

## **Pronunciation Errors Committed by Palestinian Students at An-Najah National University: An Analytical Approach**

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### **Abstract**

This empirical study aims at identifying the English consonant sounds that are mispronounced by native speakers of Palestinian Arabic. It also aims to explore the pattern of errors that Palestinian speakers follow in speaking English. Two main questions have been explored in the study: 1) what are the most common mispronounced English consonants produced by Palestinian students? and 2) what patterns do these students follow in so doing? 20 undergraduate students from the English Department at An-Najah National University are observed and their English is recorded to identify the problematic consonant sounds. The study results show that the most problematic sounds include /p/, /tʃ/, /dʒ/, /ɹ/, and /ŋ/. In the light of the findings, the researchers recommend that the best way to learn the pronunciation of a second language is by listening to native speakers of that language and by practicing it regularly.

**Keywords:** Consonants, mother tongue interference, Palestinian spoken Arabic, problematic sound(s), pronunciation mistakes

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## Introduction

Non-native speakers of English have always aspired to have a native-like accent, but one of the main difficulties that Palestinian students encounter is pronunciation. However, there are still people who desire to learn correct English pronunciation; the students of the English Language Department at An-Najah National University are not an exception. Yet, there are many obstacles that make it really difficult for them to achieve that target.

Palestinians who speak English may commit the same errors that other language learners make namely pronouncing certain consonants because this forms an incorrect formula in their brains; their English may be affected by the Arabic language and the Palestinian dialect as well. For example, the /p/ is different from the /b/ because they are two independent phonemes which distinguish meaning (Baker, 2006). However, through the researchers' observations of Arab speakers learning English, it is found that only /b/ is used in most of the cases to refer to both /p/ and /b/. For example, Palestinian speakers would pronounce both words "bound" and "pound" as /baʊnd/ instead of /baʊnd/ and /paʊnd/ respectively. They might also think that the same sound presented by the letter <g> exists in the final position of the two words (stage, rouge). So it is likely to say that even the errors committed in learning a language are systematic rather than random (Hassan, 2014).

Many studies have discussed and explained English pronunciation errors made by native speakers of different languages all over the world, such as French, Japanese, Thai, Portuguese, etc. Furthermore, many other studies have been dedicated to studying pronunciation errors by Arab speakers of different dialects like Saudi, Iraqi, and Sudanese. However, this study is deemed essential because it is meant to be part of the series of studies that concern pronunciation mistakes made by Arab speakers who speak English as a foreign language. This research aims at exploring the pattern of errors that Palestinian speakers follow in speaking English, so we can abstract the role of their mother tongue on that pattern. This study also intends to help Palestinians improve their language by helping them know where their mistakes exactly are, and providing them with general tips to avoid these mistakes.

## Statement of the Problem:

In an English language classroom in Palestine, consonant pronunciation does not receive much attention. Other components, i.e. such as vocabulary and grammar, may be focused on far more than pronunciation. As a result, students graduate from high schools and even universities having many errors in pronunciation in general, and consonant pronunciation, in specific.

One of the most common examples of consonant pronunciation errors under scrutiny is the articulation of the bilabial plosives /p/ and /b/. This can be attributed to the fact that the sound /p/ does not exist in any Palestinian dialect or any familiar dialect to Palestinian speakers. Therefore, speakers choose the more familiar counterpart /b/. So one can hear Palestinians say /ben/ instead of /pen/ for "pen", /æb.əl/ instead of /æp.əl/ for "apple", and /sɪb/ instead of /sɪp/ for "sip".

Another very common problem is the articulation of the post-alveolar affricates /tʃ/ and /dʒ/ and substituting them with the post-alveolar fricative counterparts /ʃ/ and /ʒ/. Inside the Palestinian dialect of Arabic, there are several sub-dialects which use either the fricative or the affricate pair. In their English pronunciation, Palestinian individuals use the pair that is used in

their Arabic pronunciation. As a result, you can hear speakers utter the words "strange" and "garage" either as /streɪndʒ/ and /gə'reɪdʒ/ or as /streɪnʒ/ and /gə'ræʒ/. (The problem with the sound /ɹ/ is explained below).

The sound /ɹ/ is also problematic for Palestinian speakers of English. The sound which is presented with the letter <r> is a voiced alveolar approximant in standard British English; it is presented in the IPA as /ɹ/. However, for Palestinian speakers it is a voiced alveolar tap; it is presented in the IPA as /ɾ/. Therefore, Palestinians would use /ɾ/ even in English pronunciation. So you would hear them say /ræbɪt/ instead of /ɹæbɪt/ for "rabbit", /kæɾɪ/ instead of /kæɹi/ for "carry", and /aʊəɾ/ instead of /aʊə/ for "hour"; (the sound /ɹ/ is dropped in syllable-final-position in Standard British English, but Palestinians wouldn't drop it being influenced by Arabic phonetic rules).

