have pointed some linguistic factors such as the differences of the sound system between the (LI) and the (L2), the inconsistency of some sounds in English language, the mother tongue interference and the influence of spelling on pronunciation. These factors are known as linguistic factors, which are the main focus of this research; so all of them will be discussed separately in detail in the following sections.

2.2 Mother tongue interference

Several studies have been conducted on the influence of L2 on learning English language .Catford (1977), Moosa (1972) and Swan; Smith,(2001) reported that /p/ and /b/ sounds are two different phonemes and each one is distinguished by a native speaker. In Arabic Language, the situation is different, because there is only the phoneme /b/ so this is the reason why most Arabic speakers mispronounce words with these sounds /p/ and /b/ and of course the Sudanese students of English face the same problem. Sudanese students confuse between /p/ and /b/ in words like (‘park’, ‘bark’), (‘pen’, ‘ben’), (‘pull’, ‘bull’), (‘supper’, ‘subber’) if students were asked to say these words, they would pronounce /b/ instead of /p/ in each pair of the words above and sometimes /p/ is used in the place of /b/ but this rarely happens. The reason for shifting from /p/ to /b/ is the fact that the two sounds are regarded, as two allophones of one phoneme. Alkhuli(1983) noted that “Arab students of English confuse /p/ with /b/ and that is linked to the influence of the mother tongue, so their tongues get stiff with their LI sounds, and they commit such errors until the mastery of L2 sounds”(p. 34).

Brown (2000) found that a second language learner meets some difficulties, because his LI affects his L2 especially in adulthood, and this effect is a result of LI transfer; therefore, it is an important source of making errors for second language learners. Ladefoged (2001); Carter &Nunan (2001) showed that mother tongue has clear influence on learning L2 pronunciation. Where LI and L2 rules are in conflict, errors are expected to be committed by foreign learners. All that can be linked to what is known as the interference between LI and L2. So many learners use /p/ as /b/, others use /s/ for /θ/ and /z/ for /ð/ and /b/ for /v/.

In addition to the past works, of O’Connor and Yule (2003) have studied pronunciation problems and the influence of LI. So many sounds such as /p/ and /b/, /s/ and /θ/, /z/ and /ð/, /tʃ/ and /ʃ/, /v/ and /b/ are confused e.g. (pit / bit), (thin /

sin), (question /action), (very / berry). For the Sudanese learners /z/ and /s/ are usually used in the place of /ð/ and /θ/ which results from the interference of Sudanese spoken Arabic. /ð/ and /θ/ exist in some forms of Arabic e.g. (Iraqi, Saudi Arabian, Kuwaiti, etc); however, they do not exist in Sudanese dialect where they are replaced by /s/ and /z/.

The mispronunciation of the above sounds is the result of the over practice of the first language, a process of fossilization. The adults vocal musculature is set to pronounce foreign sounds with an accent (Yule and O'Connor (2003) reported that the main problem of English pronunciation is to build a new set of sounds corresponding to the sounds of English, and to break down the arrangement of sounds which the habits and the systems of LI have strongly built up. And that means using new ways of hearing and new ways of using organs of speech. So it is too difficult to change such habits which a learner has obtained since childhood or at least it needs very long years to be changed and also after very long time and regular practice, and all that is linked to a certain age of the learner. So the points mentioned above all share the concept that the learners confuse such sounds and replace each of them with other sounds that are said to be the nearest ones to them O'Connor (2003).

2.3 Sound system differences between LI and L2

As it has been mentioned by many linguists and researchers, there is a conflict between the sound systems of LI and L2 Moosa (1972) noted that the Arab learners of English form habits of their mother tongue (Arabic), so they strongly build the phonological features of Arabic; this makes them confront many difficulties in distinguishing sound systems between a native language and the second language.

For the Sudanese learners the study discusses the problem from two perspectives, the first one is that there is a difference between the sound system in Sudanese Spoken Arabic and the sound system in other forms of Arabic language, and the second one is that there is also a difference between the sound system in Sudanese Spoken Arabic, and the sound system in English language.

Another study on the effect of sound system on learning pronunciation was done by Alkhuli (1983) who showed that the main problem in teaching and learning English pronunciation results from the differences in the sound system of English and the native language, so a speaker of Sudanese Spoken Arabic is not accustomed to pronouncing for instance θ-sound and ð-sound, because they do not find in their native language. This means that the organs of speech of the learner are not trained to produce such sound systems because they are unfamiliar to them; that is why they use the nearest sounds such as /s/ and /z/.

About the same area of the study Cruttenden (1994) noted that in the field of (SLA), learners with different linguistic backgrounds would of course face different difficulties in order to produce English sounds, because of the differences between the two languages (e.g. English and Arabic).These differences between the sound systems are regarded as a barrier against competence in the pronunciation of English, because the new sounds still remain strange for their organs of speech specially if they start learning English after the age of adulthood, but this problem is expected to be solved after a long time of regular practice and hard work.

Most of the Sudanese students of English face such problem because in Arabic the vowel system is very simple and the learner can read an Arabic word easily without any confusion, but in English he may pronounce /i/ for /e/ for example /sit/, /set/.

In Arabic, each letter represents only one sound, so it's easy to read any word from a written text. Also there is no sound which is not pronounced (silent), as it happens a lot in English. When there is a difference in the sound system in the LI and L2. Nunan (2001) showed that errors are expected to be committed because the learners transfer their mother tongue sound system into the target language.

The Sudanese English learners as speakers of Arabic tend to replace /v/ by /f/ or /b/ because this sound does not exist in their native language sound system. So their speech organs are not trained to produce such sound. They pronounce paper as pepper, have as half.

The learners difficulties in learning L2 could be predicted based on systematic differences of the two languages, and those learners from different first language backgrounds would experience different difficulties when attempting to learn L2. It was also reported that it is essential to understand which sounds in a language are phonemes because they express the differences in meaning and the learner should be able to pronounce them, otherwise he commits errors.

In English language there are twenty-four consonants and twenty vowels; that mean there are forty-four phonemes in English language the learner should be able to produce while they are learning English. Learners of different language backgrounds will of course face some difficulties to pronounce them because of their language background O'Connor (2003).

In Arabic language the number of the sounds is less than the one in English language, so the total number of letters of Arabic language is twenty-eight letters each of them represents only one sound. Which means there are only twenty-eight sounds in Arabic language. As known a sound is made by definite movement of the organs of speech, so to produce any sound that means to perform the exact organs movement of the sound. If the learner's language sound system has not any

of the forty-four English sounds, he will face a difficulty to produce it e.g. (ð, θ, p, v) sounds which do not exist in Sudanese Spoken Arabic sound system, so Sudanese students pronounce them incorrectly and the reason for that is the differences between the sound system in the LI and L2.

2.4 Inconsistency of English vowels

One of the important problems faced by the students of English in general and the Sudanese students of English in particular, is that each English vowel sound has more than just one pronunciation. This causes many difficulties to the learners and leads them to mispronunciation problems. (Cruttenden,1994 p.64) states,

> *The main difficulty for all those whose own languages have a less complex vowel system, lies in the establishment of the qualitative oppositions. Instead of using the exact quality and quantity of a special sound, the learner erroneously changes either the quality or the quantity of the sound.*

so in certain words the learner tends to use the variant sounds e.g. in words like son/s ʌ n/, come /k ʌ m/, among /əm ʌ ŋ/, monkey /m ʌ nki/, blood /bl ʌ d/, flood /flʌd/; in all these words /o/ and /oo/ stand for the same sound of /ʌ /, but most of the learners, unless they have a mastery of the pronunciation of such vowels, they pronounce /ɔ/ or /u:/ in the place of /ʌ / .This is because of their first background about each sound, so they picture this thought in their minds as if each vowel has only one type of pronunciation and if that is true the learner can easily know and expect how to pronounce each word even if s/he encounters it for the first time. That is if each letter represents only one phoneme, but in fact the situation is not like this, and that is one of the basic problems of English. O'Connor (2003)

reported that it is not simple to know the exact sounds the letters stand for or represent in a certain word for instance in the words city /siti/, busy /bizi/, women /wimin/, pretty /priti /, village /vilidʒ/, English /i ŋ gliʃ/ the letters y, u, o, a, e, all of them stand for the same vowel sound /i/. In words like, banana /bəna:nə/bather /beiðə /(r)/, man /mæn/, many /meni/ the 'a' stands for five different vowels sound. The learner, who doesn't have sufficient knowledge of different pronunciations of the vowels above, faces some difficulty, since he uses different variants of their pronunciations.

Power (2003) found that there are 23 common pronunciation problems, some of them are related to vowels e.g. the students confuse /i/ with /i:/ as in sit, seat, and /ɔ/ with /əu/ as in not,note and / æ/ with /ei/ as in mat, mate and /e/ with /ei/ as in let, late.

Researchers and linguists always connect such problems with the complexity of the vowels sound system that exists in English and the inconsistency of its pronunciation. Cruttenden (1994) noted that the inconsistency of English vowels causes difficulties for other language learners of English e.g. if we take for instance 'o' in some words like some, move, home, women, in each word it has different pronunciation as /ʌ/, /u:/, /əu/, /i/ so the English learners who don't have the mastery of the pronunciation of such words will also face difficulties. On the other hand words such as book, butcher, could, wolf etc. in all these words the letters oo, u, ou, o are all pronounced the same /u:/, so in the first example we have the same letters with different pronunciation, and in the other one we have different letters with same pronunciation. For more examples of the different pronunciations of the letter 'a' consider (water, same, fat,) the letter (a) has three different pronunciations, as /ɔ:/, /ei/, /æ/ so many of the Sudanese students of English tend to pronounce /ei/ instead of /æ/e.g./feit/ for /fæt/. Also in words such as rich, symbol, English, private, women the letters i, y, e, a, o all of them are pronounced as /i/ so

we have /ritʃ/, /simbl/, /inŋliʃ/, /praivit/, /wimin/. In such words, errors are expected to be committed by the Sudanese students of English unless they are already taught and trained in their different pronunciations. Each of the letters we use to show pronunciation may stand for more than one sound for instance in banana /bəna:nə/, bather /beiðə/(r)/, man /mæn/, many /meni/, the letter (a) stands for five different vowel sounds; if the learner has no knowledge about this inconsistency, this will lead him to wrong pronunciation (O'Connor, 2003).

2.5 Influence of spelling

According to the observations and notes on the Sudanese students at Shendi University, the Students have some difficulty in the pronunciation of some words from a written text. This problem is due to the spelling system in English language, because in Arabic language students can easily pronounce a word from a written text just by looking at it; so each letter represents one sound, so the relationship between the orthography and the phonology is very easy to distinguish, in addition to that there is no silent letter in Arabic language as it is found in English. Many words in English have letters, which are not pronounced.

Yule (2001) noted that the sounds of spoken English do not match up, always with letters of written English. So if we cannot use the letters of the alphabet in a consistent way to represent the sounds we make, it is difficult to describe the sounds of a language like English.

In English, there are twenty-four consonants and twenty vowels, if we give to each of these forty- four units a special letter, in that way certainly we can show what the student should say. If the learner knows that each letter represents a certain sound (e.g. equal number of sounds to the letters), they can simply avoid the difficulty of spelling on pronunciation. Some words which are ordinarily spelt in the same way, are different in their pronunciation, for example, there are some

words spelt differently, but sound the same e.g. rain, rein, reign, all of them are pronounced /rein/. The learner, who still doesn't have the mastery of pronunciation of such words, pronounces each of them by looking at its spelling, and he is expected to mispronounce them O'Connor (2003).

The explanatory potential of sound-spelling relationships as reported in Carter and Nunan (2001) is something teachers should be aware of, since correspondences between orthography and phonology enables the students to predict the pronunciation of words from their spelling. So if the learner doesn't know such relationship between sound and spelling, s/he may mispronounce words by just looking at their spellings e.g. before the "n" the "k" is silent; knee, know, knot, knight a student who doesn't learn their pronunciation correctly, pronounces them with the /k/ sound. Also Easton (2005) showed that there are some words with silent letters which cause problems for the learners for instance, silent /g/ and pronounced /g/ e.g. campaign, reign, sign, gnash in these words the /g/ is silent, but most of the students pronounce it. On the other hand, words like signal, signature, resignation the /g/ here is pronounced; unless the learner has a good knowledge of pronunciation of /g/ in such words, they will confuse its pronunciation.

In the same problem of pronunciation as a result of spelling Easton (2005) noted that in silent /gh/ the learners may face problem because written /gh/ has no sound of its own, so it is never pronounced as it is written e.g. /gh/, but it is pronounced as /g/ in some words as, Afghanistan, Ghana, ghost, and in other words pronounced as /f/ e.g. cough, trough, enough and silent in some other words such as light, night, high, weigh, weight, thorough, bough, plough.Any time the student meets such words they will be confused to pronounce them correctly they just guess the pronunciation by looking at the spelling of the word unless they has previous background. So it is very important to consult the dictionary from time to time to

check the pronunciation of such words until he possesses a good mastery of their pronunciation.

Chapter Three

Research Methodology

3.0 Overview

This chapter introduces the design and method used in analyzing the collected data. To reach the objectives of this study the researcher has made interviews with teachers in the pilot study. A written questionnaire and audio recordings were made to analyze the problems that lie behind problems of pronouncing consonants and vowels among Arts students at Shendi University. These tools are explained below:

3.1 Methodology

In this study, the data has been collected from 40 students (final year) of Shendi University, faculty of Arts after they have completed a whole prescribed courses in English major at the university.Samples of their pronunciation were recorded in addition to the observation in which some notes were written about their pronunciation. The researcher followed the descriptive and statistic method in this study. And as we know the descriptive researches attempt to describe the problems and the phenomenon as it is i.e. describes the phenomenon and explains it. Then offer the recommendations for solving the problem. Also the analytical method was used in this study, to test the hypotheses of the study by using suitable statistical procedures.

3.2 Data collection

The data were collected after making interviews with teachers for the problematic sounds that the study investigated. Next, the sounds were put in a list, each word contain a problematic sound.

3.3 The audio recording test

The recording was made for 15 students. Each student was asked to record 36 isolated words; divided into two recording sessions, in the first session students were asked to record 20 words then to record the rest of the words i.e.(16), this is because some of the 20 words include sounds that are in contrast to the 16 words. Words of session one were: (paper, thank, rip, breathe, half, marry, question, rob, want, lock, low, heart, eyes, said, quiet, done, father, talk, some, ear). Words of session two were:(pepper, sank, rib, breeze, half, merry, well, rope, won't, luck, law, hurt, ice, set, quite, year). Words of first session were hypothesized to be pronounced in the same way as words in the second session. The researcher tried to record these words in two sessions to help figure out this problem in a comparative way. The recordings in the two sessions were held at an office using a laptop computer recorder. The subjects were asked to read naturally and spontaneously. Each participant lasted between 5 to 10 minutes. See table (1) below:

Words of session 1	Words of session 2
Paper	Pepper
Thank	Sank
Breathe	Breeze
Marry	Merry
Rob	Rope
Want	Won't
Lock	Luck
Low	Law
Heart	Hurt
Eyes	Ice
Quiet	Quite

Ear	Year

Table 1:shows list of the target words

3.4. The Tri Regression Measurement

Four words from the overall number of words are found to be replaced by Arabic consonant sounds. These words are : (fa**th**er ظ), (**d**oneض),(**t**alkط), and **s**ummaryص) the researcher put them in the Tri Regression Measurement to let the students offer their point of views of whether the sound are replaced or not. In addition to that the researcher had their responses as to support the study. That is in case some students may don't really face the problem, but they may agree others face it according to their own observations, since this will let them give their opinions on whether they agree or disagree that the meant sounds are being replaced or not.

3.5. The written questionnaire

English consonants	Arabic consonants
Done	ض/dˤ/
Fa**th**er	ظ/ðˤ/
Some	ص/sˤ/
Talk	ط/tˤ/

Table 2: shows English consonants replaced by Arabic consonants

3.6 Participants

The participants of this study were 36 students from faculty of Arts, Shendi University, both males(19) and females(17) . They were final year students at the time of experimentation(2015) the researcher chose this sample because they studied all phonetics and Phonology courses in their prescribed curriculum. This

helps to figure out the possible reasons behind the problems raised in the study. The subjects of the study were both from males and females because they are all one class and there are no differences in performance for both gender since all were observed to face the same difficulty.

3.7 Piloting

The researcher had consulted eight teachers from three different Sudanese universities to finalize the questionnaire of the study entitled Pronunciation problems of English Consonants and vowels among Arts students at Shendi University. And their comments were: participant A is from Shendi University with PhD in translation; head of English Department; with over 15 years of teaching experience, agreed with most of the problems that were believed to exist among the students according to the questionnaire given. He supports problems 16,17,18, and 19(see the Appendix) saying they were really common not only among students but also among teachers. He only disagreed with problem 5 arguing that students always pronounce it properly.

Participant **B** from the same University who is now pursuing his PhD in literature; agreed with many of the examples given in the questionnaire and adds some more problematic sounds occur from consonant clusters. For example when students pronounce a word that begins with consonant clusters or ends in consonant clusters students as a result try to insert some vowels in between.

Participant **C** is from Neelain University. According to him the words are to a large extent help in predicting the most Sudanese students most frequently do not pronounce properly. He recommended me to consider the allomorphs of [d] in words like missed, behaved and so on. Moreover, he drew my attention to call the plural form in words that end in sibilant, e.g buses, quiz..etc. while participant **D**

;Shendi University faculty of Education ; doing her PhD; has been teaching for 8 years commented that problem 7 which says that students pronounce the short vowel sound in the word ***well*** is replaced by the short vowel / I/ so that you hear students pronounce it as ***will*** is not so common among the students who will take part in the study and it may be common with other students with no phonetic background. She says that instead of problem 7 there is another word that can be more important to be investigated than this which is the word **question** because, a lot of students pronounced it as /**kwetʃən**/ instead of the correct pronunciation/**kwestʃən**/ and that has to do with intelligibility. she observed it to be so commonly mispronounced whereas the word ***will*** and ***well*** are always pronounced properly.

Another comment given by participant **E** Shendi University -faculty of Arts-English Department, agreed with most of the examples given in the questionnaire, adding that problem of replacing the sound /e/ by/i/ in **well** is so common among Sudanese students.

Participant **F** from University of Khartoum; faculty of Arts ;PhD in Linguistics; his comment was that instead of titling the study :*"Pronunciation problems of Some English Consonants and vowels among Arts students at Shendi University"*

Participant **G** Shendi University; faculty of Education; head of English department; pursing his PhD in Reflective Teaching Methods; with over 15 years teaching experience. Said that problem No. 19 i.e the sound [s] in words like ***s****ink* and ***s****in* is not pronounced as in words like ***s****un* and ***s****ome* saying that in the latter examples /s/ is an allophone of /s/that is why it is pronounced like [ص] in Arabic.

Participant **H** Shendi University; PhD in linguistics; 15 year teaching experience; he just recommended me to bear in mind that when doing the recording it would be better if you include the problematic sounds in separate words (words are to be in

isolation) that is, to avoid having more problems other than what the study is going to deal with.

So, in light of these comments the researcher has made some changes:

According to comments A the researcher will consider the comments of making problems 16,17,18,19 as hypothesis in the written test. And that will be done in order to know according to participants' opinions if they agree upon the problems raised or not, moreover, that will make it goes beyond the participants' problems and it will help decide;Do the problems basically exist among learners in Sudan in general? Or not.

Two of the comments have shown the disagreement with problem 5 which assumedthat students confused the pronunciation of /f/ and /v/ in words like *half* and *have*. To settle the issue the researcher has found out that some students confused it, that it they pronounced in both words as /f/. Evidence proved that this happened as an over practice of the first language (Hassan, 2012). Therefore, the researcher will include it in the study. Concerning comment **b** which calls for including the consonant clusters will be taken into consideration because the study hypothesizes that lack of training for phonetic teachers is part of this problem when it comes to the unconscious process that made some teachers feed students with improper pronunciation because according to Marzouk's analysis (1993) that Arab students transfer some vowels between consonant clusters and he found that : students pronounce word like floor as /filɔ:r/ so a vowel sound is inserted between /f/ and /l/ and here the role of the teacher in correcting this error must be present. In light of comment **C** which calls for the problems that do exist from the pronunciation of allomorphs of /s/ and /d/ is included in problem 13. A considerable number of teachers agree with participant D in considering the common mispronounced word among students at Shendi university that is , the word **question** therefore, the study will include it so as to investigate the reason

behind it. In light of comment G the researcher will consider the issue of the /s/, but still the matter of pronouncing an Arabic sound instead of S or its sibilants (/s/,/iz/ /z/) would stand still, since the study hypothesizes that the Arabic sound /ص/ is pronounced and not one of S sibilants.

According to participant H the target words which will be investigated in the study should be recorded separately and that was to a large extent seems to be right as it appears to the researcher after doing a piloting test with five senior students; three males and two females. It is found that the recording process takes time each of them took about two to three minutes. The target words will not be pronounced clearly, because the students who were taken to do the piloting felt that it would be much better if the sounds were in isolated words not in phrases. Also the females were shy and a bit nervous when they attempt to record their pronunciation because they say "this is the first time to record our voices". The question here is In what way will that affect the study?

In light of this, the study will be conducted using two questionnaires. The first will be doing audio recordings to the problematic sounds, and the second one will be written ; given to the same sample of students, but this time students will find each word with two phonetic transcriptions and their job is to choose the correct transcription. This is in order to see whether the problem with students' knowledge or with students' lack of practice.

Chapter Four

4.0 Overview

In chapter three, the study presented the methodology and data collecting techniques. This chapter presents the analysis of the pronunciation problems identified in the recording and the questionnaire. The purpose of this study was to identify and analyze pronunciation difficulties experienced by students of English at Shendi University - Faculty of Arts regarding certain English consonant and vowel phonemes.

4.1 Presentation of Data:

Before students began to read aloud the list of words, they were asked to point out the new words if any. Once the data were collected the researcher played back the recordings and started listening to each session three times to identify the correct sounds paying special attention to the words of session 1 that are said to be pronounced as the words of session 2 as well as the four words that the study hypothesized to be replaced by Arabic consonant sounds (see table two above). The recordings of both sessions were transcribed as the subjects pronounced them then they were compared to the written questionnaire. While the four words were judged by an Arabic native speaker (a teacher of Arabic at faculty of Education-Shendi University) that is, when he heard for example, the Arabic consonant sound he underlined the word to indicate whether it was pronounced with Arabic consonant instead of the English one or not , thus with all the sounds:(ض/dˤ/ , (ظ/ðˤ/), (ط/tˤ/),.

4.1.1 Student "1" pronounced most of the words properly but he only mispronounced these words: ***quiet*** as /kwait/, also I noticed that he pronounced ***was*** terminating with Arabic /ظ /but he corrected himself immediately as did with ***hurt*** and ***year*** too.

4.1.2. Student "2" mispronounced the following words:

Paper as / bɜ:bə/ thank as /sænk/ rip as/rib/, breathe as /bri:z/, half as / ha:lf/, marry as /məri/, question as /kewisʃən/, lock as /lʊk/, eyes as /ais/, was as /wæظ/, done as /ضʌn/, some as /صʌm/, quiet as /kwait/, merry as /məri/, law as /ləʊ/, hurt as /hərt/, year as /iə/, rope as /rɒp/

4.1.3. Student "3" pronounced**:**

/bebə/ for paper, /breθ/ for breathe, /ha:lf/ for half, /meri/ for marry, /kiwizʃən/ for question, /lʌk/ for lock, /ضʌn/ for done, /wæظ/ for was, /təʊlk/ talk, /raib/ for rib, /braiz/ for breeze, /wil/ for well, /wəʊnt/ for want, /ləʊ/ for law, /ha:rt/ for hurt, /sit/ for set, /kwaiət/ for quite, /iə/ for year.

4.1.4 Student "4" pronounced**:**

/ bebə/ for paper, /breθ/ for breathe, /ha:lf/ half, /meri/ for marry , /kwetʃən/ for question, /lʌk/ for lock, /iə/ for ear, /kwait/ for quiet, /ضʌn/ for done, /wæظ/ for was, /tɔ:lk/ for talk, /bi:bə/ for pepper, /bres/ for breeze, /hæf/ for have, /wil/ for well,/wɔ:nt/ for won't, /ləʊ/ for law, /ha:rt/ for hurt, /iə/ for year.

4.1.5. Student "5" pronounced:

/beibə/ for paper, /bri:θ/ for breathe, /ha:lf/ for half, /meri/ for marry, /kwetʃən/ for question, /lʌk/ for lock, /kwait/ for quiet, /ضʌn/ for done, /wæظ/ for was, /طɔ:k/ for talk, /صʌm/ for some, /bebə/ for pepper, /rɒp/ for rope, /ləʊ/ for law, /ha:rt/ for hurt, /iə/ for year.

4.1.6. Student "6"mispronunciation was:

/beibə/ for paper, /sænk/ for thank, /reb/ for rip, /breðə/ for breathe, /ha:lf/ for half, /meri/ for marry, /kwetʃən/ for question, /went/ for want, /eə/ for eyes, /kweti/ quiet, /dəun/ for done, /wæظ/ for was, /teilk/ for talk, /صʌm/ for some, /eə/ for ear, /bebə/ for pepper, /reb/ for rip, /breiz/ breeze, /wil/ for well, /rəʊpi/ for rope, /went/ for won't, /la:/ for law, /ha:rt/ for hurt, /aiz/ for ice, /kiwiti/ for quite.

4.1.7. Student "7" pronounced**:**

/θænk/ for thank, /reb/ for rib, /bɜ:θ/ for breathe, / ha:lf, for half,/meri/for marry, /kwetʃən/ for question, /wɒnt/ for want, /lʌk/ for lock, /iəs/ for eyes, /kwit/ for quiet, /bebə/ for pepper, /sink/ for sank, /wil/ for well, /rɒp/ for rope, /lʌk/ for luck, /ləʊ/ for law, /ha:rt/ for hurt, /kwet/ for quite, /iə/ for year.

4.1.8. Student "8" pronounced**:**

/bɜ:bə/ for paper, /bri:θ/ for breathe, /meri/ for marry, /kweʃən/ for question, /kwait/ for quiet, /صʌm/ for some, /laʊ/ for law, /hərt/ for hurt.

4.1.9. Student "9" pronounced**:**

/ rib/ for rip, /breθ/ for breathe, /kwesʃən/ for question, /meri/ for marry, /wæظ/ for was, /صʌm/ for some, /ləʊ/ for law, /iə/ for year, /kwaiət/ for quite.

4.1.10. Student "10" pronounced**:**

/bebə/ for paper, / reb/ for rip, / breiz/ for breathe, /hɜ:lf/ for half, /ləʊk/ for lock, /hɜ:rt/ for heart, /kweit/ for quiet, /ضʌn/ for done, /wæظ/ for was, /bebə/ for pepper, /reb/ for rib, /wil/ for well, /ləʊk/ for luck, / ləʊ/ for law, /ha:rt/ for hurt, /iəs/ for ice, /kweit/ for quite, /iə/ for year.

4.1.11. Student "11" pronounced**:**

/bebə/ for paper, /raib/ for rip, /breθ/ for breathe, /məri/ for marry, /kwesʃən/ for question, /ais/ for eyes, kwait, for quiet, /ضʌn/ for done, /wæظ/ for was, /طɔ:k/ for talk, /صʌm/ for some, /bebə/ for pepper, /breiz/ for breeze, /laʊ/ for law, /həʊrt/ for hurt, /iə/ for year.

4.1.12. Student "12" only mispronounced twowords from both sessions**:**

/kwait/ for quiet, and /ضʌn/ for done.

4.1.13. Student "13" pronounced**:**

/bebə/ for paper, /reb/ for rip, /meri/ for marry, /kwetʃən/ for question, /rəʊb/ for rob, /wəʊnt/ for want, /ais/ for eyes, /kwait/ for quiet, /wæظ/ for was, /طɔ:k/ for talk, /صʌm/ for some, /raip/ for rib, /hæf/ for have, /mi:ri/ for merry, /rʊ:b/ for rope, /wʊ:nt, for won't, /ləʊ/ for law, / ha:rt/ for hurt, /iə/ for year.

4.1.14. Students "14" pronounced**:**

/bebə/ for paper, /sænk/ for thank, /meri/ for marry, /kwitʃən/ for question, /lʊk/ for lock, /hiərt/ for heart, /ais/ for eyes, /seijid/ for said, /kwait/ for quiet, /ضʌn/ for done, /wil/ for well, /rob/ for rope, /wʊdnɒt/ for won't, /lʊk/ for luck, /ləʊ/ for law, /ha:rt/ for hurt, /iə/ for year.

4.1.15 Student "15" pronounced**:**/raib/ for rib, /bri:θ/ for breathe, /meri/ for marry, /kwetʃən/, /lʌk/ for lock, /said/ for said, /kwait/ for quiet, /ضʌn/ for done, /wæظ/ for was, /wil/ for well, /ha:rt/ for hurt, /iə/ for year.

4.2 Problematic words in pairs

4.2.1The words: paper/ pepper

As we can see from the transcriptions above that 7 of the participants replaced the long vowel sound in the word "paper"/p**ei**pə/ by the short vowel /e/ and two pronounced it with /ɜ:/. The rest of the participants pronounced it properly.

4.2.2The words: thank/ sank

Eight participants have pronounced the word "thank" as /sænk/with /s/ instead of /θ/ and a special attention was paid to the tongue and lips position when the recordings were played back in order to see whether the tongue was touching the upper teeth or not.

4.2.3 The words: rip / rip

All participants except number 1, pronounced the/ p/ in rip as /b/ and did the same in all words that contain the sound.

4.2.4. The words: breathe / breeze

The final sound in the word "breathe" was mispronounced as /z/ by two of the participants and as / ð / by 6

4.2.5.The words: half / have

Two of the participants pronounced "half" with /f/ while, "have" was pronounced as /hæf/ by two of the participants. Another problem arose in pronouncing "half" is that the silent letter "l" was clearly pronounced so the word seemed very odd when a participant pronounces it.

4.2.6. The words: marry / merry

11 of the participants pronounced “marry” as /meri/ that is with /e/ instead of /æ/ so when someone hears it, they will think that the word **merry** was pronounced so that when playing back the recordings of both sessions we heard **merry** in both sessions. Another two had pronounced it with /ə/. And it was observed that those who pronounced it with /ə/ did that in both words that is, **marry** and **merry** were pronounced as /məri/.

4.2.7. The word:“question “

Only one of the participants pronounced it correctly but the remaining 14 faced difficulty in pronouncing the middle part of it which is, /..stʃ../; three have pronounced this part by omitting the / t / , 7 omitted /s/ and 2 pronounced it with only /ʃ/ that is, omitting both /t/ and /s/.

4.2.8. The word: rob / rope

Only one of the participants pronounced “rob” with the diphthong /əʊ/ instead of /ɒ/ and 4 have pronounced “rope” with short /ɒ/ instead of /əʊ/ so it is clear that most of the participants mispronounced them.

4.2.9. The words: want / won’t

Two of the participants pronounced “want” as won’t with/əʊ/; two with /ɒ/ and two with /e/ as went . Three pronounced “won’t” as /w ʊ: nt/ with /ʊ: / .

4.2.10.The words: lock / luck

Here seven of the participants pronounced both words with /ʌ/ , /ʊ/ and /əʊ/.

4.2.11.The words: low / law

It was found that 11 students had pronounced "law" as "low" and only two pronounced it with /aʊ/ and /a:/.

4.2.12. The words: heart / hurt

"Hurt" was pronounced by nine of the participants with long /a:/ like hart, three with schwa =/ə/ one with /əʊ/, While "heart" was pronounced correctly by most students.

4.2.13.The words: eyes / ice

Five of the participants pronounced "eyes" ending with consonant /s/ instead of the /z/ so when the researcher had played back the recordings in both of the recording sessions he heard the consonant /s/.

4.2.14. The words: quiet / quite

Here the researcher noticed that the two words were the most confused words in the research. In both sessions students pronounced "quite" that is, when you play back the recordings the pronunciation /kwait/ occurred in place where /kwaiət/ should occur.

But two pronounced "quiet" as/kwait/ and two pronounced it with /e/ ;one with /ei/ and another one with /i/.

4.2.15. The words :ear/ year

All of the participants except two have pronounced/iə/ in both of the recording sessions, i.e "year" was pronounced as "ear".

4.2.16. The words: well/will

Half of the participants pronounced **well** with short vowel /i/ instead of /e/

Below we will look at the analysis of the written questionnaire. Here the researcher used the SPSS system to analyze the data.

4.3. Results of the written questionnaire

4.3.1.The word “paper”:

Transcription	Frequency	Percentage
/peipə/	24	T60%
/pepə/	16	40%

Table 3: Subjects’ pronunciation of the words “paper”

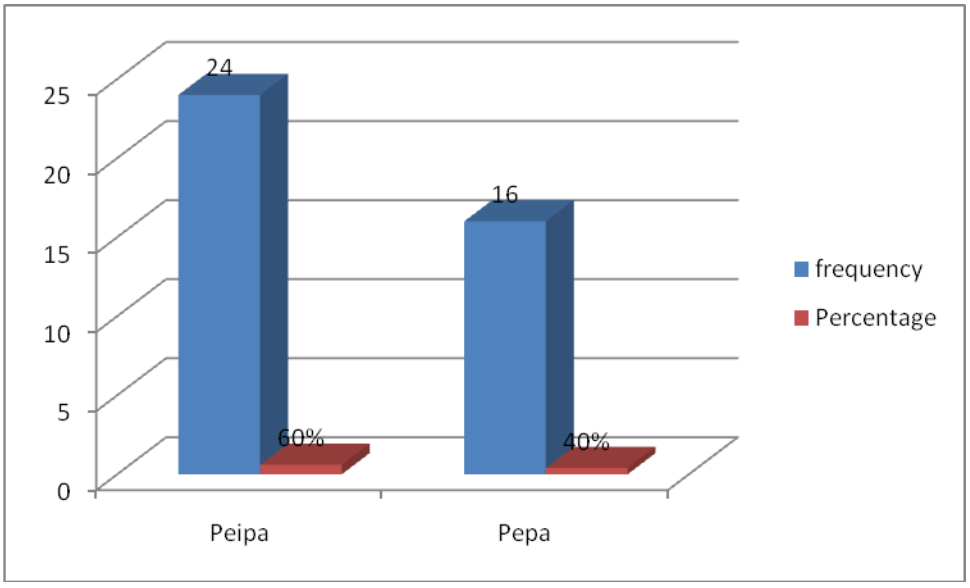

Figure1: Percentage and number of subjects’ choice of the transcribed words

From the table and the figure above it’s clear that most of the respondents believe that the correct pronunciation of the word “paper” is /peipə/, while a few think that the correct pronunciation is /pepə/

4.3.2. The word “Thank”:

Transcription	Frequency	Percentage
/θæŋk/	34	85%
/sæŋk/	4	10%

Table 4: Subjects’ pronunciation of the words “thank”

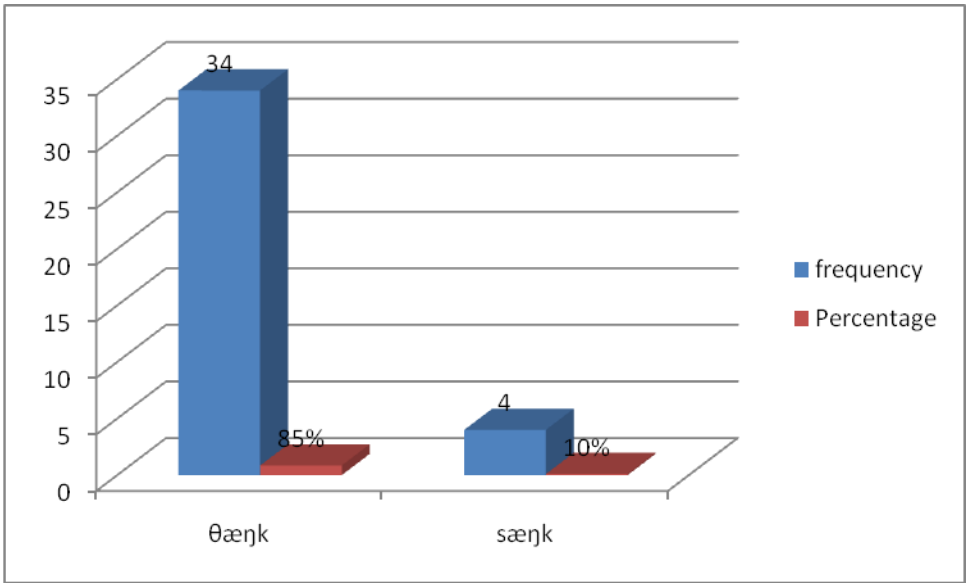

Figure2: Percentage and number of subjects’ choice of the transcribed words/θæŋk/ and /sæŋk/

It’s obvious from the table and the figure above that nearly all of the respondents(34) chose the correct transcription except four.