The last problematic sound this research explores is the sound /ŋ/. Palestinian speakers mostly do not pronounce this sound because it is not used in any familiar Arabic dialect. They do not recognize that it is a velar sound. Instead, they would substitute it with the two sounds: the alveolar /n/ and the velar /g/. So you will hear them say /kɪng/ instead of /kɪŋ/ for the word "king".

Second language learners have to spend great efforts in order to get a native-like accent. This research is meant to identify the problematic English consonant sounds for Palestinian speakers, to identify the reasons why these pronunciation problems exist, and to offer possible ways that Palestinians can follow to improve their English pronunciation.

### Objectives of the research

Through this study, the researchers aimed at:

1. Identifying the problematic English consonant sounds for Arab speakers.
2. Explaining the nature of the problematic consonants and to what natural class they belong.
3. Providing some suggestions to reduce these errors.
4. Giving advice to both students and teachers of English to decrease the potential future problems for consonant pronunciation.

### Literature Review

The issue of pronunciation has always been a serious topic to be discussed by learners of English. A number of Arab researchers have conducted research in the area of pronunciation. This review of literature includes some of the most prominent research studies that were carried out in the field of pronunciation.

Ahmad (2011), for example, investigates the consonant errors that Saudi learners of English commit in their pronunciation. The researcher uses a laptop and a microphone to record different Saudi speakers from different regions in Saudi Arabia pronouncing different words which have the sounds in question. Those speakers have never taken any training courses in English pronunciation. The researcher finds that Saudi learners encounter many difficulties in learning English consonants like /p/, /d/, /v/, /tʃ/, /ʒ/, and /ŋ/ and he recommends that IPA symbols

should be practiced in every English class to introduce students to the perfect English pronunciation.

Hassan (2014) traces the problems that Sudanese students of English language at Sudan University of Science and Technology (SUTC) encounter. The researcher uses his own observation in order to obtain enough information about the errors that students have. The study results indicate that confusing /s/ with /θ/, /z/ with /ð/, /p/ with /b/, /v/ with /f/, and /ʃ/ with /tʃ/ usually result in mispronunciation.

The phonological analysis of English phonotactics is fully identified by (Al-Saidat, 2010). The researcher explains some factors which affect Jordanians' English pronunciation, such as age, mother tongue interference, and personality. The researcher aims at identifying, classifying, and analyzing errors of epenthesis made by Jordanian Arab learners of English in the area of pronunciation. The researcher concludes that English syllables are difficult to learn for Arab learners of English because Arab speakers sometimes follow the phonological system of Arabic in their English pronunciation. The researcher adds that teachers should introduce the syllable pattern of both Arabic and English, so students can know where their mistakes exactly are.

In another study, Khidhir (2011) traces the pronunciation of the sound /ɪ/ in RP and how it is pronounced by Iraqi secondary school teachers. The researcher aims at presenting an adequate phonetic description of /ɪ/ in the languages under study, i.e. Standard British English and Iraqi spoken Arabic. The researcher gives a detailed description of the sound /ɪ/ and its different realizations depending on the context in which it occurs. The study results show that the type of /ɪ/ is widely used by Iraqi Secondary School English teachers when they speak English and that it is the Arabic flapped /ɪ/ and not the RP frictionless continuant /ɪ/. Therefore, teachers are recommended to be given opportunities of training by different specialists in pronunciation.

Bayoumi and Elhawary (2013) study common pronunciation errors of 40 (males and females) undergraduate students of the English Language and Literature Department at Ain Shams University. Different tools, mainly recordings and questionnaires, are employed to collect information. This study results indicate that the main problematic sounds for Egyptians included /ŋ/, /ð/, /t/ and /θ/; they also find that students were not aware of the pronunciation errors they make. The researchers recommend that more courses in teaching pronunciation must be added because they think that the courses that students take do not help them improve their pronunciation.

Safian (2013) aims to provide description of the sounds realized from the sequence of the letters <th> and the pronunciation of the sound /p/. The researcher states that the pronunciation of the phonetic sound of <th> was the most common error in spoken English of people from the Middle East. Therefore, "they" may be changed to "zey". Moreover, she discusses the sound /p/ and its different realizations and find that the sound /p/ turns into /b/ in most cases due to the differences between Arabic and English. For instance, you may hear people from the Middle East change "Pepsi" into "Bepsi", "Peter" into "Beter" and "pope" into "bope".

The voiceless post-alveolar affricate /tʃ/ and its different realizations for Saudi learners of English as a foreign language are fully investigated by Alqarni (2013). The researcher states that the sound /tʃ/ does not exist in the phonemic system of Arabic, so it would be problematic for Arab speakers of English as a foreign language to pronounce the /tʃ/ as an independent phoneme. Furthermore, Alqarni states that the sound /tʃ/ does exist in some dialects of Arabic, but as an allophone of other phonemes such as /q/ and /k/. The instrument used to conduct this study included 16 words containing the sound /tʃ/ in different word positions. Data is recorded and analyzed using both Speech Analyzer and SPSS software. The results show that Najdi ESL learners encounter difficulties in pronouncing the investigated sound /tʃ/. The only mistake is replacing the sound /tʃ/ with /ʃ/. Word-final position posed more pronunciation difficulties than word-initial position.

In sum, this literature review includes a number of studies which discuss English pronunciation problems by speakers of different Arabic dialects. It has been shown that Arab speakers who speak different dialects of Arabic have similar problems in pronouncing some English sounds such as /x/, /p/ and /ŋ/. However, some other sounds might not be as problematic to some regions as other regions. For example, the affricates /tʃ/ and /dʒ/ do exist in some Arabic spoken-dialects like Saudi and Iraqi but as allophones not phonemes; therefore, speakers of those dialects are able to pronounce those sounds correctly, but they may have trouble in their distribution. This study of Palestinian Arabic is meant to be part of the series of research that study problems in pronunciation by Arab speakers who speak different dialects.

## Study Design

### *Population*

The population of this study includes 4<sup>th</sup>-year students who study English Language and Literature at An-Najah National University. The researchers randomly choose a sample of 20 Palestinian students (8 males and 12 females) who were different in their academic achievement and their level of English fluency.

### *Instrument*

The researchers mean first to observe the way Palestinian speakers of English as a foreign language use the language. The researchers have initial information about the problematic consonant sounds and how they are pronounced and then formulated their own hypotheses.

To test and prove these hypotheses, the researchers use digital recordings. Students are asked to pronounce words which have the problematic sounds in all positions (initially, medially, and finally). This method is deemed suitable for this kind of research because the researchers can return to the data collected whenever he needs it.

### *Procedure*

The researchers, who are an instructor and a student of English, go to the English department, meet many 4<sup>th</sup>-year students, and ask if it is possible to record their voice for the sake of this research. Some students accept and others refuse. Those who accept the test are given a list of words on a paper to read (see the appendix which shows the test used to collect the information). They are asked to read the words slowly and carefully while the researchers are recording the test. Although the choice is random, the researchers intend to have an almost equal

rate between male and female students. The recordings are analyzed very carefully and the data is revised more than once to ensure results' accuracy.

## Results

The data analyzed show different realizations of the phoneme /p/ in English in all word-positions. Yet, the only incorrect pronunciation that the respondents (males and females) give is the voiced counterpart [b]. In word-initial position, the initial sound of the word "pain" is mispronounced as [b] by 65% of the respondents. In the word "Paper", however, 75% give the wrong pronunciation for the medial consonant. In final-position of the word "sharp", 85% of the students give the incorrect pronunciation. The overall incorrect pronunciations in all positions for the sound /p/ are approximately 75% (See Table 1).

**Table 1: Realizations of /p/**

	Realization	Males		Females		Overall	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Word Initial	[p]	3	37.5%	4	33.3%	7	35%
	[b]	5	62.5%	8	66.6%	13	65%
Word Medial	[p]	2	25%	3	25%	5	25%
	[b]	6	75%	9	75%	15	75%
Word Final	[p]	0	0%	3	25%	3	15%
	[b]	8	100%	9	75%	17	85%

When the students are asked to pronounce the words "champion, launching, and church" which all have the sound /tʃ/ in all word-positions, they mainly have two realizations: the correct one [tʃ] and the incorrect one [ʃ]. In word-initial position, the incorrect pronunciation is 55%. In word-medial position, 45% of the students give the incorrect realization of the sound /tʃ/. In word-final position, it shows that 70% give it wrongly. The total percentage of the incorrect pronunciation is 56.6% (See table 2).