4.3.3. The word “Rip":

Transcription	Frequency	Percentage
/rɪb/	6	15%
/rɪp/	33	82%

Table 5: Subjects’ pronunciation of the words “rip”

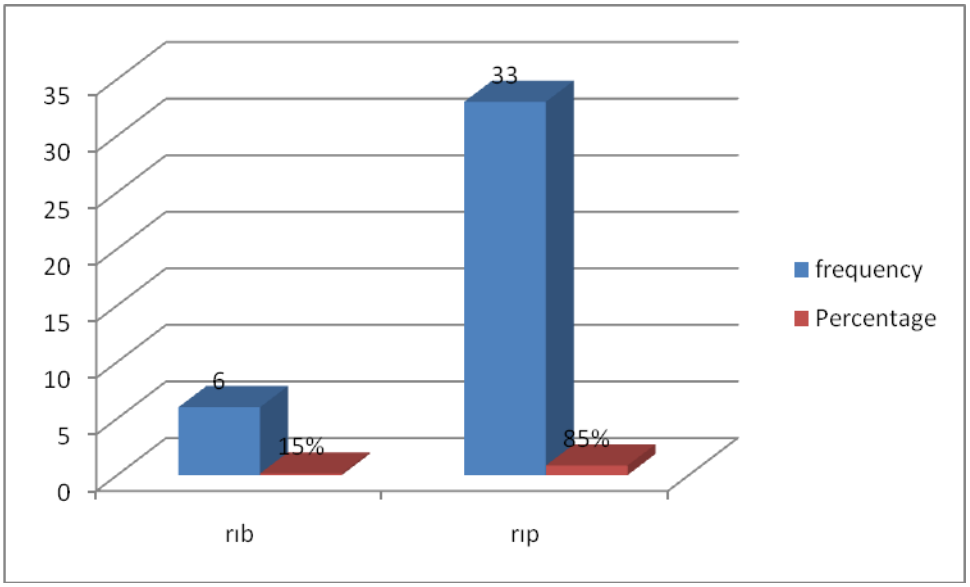

Figure3: Percentage and number of subjects’ choice of the transcribed words: /rɪb/ and /rɪp/

From the table and figure above it’s clear that most of the respondents chose the correct transcription. Only 6 of them chose the wrong one.

4.3.4. The word “breathe”

Transcription	Frequency	Percentage
/brɪ:z/	12	30%
/brɪ:ð/	27	67.5%

Table 6: Subjects’ pronunciation of the words “breathe”

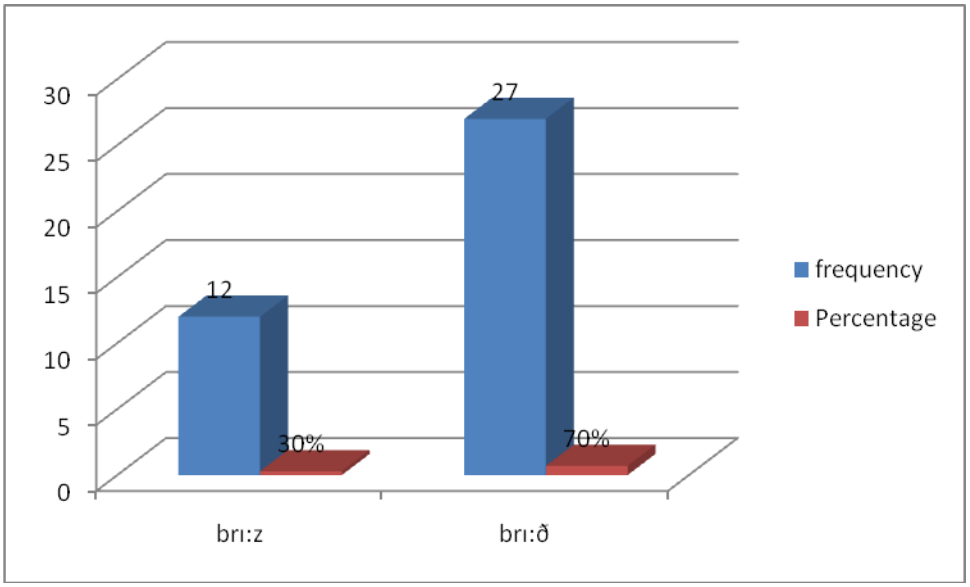

Figure 4: Percentage and number of subjects’ choice of the transcribed words/brɪ:z/ and /brɪ:ð/

Here we see that respondents who chose the correct transcription were 27 and those who chose the wrong one were 12.

4.3.5 The word “Half”:

Transcription	Frequency	Percentage
/hæv/	8	20%
/ha:f/	32	80%

Table 7: Subjects’ pronunciation of the words “half”

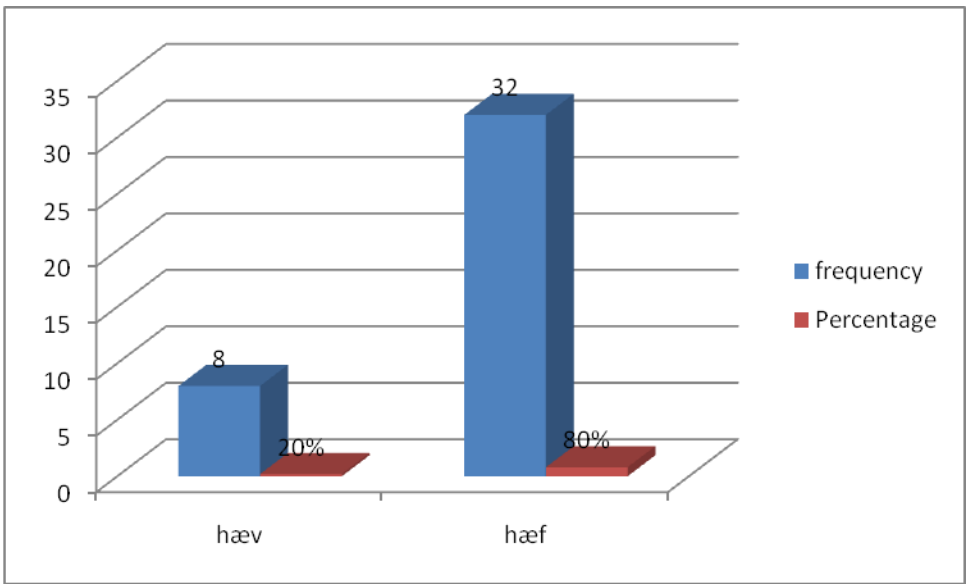

Figure 5: Percentage and number of subjects’ choice of the transcribed words: /hæv/ and /ha:f/

According to the above table and figure most of respondents chose the correct pronunciation representing 80 percent and few have chose the wrong pronunciation representing 20 percent of the overall number.

4.3.6. The word “marry”:

Transcription	Frequency	Percentage
/merɪ/	20	50%
/mærɪ/	20	50%

Table 8: Subjects’ pronunciation of the words “marry”

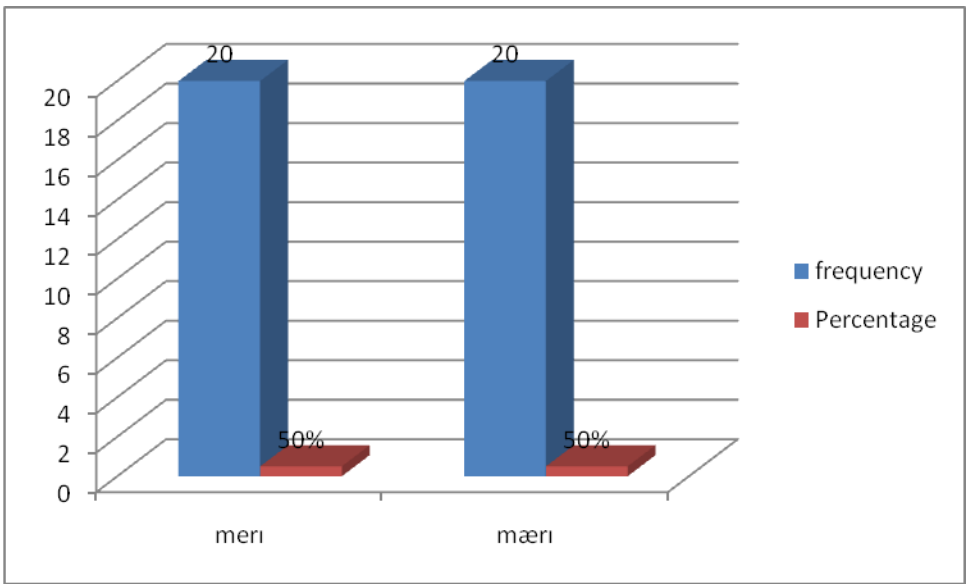

Figure 6: Percentage and number of subjects’ choice of the transcribed words: /merɪ/ and /mærɪ/

Here it’s apparent that half of the respondents chose the correct pronunciation and the other half chose the wrong one.

4.3.7. The word “question”:

Transcription	Frequency	Percentage
/kwestʃən/	13	32.5%
/kwetʃən/	27	67.5%

Table 9: Subjects’ pronunciation of the words “question”

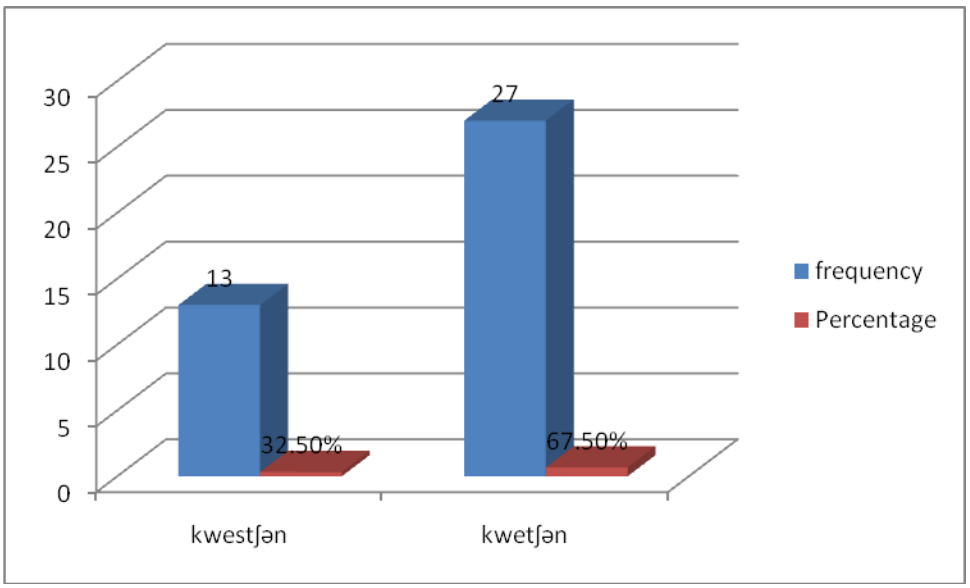

Figure 7: Percentage and number of subjects’ choice of the transcribed word: /kwestʃən/ and /kwetʃən/

As we see the above table and figure display that the majority of the respondents have chose the wrong pronunciation where the correct pronunciation was chosen by 13 of the total number of the respondents.

4.3.8. The word “rob”:

Transcription	Frequency	Percentage
/rəʊb/	17	43.6%
/rɒb/	22	56.4%

Table 10: Subjects’ pronunciation of the words “rob”

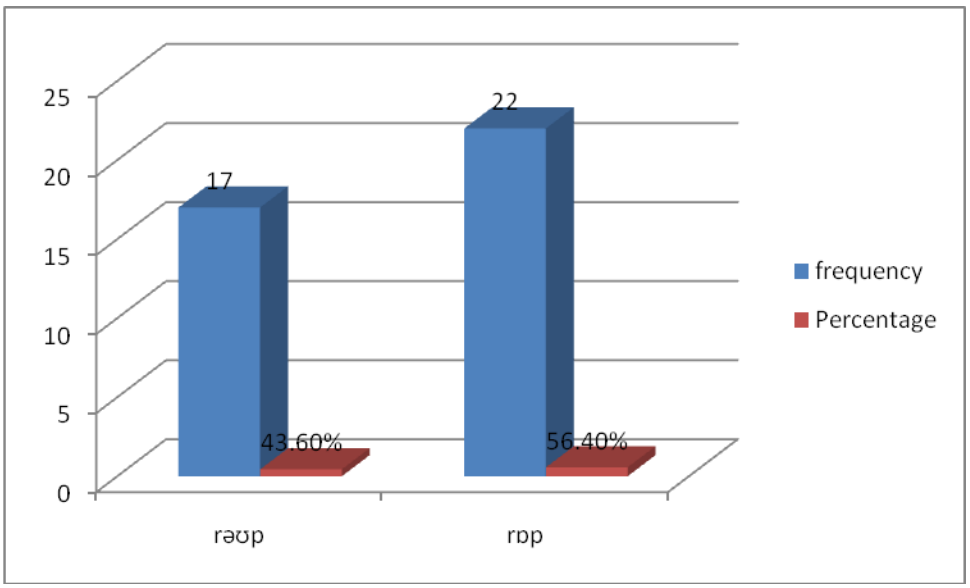

Figure 8: Percentage and number of subjects’ choice of the transcribed words/rəʊb/ and /rɒb/

In the table and figure above, we find that the number of respondents who chose the right transcription was 22 of the overall number and 17 chose the incorrect transcription.

4.3.9.The word “want”:

Transcription	Frequency	Percentage
/wəʊnt/	19	47.5%
/wɒnt/	21	52.5%

Table 11: Subjects’ pronunciation of the words “want”

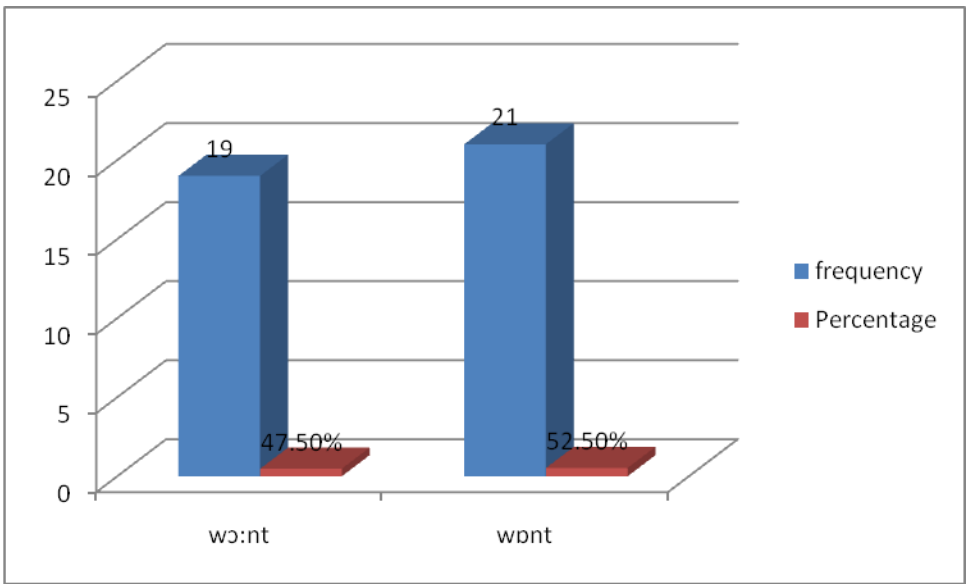

Figure 9:Percentage and number of subjects’ choice of the transcribed words /wəʊnt/ and /wɒnt/

From the table and figure above one can figure out that the closer pronunciation the two word have the greater the confusion occurs; so 19 of the respondents choose the correct pronunciation while the rest that is 21 choose the wrong pronunciation.