**Table 2: Realizations of /tʃ/**

	Realization	Males		Females		Overall	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Word Initial	[tʃ]	4	50%	5	42%	9	45%
	[ʃ]	4	50%	7	58%	11	55%
Word Medial	[tʃ]	4	50%	7	58%	11	55%
	[ʃ]	4	50%	5	42%	9	45%
Word Final	[tʃ]	2	25%	4	33.3%	6	30%
	[ʃ]	6	75%	8	66.6%	14	70%

The sound /dʒ/ which occurs in all word positions of the words "Germany, Plagiarism, Judge" also has two realizations, the correct one [dʒ] and the incorrect one [ʒ]. In the initial position, 65% of the students have the incorrect phone. However, in word-medial position, 85% of the students pronounce it incorrectly. Finally, only 25% of the respondents give the incorrect realization in word-final position. The overall mispronunciation in all positions is roughly 58% (See table 3).

**Table 3: Realizations of /dʒ/**

	Realization	Males		Females		Overall	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Word Initial	[dʒ]	3	37.5%	4	33.3%	7	35%
	[ʒ]	5	62.5%	8	66.6%	13	65%
Word Medial	[dʒ]	1	12.5%	2	16.6%	3	15%
	[ʒ]	7	87.5%	10	83.3%	17	85%
Word Final	[dʒ]	6	75%	9	75%	15	75%
	[ʒ]	2	25%	3	25%	14	25%

For the sound /ɹ/, students have the correct realizations which are used in both Standard British English and Standard American English, and the incorrect realization which is the tap sound [ɾ] that is used in Arabic. For the word rabbit, the initial consonant is 80% mispronounced by the students. However, 65% are unable to pronounce the medial consonant in the word "carry" correctly. Nevertheless, the final consonant of the word "hour" is mispronounced by 80% of the respondents. The overall mispronunciation of the sound /ɹ/ in all contexts is around 71% (See figure 4 for detailed information).

**Table 4: Realizations of /ɹ/**

	Realization	Males		Females		Overall	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Word Initial	[ɹ]	2	25%	4	33.3%	6	30%
	[ɾ]	6	75%	8	66.6%	14	70%
Word Medial	[ɹ]	2	25%	5	41.6%	7	35%
	[ɾ]	6	75%	7	58.3%	13	65%
Word Final	[ɹ]	1	12.5%	3	25%	4	20%
	[ɾ]	7	87.5%	9	75%	16	80%

The sound /ŋ/ involves two problems. The first problem is that students may use the two sounds [n+g] or the two sounds [ŋ+g] to indicate that sound in word-final position. Students are given the words "king, sing, and bring" to pronounce; 20% of the students use the two sounds [ng] to indicate /ŋ/ while 70% used the sequence of the sounds [ŋ+g]. This means that only 10% of the students give the correct pronunciation /ŋ/ for this sound in word-final position.

The other problem is that students do not recognize when to follow the sound /ŋ/ with a /g/ and when not in word-medial position. Students are given the words "singer, finger, longer, and singing". 66.6% of the students who recorded their pronunciation give it wrong (See table 5 for more details about the phoneme /ŋ/ and its realizations and table 6 for the overall results).

**Table 5: Realizations of /ŋ/**

	Realization	Males		Females		Overall	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Word Medial	[ŋ]	0	0%	2	16.6%	2	10%
	[ng]	1	12.5%	2	16.6%	3	15%
	[ŋg]	7	87.5%	8	66.6%	15	75%
Word Final	[ŋ]	0	0%	2	16.6%	2	10%
	[ng]	2	25 %	2	16.6%	4	20%
	[ŋg]	6	75%	8	66.6%	14	70%

**Table 6: The problematic sounds and how they are realized**

Phoneme	Incorrect realization	Percentage of incorrect pronunciation	The words used in the test	
/p/	[b]	75%	Pain, paper, sharp	
/tʃ/	[ʃ]	56.6%	Champion, launching, church	
/dʒ/	[ʒ]	58.33%	Germany, plagiarism, judge	
/ɪ/	[ɪ]	71.66%	Rabbit, carry, hour	
/ŋ/	Word-medial	[ng][ŋg]	66.6%	Singer, finger, longer, singing
	Word-final	[ng][ŋg]	90%	King, sing, bring

## Discussion

From a phonetics perspective, consonants are classified in three different ways: voicing, place of articulation, and manner of articulation.

The first distinctive feature of sounds is "voicing". It is about the state of the vocal folds while producing sounds. Consonants are referred to as (voiced) or (voiceless). Voiced means that the vocal folds vibrate while producing a certain sound; however, voiceless means that the vocal

folds do not vibrate when one produces a certain sound. For example, the only difference between the pair /p/ and /b/ is voicing; they share all features except for voicing. That's why Arab speakers opt for /b/ instead of /p/; it is the familiar counterpart that they are used to

The second distinction is "place of articulation". It means which articulators we use to produce a certain sound, or what part in the oral cavity the tongue articulates with to produce a certain sound (Rogers 2000). Sounds have different places of articulation; we have bilabial, labiodental, dental, alveolar, post-alveolar, retroflex, palatal, velar, uvular, pharyngeal, and glottal sounds.