4.3.10. The word “lock”:

Transcription	Frequency	Percentage
/lʌk/	20	50%
/lɒk/	20	50%

Table 12: Subjects’ pronunciation of the words “lock”

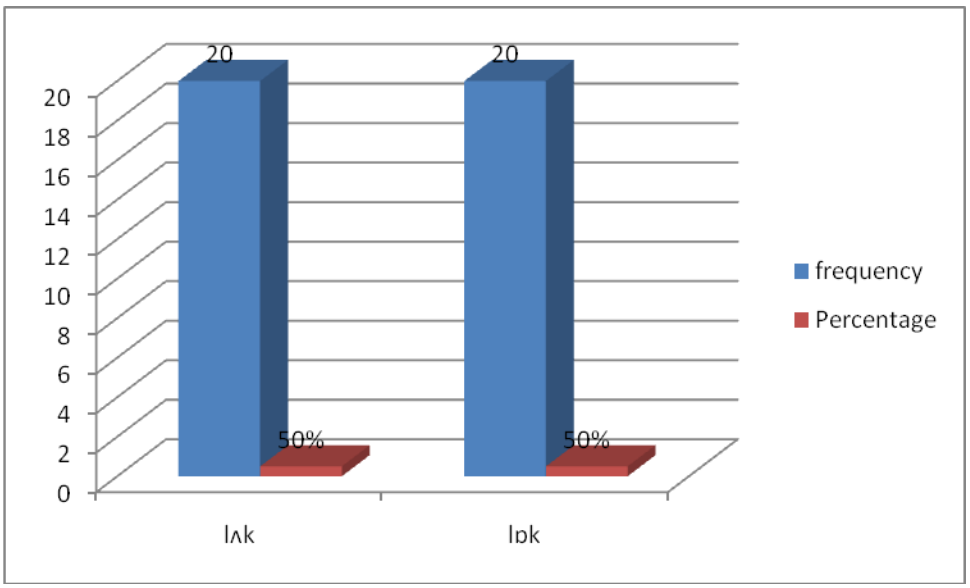

Figure 10:Percentage and number of subjects’ choice of the transcribed words /lʌk/ and /lɒk/

Interestingly, the above results show a balance between respondents who chose the right and wrong pronunciation

4.3.11. The word “low”:

Transcription	Frequency	Percentage
/lɔ:/	13	32.5%
/ləʊ/	27	67.5%

Table 13: Subjects’ pronunciation of the words “low”

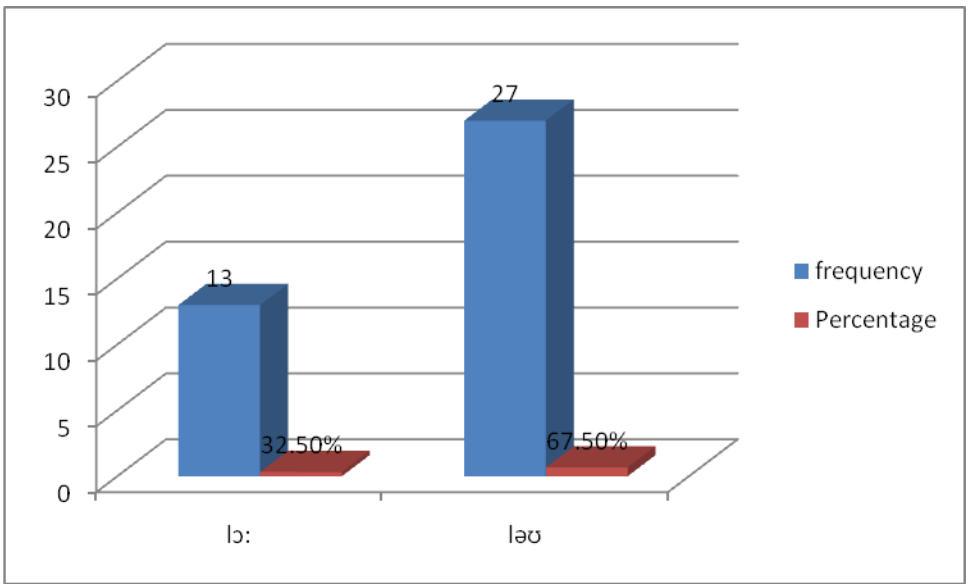

Figure 11: Percentage and number of subjects’ choice of the transcribed words/lɔ:/ and /ləʊ/

Here we see that 27 of the respondents chose the correct transcription of the word “low” whereas 13 chose the incorrect transcription

4.3.12. The word “heart”:

Transcription	Frequency	Percentage
/hɜ:rt/	20	51.3%
/ha:t/	19	48.7%

Table 14: Subjects’ pronunciation of the words “heart”

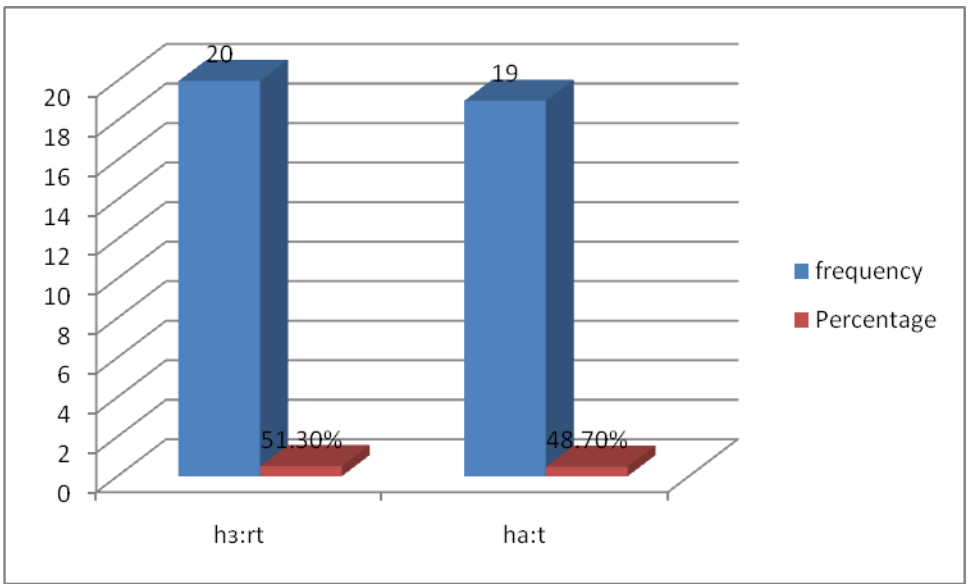

Figure 12: Percentage and number of subjects’ choice of the transcribed words/hɜ:rt/ and /ha:t/

According to the table andfiguer above, it is clear that 21out of 40 respondents chose the wrong transcription of the word “heart”. And the others chose the right one.

4.3.13. The word “eyes”:

Transcription	Frequency	Percentage
/aɪz/	31	79.5%
/aɪs/	8	20.5%

Table 15: Subjects’ pronunciation of the words “eyes”

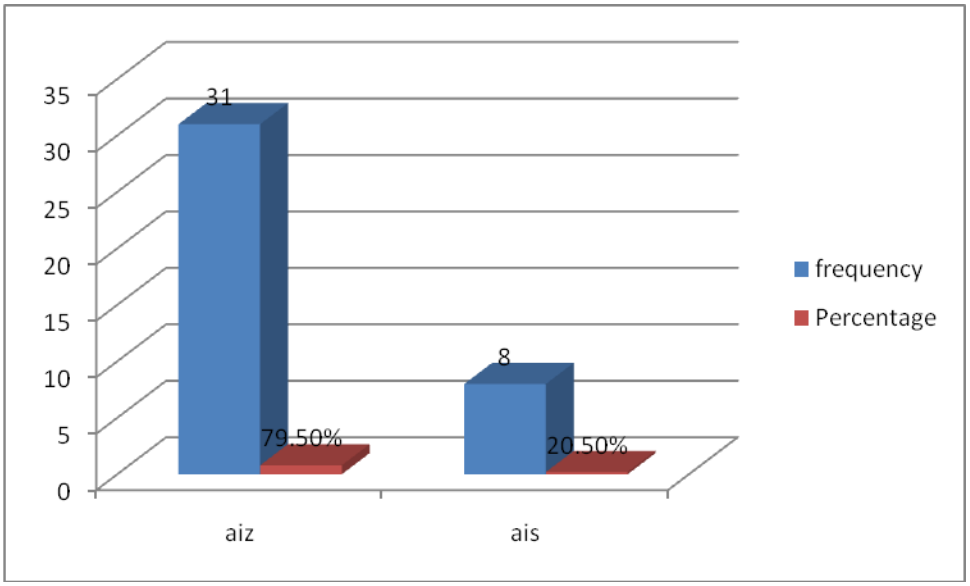

Figure 13: Percentage and number of subjects’ choice of the transcribed words/aɪz/ and /aɪs/

From the table and figure above, there is no point of difficulty here for the target group because those who chose the correct transcription were 79% and the incorrect one were 20%.

4.3.14. The word “quiet”:

Transcription	Frequency	Percentage
/kwaɪt/	28	71.8%
/kwaɪət/	11	28.2%

Table 16: Subjects’ pronunciation of the words “quiet”

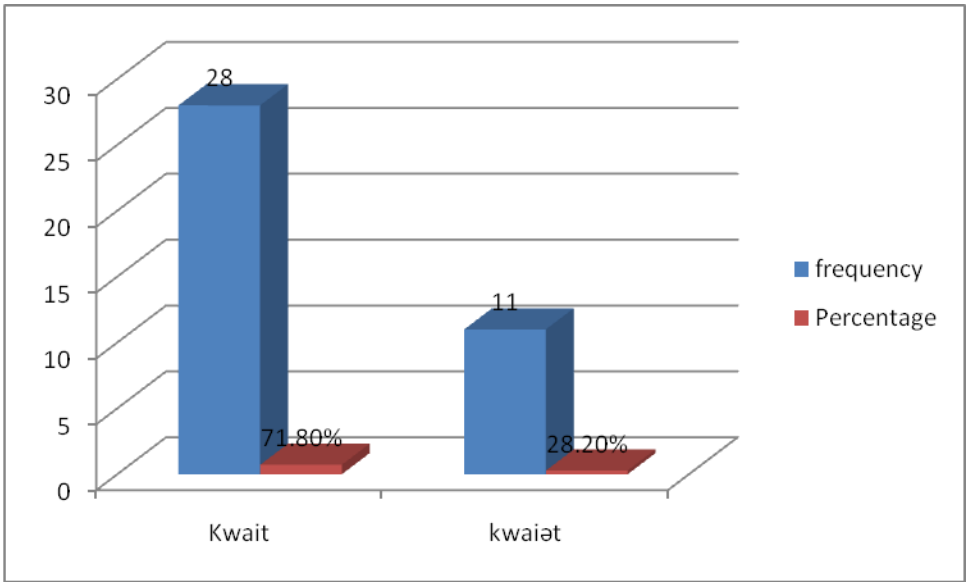

Figure 14: Percentage and number of subjects’ choice of the transcribed words/kwaɪt/ and /kwaɪət/

From this table and figure it is clear that 71.8% chose the wrong answer, while 28.2% chose the right one. Thus it is very clear that this word represent a point of difficulty.

4.3. 15. The word “ear”:

Transcription	Frequency	Percentage
/ɪə/	3	7.5%
/jɪə/	37	92.5%

Table 17: Subjects’ pronunciation of the words “ear”

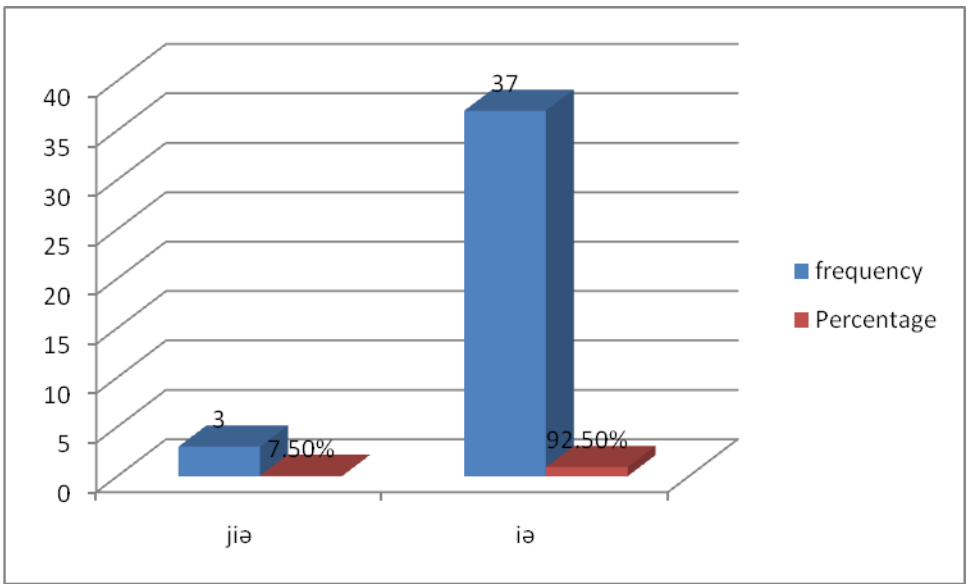

Figure 15: Percentage and number of subjects’ choice of the transcribed words/ɪə/ and /jɪə/

Here, without doubt it is seen that 37 out of 40 respondents chose the right transcription for the word “ear”, only 3 were mistaken.

4.3.16. The word “pepper”:

Transcription	Frequency	Percentage
/pepə/	19	47.5%
/peɪpə/	21	52.5%

Table 18**:** Subjects’ pronunciation of the words “pepper”

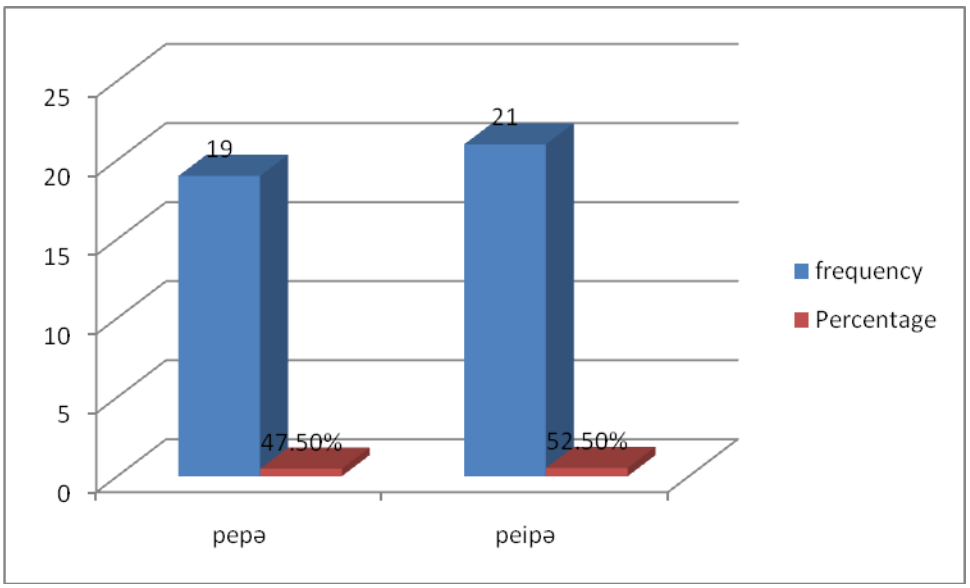

Figure 16:Percentage and number of subjects’ choice of the transcribed words/pepə/ and /peɪpə/

The above table shows that the correct transcription of the word “pepper” was the choice of 21 respondents and the rest chose the wrong transcription.

4.3.17. The word “sank”:

Transcription	Frequency	Percentage
/θæŋk/	8	20.5%
/sæŋk/	31	79.5%

Table 19: Subjects’ pronunciation of the words “sank”

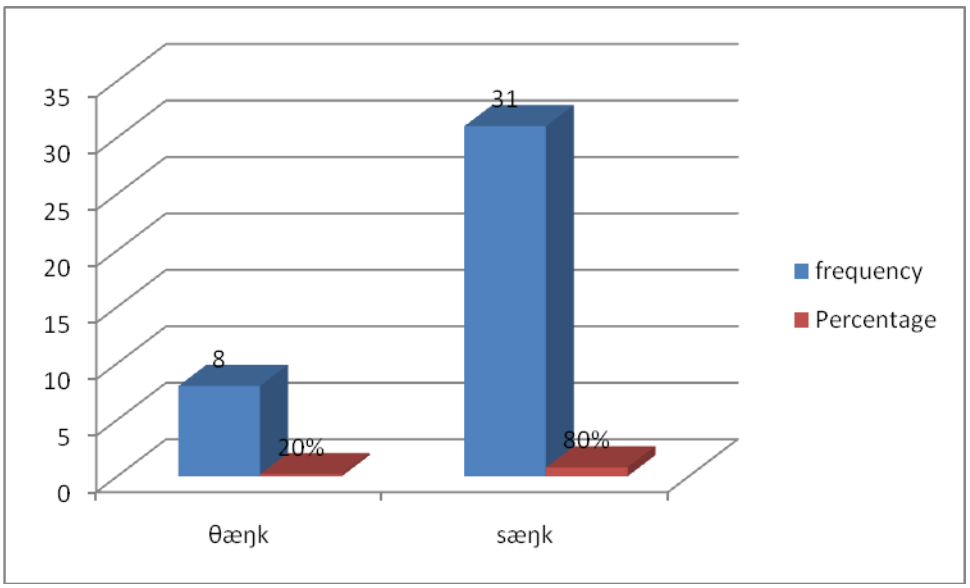

Figure 17: Percentage and number of subjects’ choice of the transcribed words/θæŋk/ and /sæŋk/

From the table above it is obvious that most of the respondents chose the correct transcription of the word “sank” and only 8 chose the wrong one.

4.3.18. The word “rip”:

Transcription	Frequency	Percentage
/rɪp/	32	82.3%
/rɪb/	7	17.7%

Table 20: Subjects’ pronunciation of the words “rip”

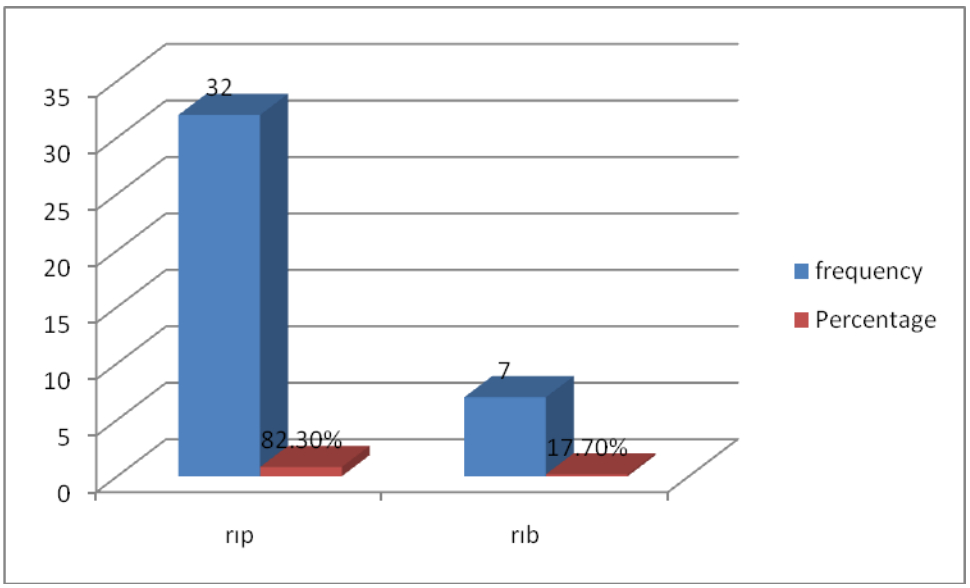

Figure 18: Percentage and number of subjects’ choice of the transcribed words/rɪp/ and /rɪb/

From the table above we see that 32 out of 40 respondents chose the right transcription of the word “rip” and only 7 chose the incorrect transcription.

4.3.19. The word “breeze”:

Transcription	Frequency	Percentage
/brɪ:ð/	13	32.5%
/brɪ:z/	27	67.5%

Table 21: Subjects’ pronunciation of the words “breeze”

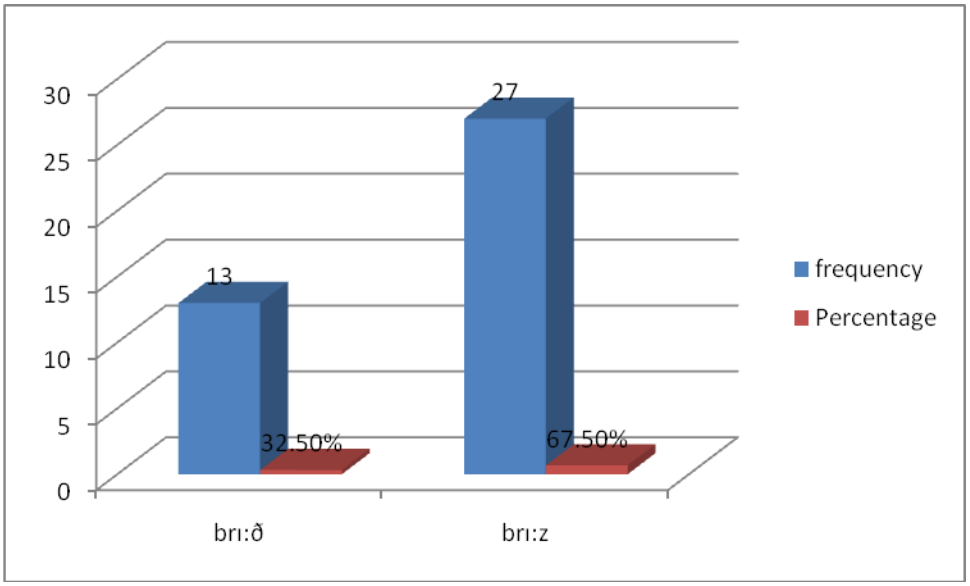

Figure 19: Percentage and number of subjects’ choice of the transcribed words/brɪ:ð/ and /brɪ:z/

From the table above it is clear that most of the respondents agreed that the correct transcription of the word “breeze” was /bri:z/ while few think that the correct transcription was/ brɪ:ð/.

4.3.20. The word “have”:

Transcription	Frequency	Percentage
/hæv/	34	85%
/hæf/	6	15%

Table 22: Subjects’ pronunciation of the words “have”

Figure (21)

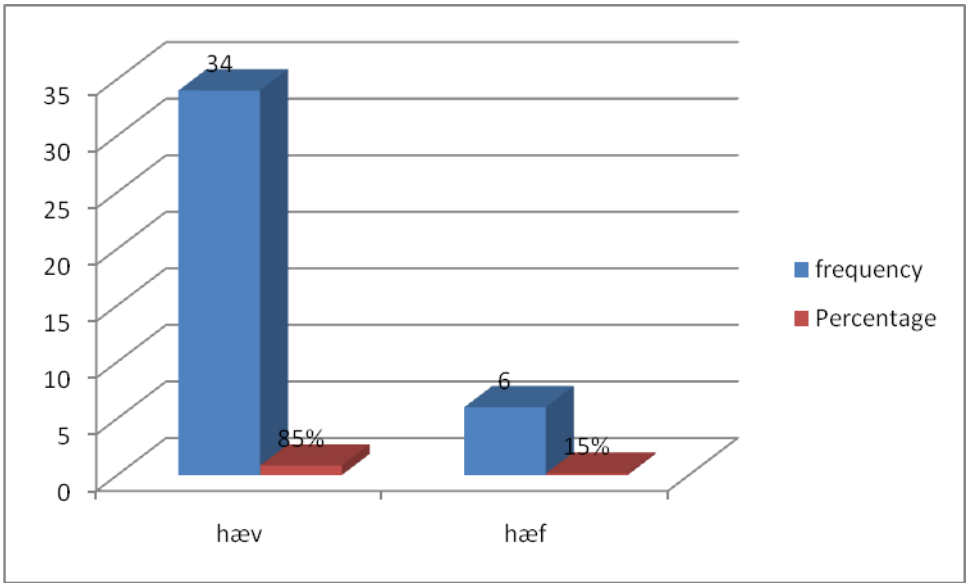

Figure 20: Percentage and number of subjects’ choice of the transcribed words/hæv/ and /hæf/

This table shows that the respondents chose the correct transcription of the word “have” and only 6 of the total number were mistaken.

4.3.21. The word “merry”:

Transcription	Frequency	Percentage
/merɪ/	33	84.6%
/mærɪ/	6	15.4%

Table 23: Subjects’ pronunciation of the words “merry”

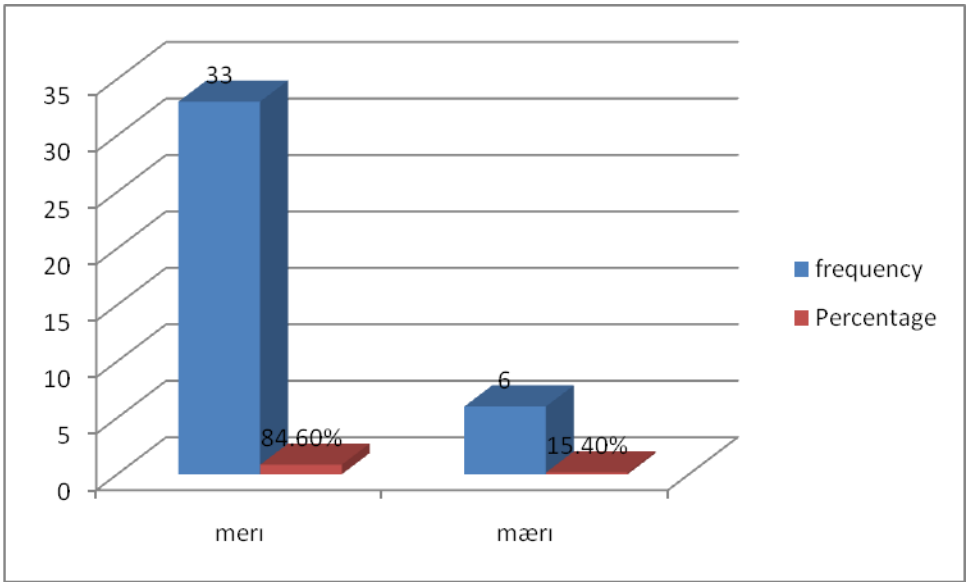

Figure 21: Percentage and number of subjects’ choice of the transcribed words/merɪ/ and /mærɪ/

From the table above it is clear that most of the respondents chose the correct transcription while, 6 of them chose the incorrect transcription.

4.3.22. The word “well”:

Transcription	Frequency	Percentage
/wel/	25	62.5%
/wɪl/	15	37.5%

Table 24: Subjects’ pronunciation of the words “well”

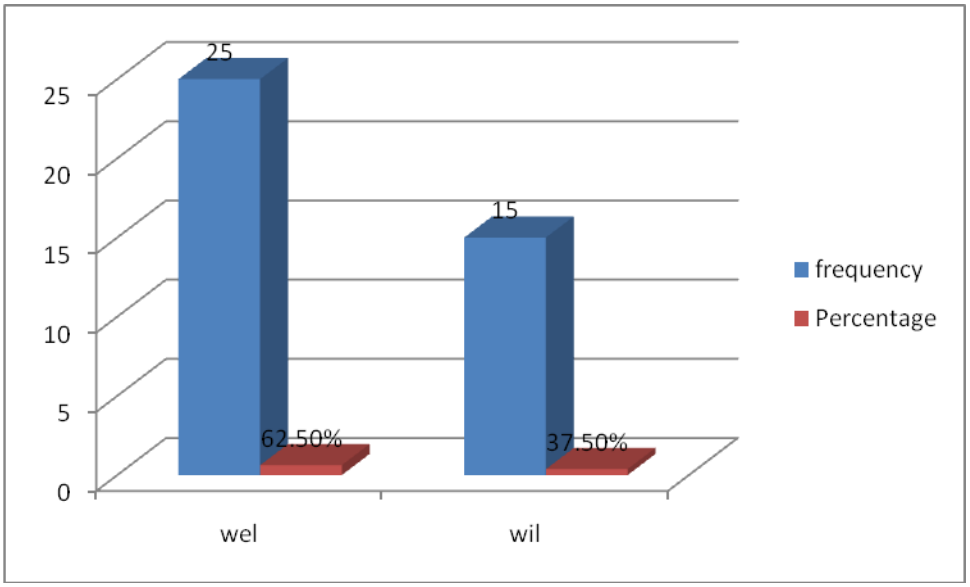

Figure 22: Percentage and number of subjects’ choice of the transcribed words/wel/ and /wɪl/

Here we see that 25 was the percentage of the respondents who chose the correct transcription and 15 was the percentage of those who chose the wrong transcription.

4.3. 23. The word “rope”:

Transcription	Frequency	Percentage
/rəʊp/	31	77.5%
/rɒp/	9	22.5%

Table 25: Subjects’ pronunciation of the words “rope”

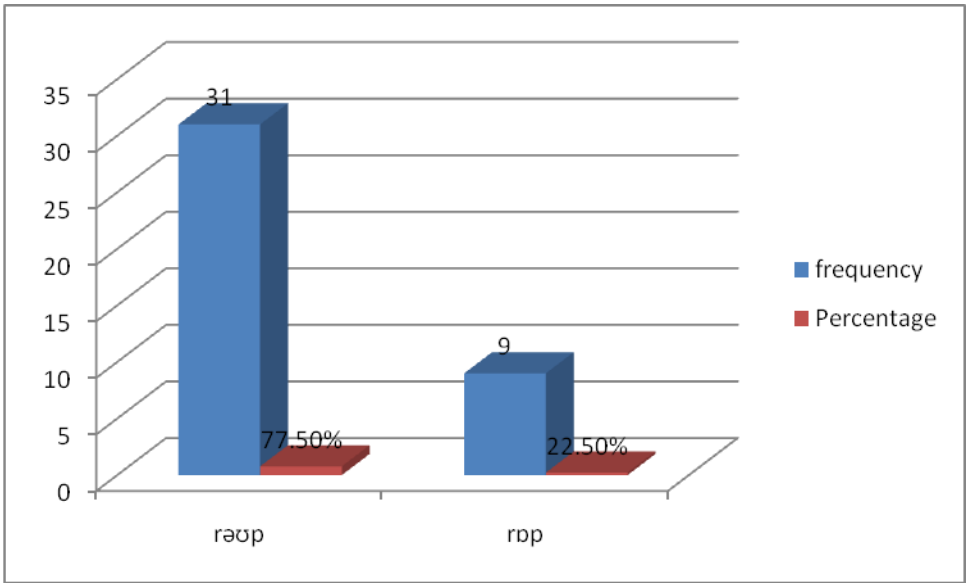

Figure 23: Percentage and number of subjects’ choice of the transcribed words/rəʊp/ and /rɒp/

This table shows that most of the respondents chose the right pronunciation of the word “rope” and few chose the wrong one.

4.3.24. The word “won’t” :

Transcription	Frequency	Percentage
/wəʊnt/	25	65.8%
/wɒnt/	13	34.2%

Table 26: Subjects’ pronunciation of the words “won’t”

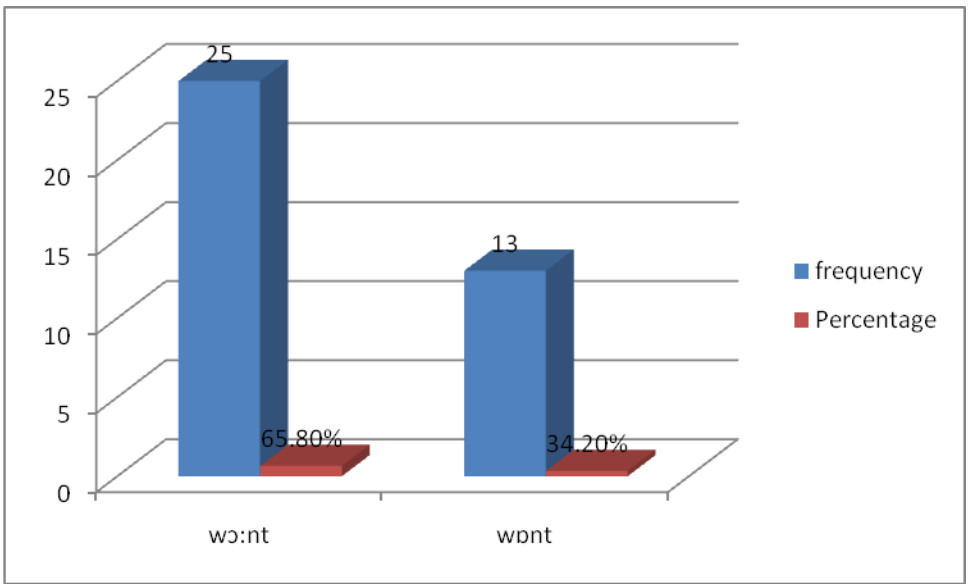

Figure 24: Percentage and number of subjects’ choice of the transcribed words /wəʊnt/ and /wɒnt/

As we see the above table shows that most of the respondents chose the incorrect transcription, and few chose the incorrect one.

4.3.25. The word “luck”:

Transcription	Frequency	Percentage
/lɒk/	7	17.5%
/lʌk/	33	82.5%

Table 27: Subjects’ pronunciation of the words “luck”

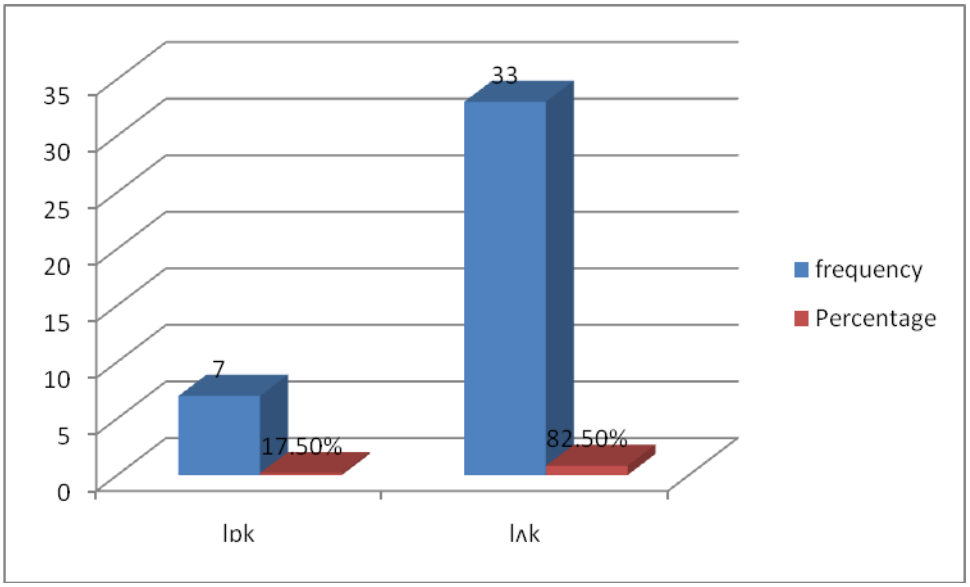

Figure 25: Percentage and number of subjects’ choice of the transcribed words/lɒk/ and /lʌk/

From the table above it is clear that most of the respondents chose the correct transcription of the word “luck”.

4.3.26. The word “law”:

Transcription	Frequency	Percentage
/ləʊ/	22	56.4%
/lɔ:/	17	43.6%

Table 28: Subjects’ pronunciation of the words “law”

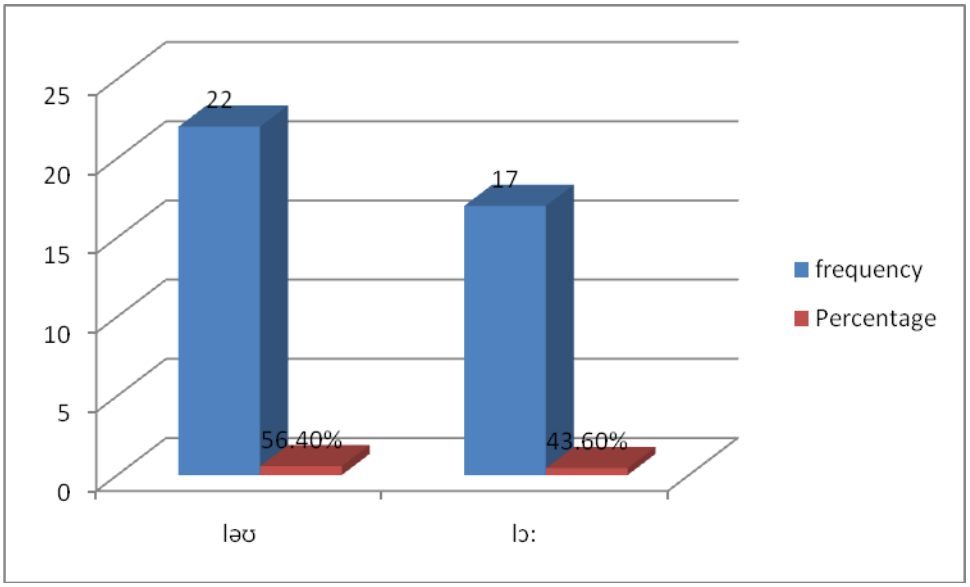

Figure 26: Percentage and number of subjects’ choice of the transcribed words /ləʊ/ and /lɔ:/

The table above shows that respondents who chose the correct transcription were less than those who chose the right transcription.

4.3.27. The word “hurt”:

Transcription	Frequency	Percentage
/hərt/	22	57.9%
/hɜ:t/	16	42.1%

Table 29: Subjects’ pronunciation of the words “hurt”

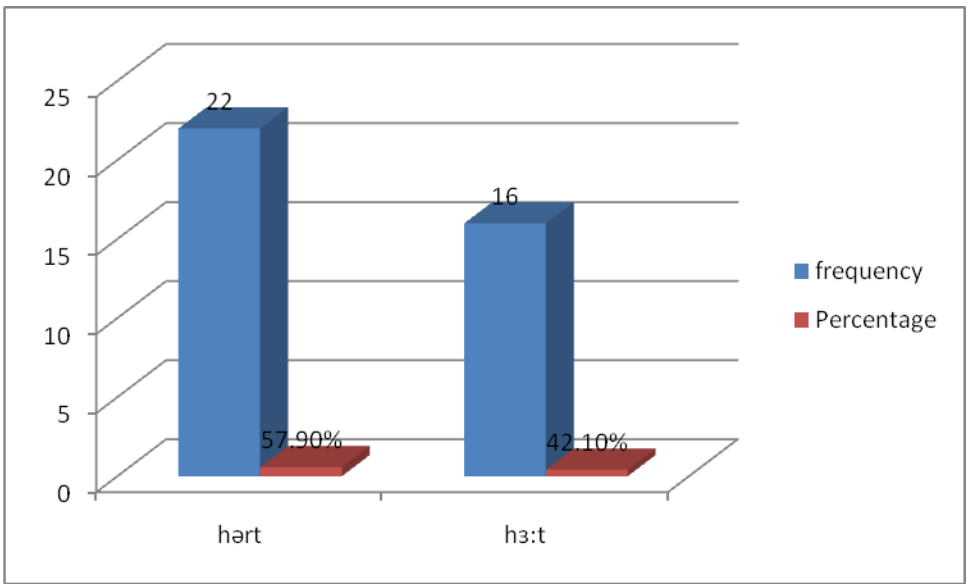

Figure 27: Percentage and number of subjects’ choice of the transcribed words /hərt/ and /hɜ:t/

From the table above it is obvious that most of the respondents believe that the correct transcription of the word “hurt” is /hərt/ and those who chose the right transcription were fewer.

4.3.28. The word “ice”:

Transcription	Frequency	Percentage
/aɪs/	28	71.8%
/aɪz/	11	28.2%

Table30: Subjects’ pronunciation of the words “ice”

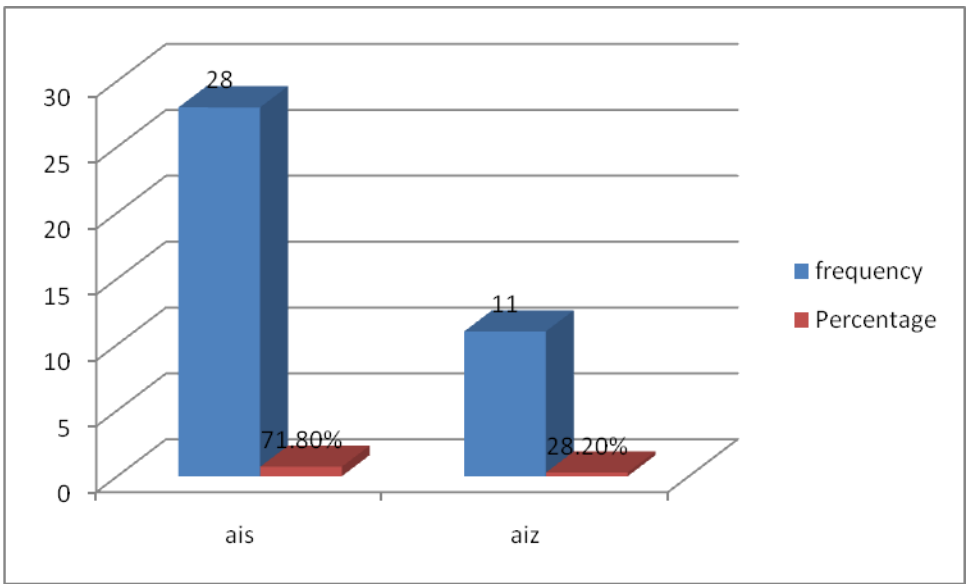

Figure 28: Percentage and number of subjects’ choice of the transcribed words/aɪs/ and /aɪz/

From the table above it is clear that most of the respondents were able to choose the correct transcription.

4.3.29. The word “quite”:

Transcription	Frequency	Percentage
/waɪt/	31	79.5%
/kwaɪət/	8	20.5%

Table31: Subjects’ pronunciation of the words “quite”

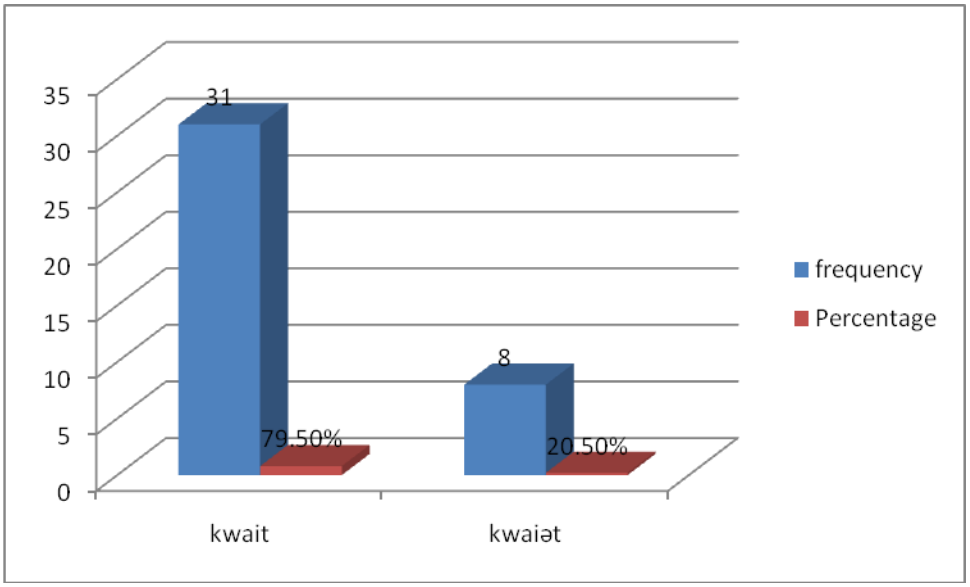

Figure 29: Percentage and number of subjects’ choice of the transcribed words /waɪt/ and /kwaɪət/

From the table above it is clear that most of the respondents chose the correct transcription while 8 chose the incorrect one.

4.3.30. The word “year”:

Transcription	Frequency	Percentage
/ɪə/	20	51.3%
/jɪə/	19	48.7%

Table32: Subjects’ pronunciation of the words “year”

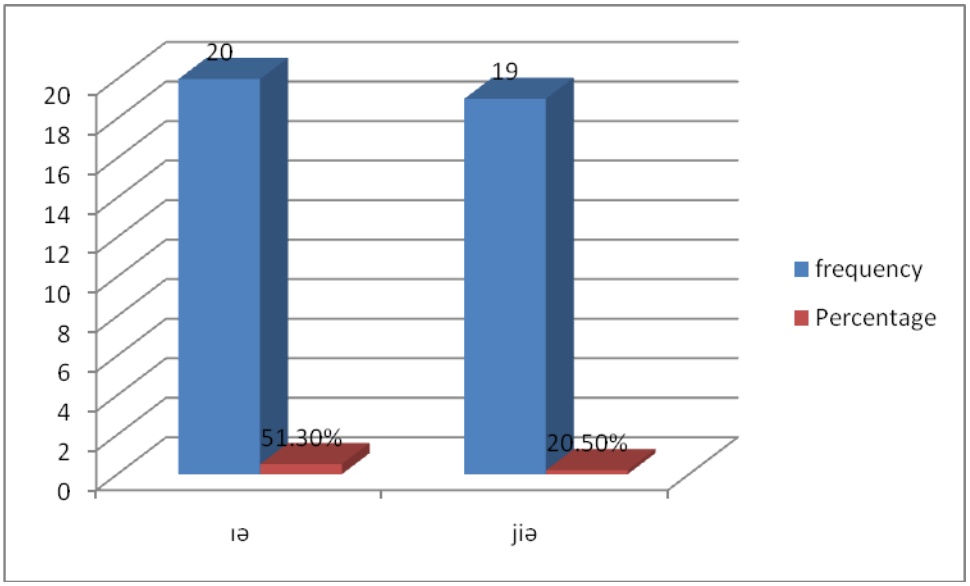

Figure 30: Percentage and number of subjects’ choice of the transcribed words /ɪə/ and /jɪə/

From the table above, one can see that respondents who chose the right transcription exceeded the number of those who chose the wrong one by only one participant.

4.4. Four English consonants are replaced by four Arabic consonants (ض/dˤ/ , (ظ/ðˤ/), (ط/tˤ/), (/sˤ/ص)

4.4.1. The initial sound in the word "done" is pronounced with Arabic (ض) instead of / d /:

Options	Frequency	Percentage
Agree	35	87.5%
Neutral	4	10%
Disagree	1	2.5%

Table 33: shows "done" is pronounced with Arabic (ض) by 87.5%

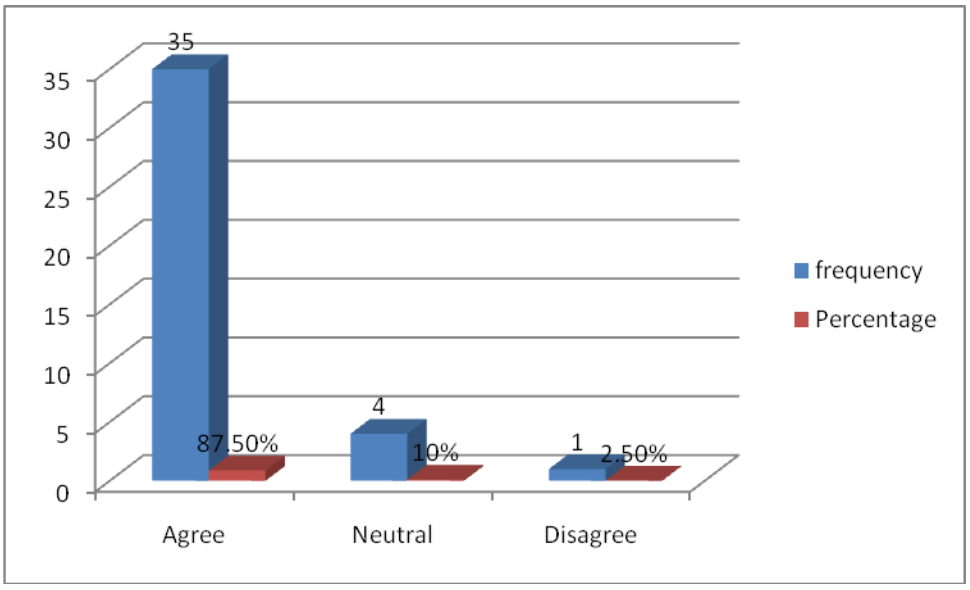

Figure 31: Percentage and number of subject's agreement that is /d/ replaced by /ض /

From the table and figure above, we find that most of the respondents agreed that the initial sound in words like "done" was pronounced with Arabic consonant (ض/dˤ/)

4.4.2. The consonant sound /ð / in word like father is pronounced (ظ):

Options	Frequency	Percentage
Agree	33	82.5%
Neutral	6	15%
Disagree	1	2.5%

Table 34: shows /ð / is pronounced (ظ) by 82% of the subjects

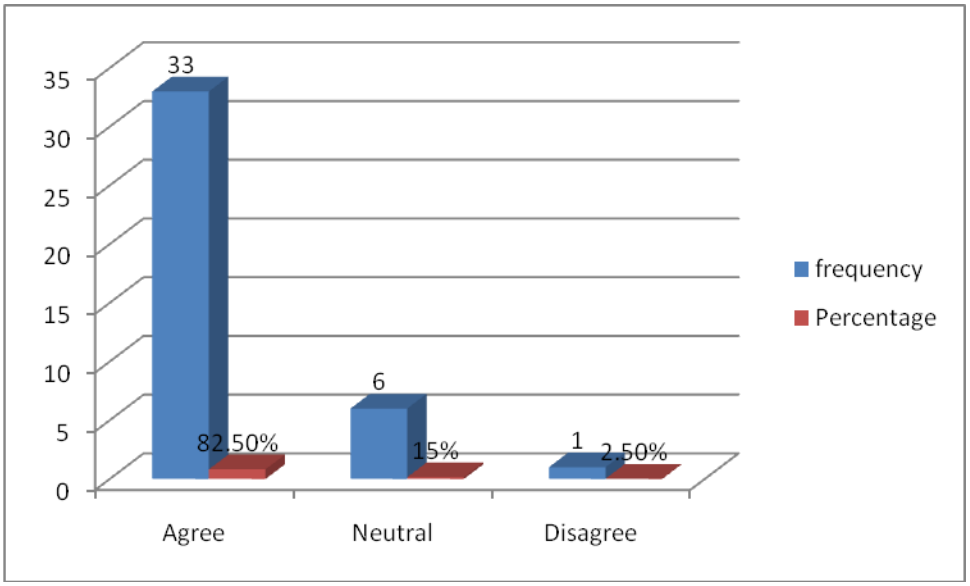

Figure 32: Percentage and number of subject's agreement that is /ð / replaced by /ظ/

From the table and figure above it's clear that most of the respondents agreed that words like (was, father, mother) are pronounced with the Arabic (ظ/ðˤ/), instead of the English consonant sound / ð /.

4.4.3.The initial sound in the word talk is replaced by the Arabic (ط):

Options	Frequency	Percentage
Agree	18	45%
Neutral	14	35%
Disagree	8	20%

Table 35: shows that 45% of subjects agreed is /t/ is replaced by/ ط /

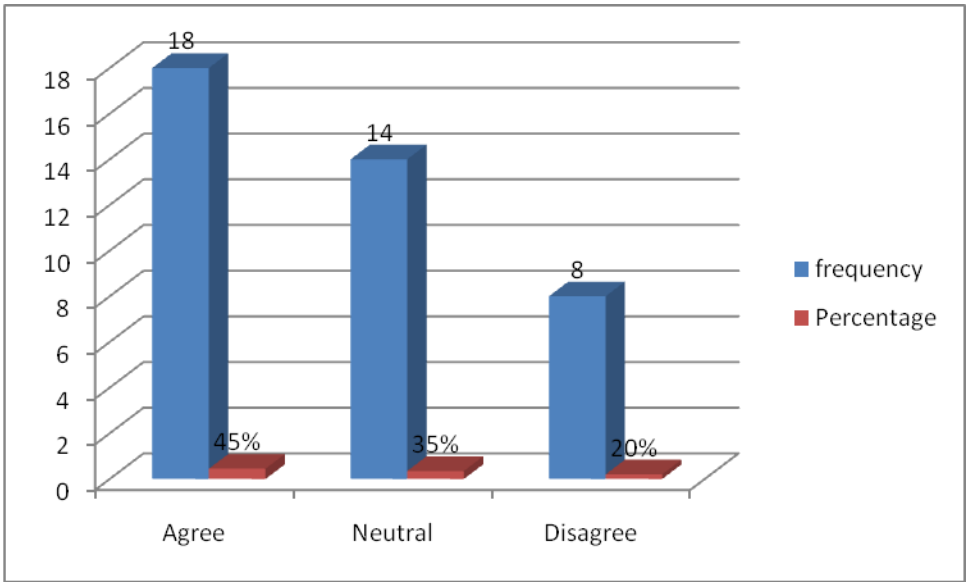

Figure 33: Percentage and number of subject's agreement that /t/ is replaced by ط /

The table and figure above also make it clear that there are some respondents who were neutral but still the percentage of those who agreed that the Arabic consonant sound do exist in such word is more than those who were neutral.

4.4.4. The initial sound in the word summary, sun is replaced by the Arabic (ص):

Options	Frequency	Percentage
Agree	34	85%
Neutral	4	10%
Disagree	2	5%

Table 36: shows that 85% of subjects agreed that /s/ is replaced by(ص)

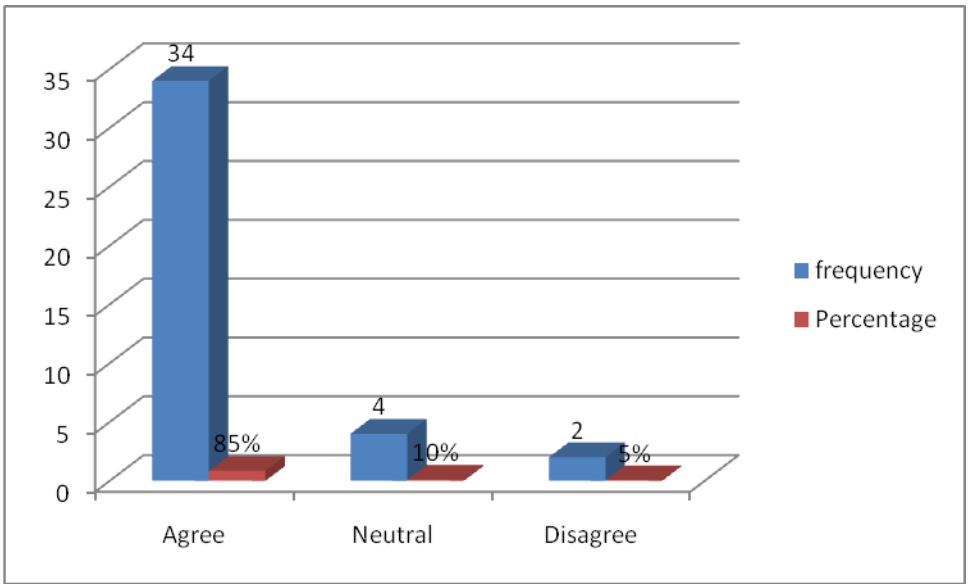

Figure 34: Percentage of subject's agreement that/s/ is replaced by(ص)

From the table and figure above it's also clear that most of the respondents agreed that the consonant sound /s/ in words like sum, sun, something, was replaced by the Arabic consonant sound /ص/.

4.5 Analysis and discussion of results

The word	incorrect pronunciation	Percentage	Correct pronunciation	Percentage
1-Paper	/pepə/	40%	/peipə/	60%
2-Thank	/sæŋk/	10%	/θæŋk/	85%
3- Rip	/rɪb/	15%	/rɪp/	82%
4-Breathe	/brɪ:z/	30%	/brɪ:ð/	67.5%
5-Half	/hæv/	20%	/ha:f/	80%
6-Marry	/merɪ/	50%	/mærɪ/	50%
7-Question	/kwetʃən/	67.5%	/kwestʃən/	32.5%
8-Rob	/rəʊb/	43.6%	/rɒb/	56.4%
9-Want	/wəʊnt/	47.5%	/wɒnt/	52.5%
10-Lock	/lʌk/	50%	/lɒk/	50%
11-Low	/lɔ:/	32.5%	/ləʊ/	67.5%
12-Heart	/hɜ:rt/	51.3%	/ha:t/	48.7%
13-Eyes	/aɪs/	20.5%	/aɪz/	79.5%
14-Quiet	/kwaɪt/	71.8%	/kwaɪət/	28.2%
15-Ear	/ɪə/	7.5%	/jɪə/	92.5%
16-Pepper	/peɪpə/	52.5%	/pepə/	47.5%
17-Sank	/θæŋk/	20.5%	/sæŋk/	79.5%
18-Rib	/rɪp/	17.7%	/rɪb/	82.3%
19-Breeze	/brɪ:ð/	32.5%	/brɪ:z/	67.5%
20Have	/hæf/	15%	/hæv/	85%
21-Merry	/mærɪ/	15.4%	/merɪ/	84.6%
22-Well	/wɪl/	37.5%	/wel/	62.5%
23-Rope	/rɒp/	22.5%	/rəʊp/	77.5%
24-Won’t	/wɒnt/	34.2%	/wəʊnt/	65.8%

25-Luck	/lɒk/	17.5%	/lʌk/	82.5%
26-Law	/ləʊ/	56.4%	/lɔ:/	43.6%
27-Hurt	/hərt/	57.9%	/hɜ:t/	42.1%
28-Ice	/aɪz/	28.2%	/aɪs/	71.8%
29-Quite	/kwaɪət/	20.5%	/waɪt/	79.5%
30-Year	/ɪə/	51.3%	/jɪə/	48.7%

Table 37: presents summary of the results of written question

4. 6. Comparing the results of the written questionnaire to the results of the audio recorded one

4.6. 1 The word " paper"

As it was mentioned earlier, the written questionnaire was intended to test the study populations' phonetics background. In this chapter the researcher will compare the two questionnaires as the presentation in table (37) above shows a number of differences. First, the word "paper" those who pronounced it correctly were only 3 out of 15 while in the written 60%chose the correct transcription.

It can be seen in the above table that 60% of the participants chose the right pronunciation while 40% chose the incorrect transcription, Hassan (2014) conducted a study and the subjects were Sudanese learners of English at Sudan University of Science and Technology, and found that his subjects replace /e/ with /ei/ as in let, late, and in the present study also the participants are Sudanese learners. When the researcher did the recording sessions, it was found that 10 out of 15 of the participants mispronounced it therefore, it is clear that they face the same problem .

4.6.2 The words "Thank" and "Sank"

Let's now take words "thank" and "sank", as mentioned earlier participants confused the pronunciation of "thank" with "sank", since

those who chose the incorrect transcription were 10% and the correct were 85% while in the audio recording sessions it was found that 8 of participants pronounced the word "thank" as /sænk/with /s/ instead of /θ/. Hassan (2014) found that his subjects don't differentiate between (s-sound and θ -sound) so they usually use /s/ instead of /θ/ when asked to pronounce words like (bath, math, theatre) When they pronounce them, they replace the dental /θ/ with the alveolar /s/ so they pronounce them as (bas, mas, seatre). Although the sound /θ/ does exist in the L1 of the participants but they use /s/ instead. The researcher whose L 1 is Arabic, actually investigated the Arabic language and found that /س/=/s/ was also used instead of /ث/=/ θ/ for example, ثم /θʊmə/is pronounced سم/sʊmə/. According to (Fred and Eckman, 1992) in their thorough discussion of hypercorrection they found that errors of SLA(second language acquisition) occur under the condition of that at least one of the phonemes in contrast being acquired exists in NL(native language) on this condition NL rule that is transferred into SL(second language).

4.6.3 The words "Rip" and "Rib"

Now take words **"Rip"** and**"Rib"** , the percentage clarifies that there was no difficulty in choosing the correct transcription of the words but when we did the audio recording all participants except number 1, pronounced the/ p/ in rip as /b/ and did the same in all words that contain the sound/p/. According to(Alkhuli, 1983) noted that Arab learners of English confuse /p/ with /b/ and that is linked to the influence of the mother tongue, so their tongues get stiff with their LI sounds, and they continue to make errors until they master L2 sounds. So what happened here is because the consonant /p/ does not exists in the L1 of participants

and this process is called **merging** which is defined by "(Yoshida ,2014, p.205) as follows:

> "*When learners hear unfamiliar sounds in a new language, they tend to interpret the sounds of the new language in terms of the categories of their original language. Therefore in both cases participants pronounced /b/ sound which both L1 and L2 have in as phonemes".*

4.6.4Thewords "Breathe" and "Breeze"

The final sound in the word "breathe" was pronounced as /z/ by 6 of the participants and as /s/ by 2. In the written questionnaire those who chose the correct transcription were 67.5%. According to (Hassan 2014) found that the consonants /z/ and /s/ are usually used in the place of /ð/ and /θ/ which results from the interference of Sudanese spoken Arabic. /ð/ and /θ/ exist in some forms of Arabic e.g. (Iraqi, Saudi Arabian, Kuwaiti, etc); however, they do not exist in Sudanese dialect where they are replaced by /s/ and /z/. Another study on the effect of sound system on learning pronunciation was done by (Alkhuli, 1983) who showed that the main problem in teaching and learning English pronunciation results from the differences in the sound system of English and the native language, so a speaker of Sudanese Spoken Arabic is not accustomed to pronounce for instance θ -sound and ð-sound, because they do not found in their native language. This means that the organs of speech of the learner are not trained to produce such sound systems because they are unfamiliar to them; that is why they use the nearest sounds such as /s/ and /z/. About the same area of the study Cruttenden (1994)noted that in the field of (SLA), learners with different linguistic backgrounds would of course face different difficulties in order to produce English sounds,

because of the differences between the two languages (e.g. English and Arabic).These differences between the sound systems are regarded as a barrier against competence in the pronunciation of English, because the new sounds still remain strange for their organs of speech specially if they start learning English after the age of adulthood, but this problem is expected to be solved after a long time of regular practice and hard work.In the L1 of the participants both sounds do exist but again Sudanese spoken Arabic (participants L1) the consonant / ð / tend not to use the sound and so they transfer that into English which appears as negative transfer.

4.6.5 The words "Half " and "Have"

The word "have" is pronounced like "half" that's to say the sound /v/ is pronounced as /f/. Yoshida ,2014:193) defines substitution as,

> *When learners hear a new sound that doesn't match any of the sounds they know, they often substitute a familiar sound that is somewhat similar and easier for them to produce.*

For example, the first sound in **th**ink and **th**ree(is found in relatively few languages in the world. Speakers of languages that do not have this sound often substitute /s/, /f/, or /t/ so that *think* sounds like *sink*, *fink*, or *tink*. In support of this (Yoshida ,2014: 194) states,

> *The processes of substitution and merging can cause serious problems for learners' intelligibility. When listeners expect to hear one sound but actually hear a different one, communication can break down. Even when teachers make learners aware of what's happening, it's difficult not to fall into one of these traps*.

Two of the participants pronounced "half" with /f/ while, "have" was pronounced as /hæf/ by also two of the participants. But when it came to choosing the correct transcription 80% of participants selected the correct transcription. Another problem arose in pronouncing "half" is that the silent letter "l" was clearly pronounced by 10 of the participants so the word seemed very odd when a participant pronounced it.

4.6. 6 The words "Marry " and "merry"

According to the written questionnaire the percentage here is 50% for each of the above words however, the case is different when it came to the audio recording test which showed that 11 out of 15 participants had pronounced the word marry with /e/ instead of /æ/, so that the hypothesis is confirmed.

4.6. 7 The words "Well " and "Will"

Regarding the word "well" and "will"it was found that half of the participants pronounced it with short vowel /i/ so that participants pronunciation for the two words was the same while, in the written questionnaire those who chose the correct transcription were 62,5% ; according to the contrastive analysis approach, the presence of phonemes in L2 that do not occur in the L1 necessarily represents a learning problem, because the learner's response may be to use the closest L1 phoneme (in the above case we found that /e/ was replaced by /i/) as a "substitute" for the unfamiliar L2 phoneme(Lehiste 1988). Hassan (2014) stated

*"Most of the Sudanese Students of English face such problem because in Arabic the vowel system is very simple and the learner can read an Arabic word easily without any confusion, but in English he may pronounce /i/ for /e/ for example /sit/, /set/."(*p.5)

4.6. 8 The word "Question"

Only one of the participants had pronounced it correctly but the remaining 14 faced difficulty in pronouncing the middle part of it which is, /..stʃ../; three have pronounced this part by omitting the / t /, 7 omitted /s/ and 2 pronounced it with only /ʃ/ omitting both /t/ and /s/. according to the written transcription the percentage of those who chose the incorrect pronunciation was 67,5% which mean that the participants' knowledge was fairly adequate to let them know the correct pronunciation but, the problem was with their performance (to practice such as loud reading) as it was mentioned earlier the total neglect of the speaking skill was behind such problems.In addition to the past works, O'Connor(2003); Yule (2003) have studied pronunciation problems and the influence of LI. So many sounds such as /p/ and /b/, /s/ and /θ/, /z/ and /ð/, /tʃ/ and /ʃ/, /v/ and /b/ are confused e.g. (pit / bit), (thin / sin), (question /action), (very / berry).

4.6. 9 The words "Rob " and "Rope"

Only one of the participants pronounced "rob" with the diphthong /əʊ/ instead of /ɒ/ and 4 have pronounced "rope" with short /ɒ/ instead of /əʊ/ so it was clear that most of the participants mispronounced both words. As can be seen from the percentage that 56% chose the right transcription, and this supports the aforementioned problem which was lack of practice and it also due to the fact that the short vowel /ɒ/ doesn't

exist in participants' L1(Arabic) so both issues were the reason behind those errors.

4.6. 10 The words "Want " and "Won't"

Two of the participants pronounced "want" as /wəʊnt/ instead of /wɒnt/ and it was clear from the results of the written questionnaire that even the 52% of participants who have prior knowledge of the right transcription were unable to produce the correct pronunciation of, so again practice is more important than just knowing.

Yoshida(2014) mentioned that,

> *according to the world Atlas of language structure online , the average number of vowels in the language of the world is five or six. English has more than twice that number! And vowels that are found in English but not in the learner's language are often challenging since the learner's tongue and lips need to get used to moving into unfamiliar position and new combinations of movement .(p.52)*

4.6. 11 The words "Lock " and "Luck"

Seven of the participants pronounced *lock* as / lʌk /with/ʌ/ while "luck" was pronounced correctly except one produced it with /əʊ/. But what was surprising is that in responding to the written questionnaire only half of participants chose the right transcription for the word "lock" so this result is in line with hypothesis (see table 37 above)

A number of reasons were said to be behind the substitution of L1 and L2 sounds because according to Flege (1987) the phonetic category

established in childhood for an L1 sound developed to specify somewhat longer or shorter sound.

One of the important problems faced by the students of English in general and the Sudanese students of English in particular, is that each English vowel sound has more than just one pronunciation. So this causes many difficulties to the learners and leads them to a mispronunciation Cruttenden (1994) noted that the main difficulty for all those whose own languages have a less complex vowel system, lies in the establishment of the qualitative oppositions. Instead of using the exact quality and quantity of a special sound, the learner erroneously changes either the quality or the quantity of the sound; so in a certain word the learner tends to use the variant sounds e.g. in words like son/s ʌ n/, come /k ʌ m/, among /əm ʌ ŋ/, monkey /m ʌ nki/, blood /bl ʌ d/, flood /flʌd/; in all these words /o/ and /oo/ stand for the same sound of /ʌ /, but most of the learners, unless they have a mastery of the pronunciation of such vowels, they pronounce /ɔ/ or /u:/ in the place of /ʌ / .This is because of their first background about each sound, so they picture this thought in their minds as if each vowel has only one type of pronunciation and if that is true the learner can easily know and expect how to pronounce each word even if s/he is seeing it for the first time. That is if each letter represents only one phoneme, but in fact the situation is not like this, and that is one of the basic problems of English.

4.6. 12 The words “Low ” and “Law”

It was found that 11 students had pronounced “law” as “low” and only two pronounced it with /aʊ/ and /a:/. The table above shows percentage of participants who chose the correct pronunciation of the word “*low”* was 67.5% and the incorrect was 32.5% this also indicates that students

awareness of the transcription was good but the problem seems to be lack of practice.

O'Connor (2003) reported that it is not simple to know the exact sounds the letters stand for or represent in a certain word for instance in the words city /siti/, busy /bizi/, women /wimin/, pretty /priti /, village /vilidʒ/, English /i ŋ gliʃ/ the letters y, u, o, a, e, all of them stands for the same vowel sound /i/. In words like, banana /bəna:nə/bather /beiðə /(r)/, man /mæn/, many /meni/ the 'a' stands for five different vowels sound. The learner, who doesn't have sufficient knowledge of different pronunciations of the vowels above, meets some difficulty, since he uses different variants of their pronunciations.

4.6.13. The words "heart" and " hurt"

"Hurt" was pronounced by nine of the participants with long /a:/like hart, three with schwa =/ə/ one with /əʊ/, While "heart" was pronounced correctly by most students. The table illustrates that participants confused the transcription of **Heart /ha:rt/**with that of **hurt /h3:rt/** as it was seen that 48.7% the correct transcription and 51.3% selected the wrong transcription actually it the transcription of **hurt/h3:rt/**. Power (2003) found that there are 23 common pronunciation problems, some of them are related to vowels e.g. the students confuse /i/ with /i:/ as in sit, seat, and /ɔ/ with /əu/ as in not, note and / æ/ with /ei/ as in mat, mate and /e/ with /ei/ as in let, late.

4.6.14. The words "eyes" and "ice"

Five of the participants pronounced "eyes" ending with consonant /s/ instead of the /z/ so when the researcher had played back the recordings in both of the recording sessions he heard the consonant /s/. in a similar

case study investigated by Hassan (2014) found that most of his study subjects who were actually Sudanese students made errors in by replacing the sound /s/ with /z/ in final positions where a word ends in voiced sound.

4.6.15. The words “quiet” and “quite”

Here the researcher noticed that the two words were the most confused words in the research. In both sessions students pronounced “quite” that is, when you play back the recordings the pronunciation/kwait/ occurred in place where /kwaiə/ should occur. As seen from the table above, only (28.2%) of the participants were able to pronounce the target sound correctly and (71.8%) failed. Those who failed had actually chosen the transcription of word**quite** ,according to the researcher observation this happened because the word **quiet** student are not familiar with. Cruttenden (1994) noted that the main difficulty for all those whose own languages have a less complex vowel system, lies in the establishment of the qualitative oppositions. Instead of using the exact quality and quantity of a special sound, the learner erroneously changes either the quality or the quantity of the sound.

4.6.16. The words “ear” and “year”

All of the participants except two have pronounced/iə/ in both of the recording sessions, i.e “year” was pronounced as “ear”. Results of the questionnaire indicates that 92% failed to choose the correct transcription so, the pronunciation of the word **year** was thought to be the same as that of **ear.** According to Dickens (2007) the Sudanese vowel inventory contains five short vowels /i, u, a, e, o/ and five long vowels /i:, u:, a:, 3:, u:/, which uncontroversial form an extension of the short vowels .

However, in Sudanese Arabic, /e/ is also realized as a reduced form of /eI/, whilst /u/ is a reduced form of /aʊ/ and often realized as /u/. Moreover, in Sudanese urban Arabic there is alternation between /i/ and /j/ on the one hand, and between /u/ and /w/ on the other, depending on the position of /j/ or /w/ in the syllable. Since no vowels are possible in initial position in Arabic, the alternation is analyzed as an underlying phoneme /j/ which is realized as /i/ in nucleus position but remains a consonant /j/ in marginal position.According to the results above, it could then be said that the most of the participants do not have mastery on different pronunciations of vowels. The results of the recordings showed that 13 of the subjects failed to pronounce the target sound /j/ correctly in the word tutor so most of the students tend to pronounce it as / i/. The results of the questionnaire go in the same way with the results of the recorded test, so (92%).

4.7. Four English consonants replaced by non-existent Arabic consonants:

According to the results in chapter three and according to the last four hypotheses in the written questionnaire about particular consonants(/d/,/z/,/ð /,/t/) in words like (**d**one, fa**th**er**, s**ummary,**t**alk) that were found to be pronounced with Arabic consonants/ ض/ظ/ ص/ ط) =(**(/dˤ/ ,/ðˤ/ /tˤ/ /sˤ/)** instead of the English consonants, here are the sounds and the percentage of participants who chose from the three options **agree**,**neutral** or **disagree**:

1-The initial sound in the word <u>done</u> is pronounced with Arabic(ض,/dˤ/) instead of / d /:

Options	Frequency	Percentage
Agree	35	87.5%
Neutral	4	10%

Disagree	1	2.5%

Table38: Subjects' opinion of the pronunciation of the consonant "d"

2- The consonant sound /ð / in word like fa**th**er is pronounced (ظ/ðˤ/):

Options	Frequency	Percentage
Agree	33	82.5%
Neutral	6	15%
Disagree	1	2.5%

Table39: Subjects' opinion of the pronunciation of the consonant(ظ/ðˤ/)

3-The initial sound in the word **t**alk is replaced by the Arabic(ط/tˤ/):

Options	Frequency	Percentage
Agree	18	45%
Neutral	14	35%
Disagree	8	20%

Table 40: Subjects' opinion of the pronunciation of the consonant(ط/tˤ/)

4-The initial sound in the word **s**ummary,**s**un is replaced by the Arabic(/sˤ/ص):

Options	Frequency	Percentage
Agree	34	85%
Neutral	4	10%
Disagree	2	5%

Table 41:Subjects' opinion of the pronunciation of the consonant(/sˤ/ص)

Tables 38, 39, 40,and 41nearly all participants agreed with the hypotheses mentioned above. Table 38 confirmed that 87.5% of participants agreed with the hypothesis that says: the Arabic (ض/dˤ/ was put in place of /d/). Table 39 it's clearly shown that 82.5% were for the hypothesis. In table 40, 45% of participants believed that The initial sound in the word **t**alk is replaced by the Arabic (ط/tˤ/): and 40 were neutral. Table 41 indicates that 85% of respondents agree that the initial sound in words like **s**ummary,**s**un is replaced by the Arabic (/sˤ/ص). So it was clear that negative transfer took place in the above cases. Common pronunciation variations facing Arabic speakers learning English are due to a language transfer from their native language.Parker & Riley (2009).Also Brown (2000) found that a second language learner meets some difficulties, because his LI affects his L2 specially in adulthood, and this effect is a result of LI transfer; so it is a significant source of making errors for second language learners. Ladefoged (2001); Carter &Nunan (2001) showed that mother tongue has clear influence on learning L2 pronunciation.

4.8. The Markedness Differential Hypothesis (MDH).

Although there are many sounds that are shared by both sound systems, there are sounds that are present in one system but not the other.
It is well known that Eckman (1977) proposed the Markedness Differential Hypothesis (MDH) as justification for areas of difficulties in second language learning. He proposed his hypothesis on the phonological theory of markedness. The common sounds in many languages are considered unmarked, while the less common sounds are considered marked. Eckman predicted that for second language learners, the acquisition of an unmarked sound like /k/, /m/,/n/, /b/ for participants of this study would be easier than/t/,/d/,/s/,and/ð/ which are considered marked Fellbaum (1996). The above four hypotheses can be considered

as marked sounds for participants of this study.The MDH has gathered a wide range of audiences, some of whom agree with it and think it is the cause of second language errors, while others think it cannot be the sole answer to identify sources of errors.

Chapter Five

Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Introduction

Like other English language skills or sub skills courses, such as reading, writing, grammar and vocabulary etc., English pronunciation is very important for ESL/EFL learners to develop their communicative efficiency. It is one of the basic skills required for the students in their English language learning.

As mentioned earlier, this research aimed at studying the problems of pronunciation experienced by Sudanese students of English at Shendi University-Faculty of Arts, and tried to find the reasons behind these errors regarding mother tongue interference, sound system differences between the native and the foreign language, study the influence of spelling on the pronunciation, and the inconsistency of some English sounds affects on the pronunciation. The method and tools were audio recording for the target sounds in word list and a written questionnaire to support the hypothesis which say that students lack of practice has the biggest part for making such errors.

5.2. Summaryof findings

As shown in this study, certain English consonant and vowel sounds are difficult to pronounce for Sudanese learners of English at Shendi University-Faculty of Arts and some are replaced by other sounds. That is why the researcher put the problematic sounds in pairs of words that are different in one sound which is either a consonant or vowel. The main findings of this study include the following:

5.2.1Mispronouncing certain consonant and vowel sounds

The previous chapter showed that most of the participants faced problems while pronouncing consonant and vowel sounds in these words (P**a**per/P**e**pper/**Th**ank/**S**ank/Ri**p**/Ri**b**/Brea**th**e/Bree**z**e/Hal**f**/Ha**v**e/M**a**rry/M**e**rry/Que**st**ion/R**o**b/R**o**pe/W**a**nt/W**on**'t/L**o**ck/L**u**ck/L**o**w/L**a**w/H**ear**t/H**ur**t/Eye**s**/I**c**e/Qu**ie**t/Q**u i**te/**Ea**r/**Y**ear/w**i**ll /W**e**ll).

The percentage of the students who did so were high in the written questionnaire which was intended to fulfill the hypothesis that the students phonetic background was good, but they made such errors because they do not practice producing these sounds, "knowing is not like practicing !"

They pronounce /p/ as /b/ when it appears in the initial and final positions of a word. They pronounce /ei/ as /e/ in Paper/p**e**pə/. According to the above data /f / is replaced by /v /. Most of the participants pronounce /stʃ/ as /tʃ/ in the word "que**st**ion", they left out the /s/ and pronounced it as/kwetʃən/.**Thank** is pronounced as **sank** and **rib** as **rip**. **Breathe** is pronounced like **breeze**. **Marry** as **merry**, **rob** as **rope**, **want** as **won't**, **lock** as **luck**, **law** as **low**, **hurt** as **heart**, **eyes** as **ice, quiet** as **quite**, **year** as **ear**, and **well** as **will.** The below table shows that the correct transcription has the high percentage i.e.testingstudents' knowledge of phonetic.

The word	Correct pronunciation	Percentage
1-Paper	/peipə/	60%
2-Thank	/θæŋk/	85%
3- Rip	/rɪp/	82%
4-Breathe	/brɪ:ð/	67.5%
5-Half	/ha:f/	80%
6-Marry	/mærɪ/	50%

7-Question	/kwestʃən/	32.5%
8-Rob	/rɒb/	56.4%
9-Want	/wɒnt/	52.5%
10-Lock	/lɒk/	50%
11-Low	/ləʊ/	67.5%
12-Heart	/ha:t/	48.7%
13-Eyes	/aɪz/	79.5%
14-Quiet	/kwaɪət/	28.2%
15-Ear	/jɪə/	92.5%
16-Pepper	/pepə/	47.5%
17-Sank	/sæŋk/	79.5%
18-Rib	/rɪb/	82.3%
19-Breeze	/brɪ:z/	67.5%
20Have	/hæv/	85%
21-Merry	/merɪ/	84.6%
22-Well	/wel/	62.5%
23-Rope	/rəʊp/	77.5%
24-Won’t	/wəʊnt/	65.8%
25-Luck	/lʌk/	82.5%
26-Law	/lɔ:/	43.6%
27-Hurt	/hɜ:t/	42.1%
28-Ice	/aɪs/	71.8%
29-Quite	/waɪt/	79.5%
30-Year	/jɪə/	48.7%

Table 42: shows the percentages of correct transcription

5.2.2 Consonant substitution

Concerning the problem encountered by participants which is substituting the highlighted four consonant sounds in these English words(**d**one,fa**th**er, **t**alk, **s**ummary)by the Arabic consonants sounds:(ض/dˤ/ , (ظ/ðˤ/), (ط/tˤ/), (/sˤ/ص) were evident. This finding seems to support Eckman's (1977) Markedness Differential Hypothesis, which states that commonsounds between L1 and L2 are less difficult or less marked than nonexistent sounds which are considered more difficult and more marked. However, all four sounds studied (ض/dˤ/ , (ظ/ðˤ/), (ط/tˤ/), (/sˤ/ص) are absent from the L2 inventory and present in the L1 inventory. The the percentage of participants who chose the "agree-option" in the producing the word "**d**one" with (ض/dˤ/ instead of /d/ was 87.5%, and (ظ/ðˤ/) instead of / ð/ was 82.5%, (ط/tˤ/) instead of /t/ was 45.5% , and the neutral-option were 35%, and (/sˤ/ص) instead of /s/ was 85 %.

5.3 Possible explanations of subjects' poor performance

A general explanation of subjects' poor performance in all targetedsounds could be L1 transfer since Arabic contains the sounds /b f / but lacks the /p v/ Altaha (1995). Another explanation for the participants production errors may be the effect of orthography since Arabic spelling has more of a one-to-one correspondence between sound and symbol than English does Tushyeh, (1996). That means the majority of letters in the orthography are pronounced individually.

Although the data demonstrates an overall agreement on the difficulty of the studied sounds, the results revealed a non-consistency in the individual participant's performance since unexpected problems occurred as discussed in chapter3 which showed the following odd pronunciation for some of the target sounds:

- participant 3 pronounced rib as /raib/, breeze as /braiz/.

- Participant 6 produced /kweti/ forquiet, /rəʊpi/ for rope,/kiwiti/ for quite.
- Participant 7 produced /kwet/ for quite.
- Participant 10 produced /hɜ:lf/ for half, /kweit/ for quiet

To account for the unusual results regarding individual performances, the researcher has found out that these unexpected problems happened because those participants after making the recording were asked why they made these odd pronunciations? Their answer was that these words were new for them. As we all know there is no one – to –one relation spelling and pronunciation of most English words between most spelling of words in English and their pronunciations therefore the researcher considered the odd pronunciation were backed to this fact.

5.4 The Scope of the study

Despite the effort to control validity threats, this study still had a number of limitations. First, this study was limited to the pronunciations difficulties of the consonant and vowel sounds in a limited number of words (P**a**per/P**e**pper /**Th**ank/**S**ank /Ri**p**/Ri**b**/Brea**th**e/Bree**z**e /Hal**f**/Ha**v**e /M**a**rry/M**e**rry /Que**st**ion/R**o**b/R**o**pe /W**a**nt/W**on**'t /L**o**ck/L**u**ck /L**o**w/L**a**w /H**ear**t/H**ur**t /Eye**s**/I**c**e /Qu**ie**t/Q**ui**te /**Ea**r/**Y**ear/w**i**ll /W**e**ll) and four Arabic consonants sounds (ض/dˤ/ , (ظ/ðˤ/), (ط/tˤ/), (/sˤ/ص) , which means that a lot of other problems were not covered in this study.

5.5 Recommendations

Based on the findings of the research, some recommendations and strategies are given below which may help teachers and students to reduce students' difficulties in pronouncing problematic consonant and vowel sounds:

- When teaching new sounds teachers try to avoid introducingtoo many sounds at once, otherwise students will be confused by too much

information. Practice slowly at first because pronunciation is a muscular activity and the muscles in learner's tongue, lips, and jaws have to get used to moving in new ways.

- The teacher should also conduct a students' needs analysis regarding pronunciation. According to the needs of the learners, the teacher should develop some appropriate materials and strategies to present in the class to reduce the learners' problem(s).
- Unfamiliar sounds -- which do not exist in the learners' mother tongue-- should be identified and given special attention.
- Oral communication classes should be encouraged in English teaching program.The students should be asked to read aloud the text with the support of recorded materials or with the teacher's support. If the student commits any mistakes while reading aloud, the teacher should correct and practice them several times.
- The students should be given enough instructions or opportunities to learn pronunciation within English language courses.
- Students should do audio or if possible video recording to hear how their pronunciation sounds like. By doing so, they will be able to follow their progress and know areas that need more focus.

5.6 Suggestions for future research

It is most likely that orthography and L1 phonology greatly contributed in this matter. Therefore, a more comparable selection of sounds seems to be more accurate to research in future studies. For example, investigating difficulties in superasegmental features would be more appropriate to perform accurate comparisons. Moreover, the tasks used elicit sounds were a words list and a

written questionnaire to support the audio recordings. The validity of results could be improved by observation and recording of spontaneous speech. This would also eliminate the effects of orthography as Arabic is a one-to-one correspondence language and that may affect their pronunciation.

Second, the findings of this study should not be generalized to all ESL learners other than the sample studied. This study was structured to monitor Sudanese spoken Arabic and ESL learners of English. Expanding the samples to cover another Sudanese University students will increase the importance of such studies. Finally, this study did not look into the mispronunciations of whole words but on targeted sounds.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Words in Isolation (Word List)

Dear student. Read the following words aloud.

1- ***paper***

2- ***Thank***

3- ***rip***

4- ***Breathe***

5- ***Half***

6- ***marry***

7- **question**

8- ***rob***

9- ***want***

10- ***Lock***

11- ***Low***

12- ***heart***

13- ***eyes***

14- said

15- ***quiet***

16- ***done***

17- ***was***

18- ***talk***

19- *S*ummary

20- ear

21- pepper

22- sank

23- rip

24- breeze

25- Have

26- merry

27- well

28- rope

29- won’t

30- luck

31- law

32- hurt

33- ice

34- Quite

35- year

APPENDIX B the questionnaire

Dear student. Choose the correct transcription.

1- ***paper***[ ] /peipə/ [ ] /pepə/

2- ***Thank***[ ] /θæŋk/ [ ] /sæŋk/

3- ***rip***[ ] /rɪb/ [ ] /rɪp/

4- ***Breathe***[ ] /brɪ:z/ [ ] /brɪ:ð/

5- ***Half***[ ]/hæv/ [ ]/hæf/

6- ***marry*** [ ] /merɪ/ [ ]/mærɪ/

7- **Question** [ ] /kwestʃən/ [ ] /kwetʃən/

8- ***Rob*** [ ] /rəʊp/ [ ] /rɒp/

9- ***want***[ ] /wɔ:nt/ [ ] /wɒnt/

10- ***Lock*** [ ]/lʌk/ [ ] /lɒk/

11- ***Low***[ ]/lɔ:/ [ ]/ləʊ/

12- ***Heart*** [ ]/hɜ:rt/ [ ]/ha:t/

13- ***eyes***[ ] /aiz/ [ ] /ais/

14- ***quiet***[ ]/kwait/ [ ]/kwaiət/

15- **ear** [ ] /jiə/ [ ] /iə/

16- **Pepper** [ ]/pepə/ [ ]/peipə/

17- Sank [ ]/θæŋk/ [ ]/sæŋk/

18- Rip [ ]/rɪp/ [ ]/rɪb/

19- **Breeze** [ ]/brɪ:ð/ [ ]/brɪ:z/

20- **Have** [ ]/hæv/ [ ]/hæf/

21- Merry [ ]/merɪ/ [ ]/mærɪ/

22- Well [ ]/wel/ [ ]/wil/

23- Rope [ ]/rəʊp/ [ ] /rɒp/

24- won't [ ]/wɔ:nt/ [ ]/wɒnt/

25- Luck [ ]/lɒk/ [ ]/lʌk/

26- **Law** [ ]/ləʊ/ [ ] /lɔ:/

27- Hurt [ ]/hərt/ [ ]/hɜ:t/

28- Ice [ ]/ais/ [ ] /aiz/

29- set [ ]/sed/ [ ]/set/

30- Quite [ ]/kwait/ [ ]/kwaiət/

31- year [ ]/ıə/ [ ]/jiə/

Dear student, Do you agree with the following?

1- The initial sound in the word **done** is pronounced with Arabic (ض) instead of **d**
   a. Agree ( )
   b. Neutral ( )
   c. Disagree ( )
2- The consonant sound /ð/ in word like **father** is pronounced (ظ)
   a. Agree ( )
   b. Neutral ( )
   c. Disagree ( )
3- The initial sound in the word **talk** is replaced by the Arabic (ط)
   a. Agree ( )
   b. Neutral ( )
   c. Disagree ( )
4- The initial sound in the words **some**, **sun** is replaced by the Arabic(ص)
   a. Agree ( )
   b. Neutral ( )
   c. Disagree ( )