Manner of articulation is the last feature that distinguishes between sounds. Speech is modified breathing. Whether in Arabic or in English, a person speaks when he/she breathes out because all sounds in both Arabic and English are ingressive pulmonic. When people speak, they use different articulators to block the air that comes out of the lungs to produce different consonant sounds. The width of the blockage causes either a turbulent or a laminar airflow. For example, the air may be stopped completely in the oral cavity for stops, partially leaving a very narrow passage for fricatives, or partially leaving a wide passage to let the air freely for approximants. However, for nasal sounds, there is a complete closure of air in the oral cavity, but the air escapes freely through the nasal cavity (Roach 2009).

Palestinians mispronounce some English sounds because speakers are influenced by their own mother tongue, Palestinian spoken Arabic. Therefore, they produce English sounds in an Arabic way; they choose the closest counterpart in their native language to produce each of the problematic sounds which are /p/, /tʃ/, /dʒ/, /ɪ/ and /ŋ/.

The sound /p/, as in "Pope" is a voiceless bilabial plosive. There is no vibration in the larynx when a native speaker of English pronounces the sound /p/, so it is a voiceless sound. The place of articulation is "bilabial", i.e. there is a complete contact between the upper lip and the lower lip when producing this sound. The manner of articulation is "plosive" (oral stop), i.e. the airflow stops completely inside the oral cavity before the air is released (Rogers, 2000).

The sounds /tʃ/ and /dʒ/, as the initials of "chick" and "Japan" respectively, are both post-alveolar affricates, i.e. the tongue articulates with the post-alveolar area. These sounds have double articulation; they start with a stop, then they move to a fricative. Therefore, the air which is stopped for the "stop" in the oral cavity is released with a narrow passage "fricative" causing a turbulent airflow. As for voicing, the sound /tʃ/ is voiceless while /dʒ/ is voiced (Ogden, 2009).

The sound /ɪ/ is problematic for most speakers of English as a second language not only for Arabs. The sound /ɪ/ differs not only from one language to another, but also from a variety of English to another. For example, the sound /ɪ/ in Standard British English is a voiced alveolar approximant. The tip of the tongue leaves a relatively wide gap with the alveolar ridge to let the laminar flow of air. However, the /ɹ/ which is pronounced in standard American English is a voiced retroflex approximant. The tip of the tongue curls backward when a Native American speaker produces this sound leaving a wide gap to let the air freely as well (Roach, 2009). On the other hand, the Arabic /ɾ/ is a voiced alveolar "tap or flap". The tip of the tongue completely touches the alveolar ridge once and quickly.

The sound /ŋ/ is a voiced velar nasal. As any other voiced sound, the vocal folds vibrate when one tries to pronounce the sound /ŋ/ correctly. The back of the tongue forms a complete contact with the velum (soft palate) to stop the air completely in the oral cavity. However, unlike any oral sounds, the nasal sounds are pronounced with the nasal cavity open to let the air freely through it (Ogden, 2009).

The sample of this research consists of 20 students who were asked to pronounce different words having the problematic sounds that the researchers had already observed.

The first sound which causes mispronunciation is the sound /p/. Students are asked to pronounce the words "pain, paper, sharp". The findings showed that 25% of the students are able to pronounce the sound /p/ correctly in word different positions. Students mispronounce the sound /p/ as [b] as it is noticed in the recordings. The reason why students pronounce the sound [b] in most of the cases is that it exists in the Arabic phonological system while /p/ does not. Thus, there is no distinction of voicing in Arabic between the two sounds in question. For example, if you pronounce the Arabic word "bab" as [pap] or [bab], few Arab speakers would notice any difference in the pronunciation of the word, and if so, they would understand the one and only meaning of the word which is "door".

Another sound that Palestinians have difficulties in is the post-alveolar affricate sound /tʃ/. Students are asked to pronounce the words "champion, launching, church". The results show that 56.66% of the respondents do not pronounce the sound /tʃ/ correctly. Instead, they use the fricative counterpart [ʃ]. The reason why /tʃ/ is problematic is that it does not exist in the Arabic phonological system as an independent phoneme, but it does exist as an allophone of other phonemes, /k/ and /q/, in some dialects in a way that does not affect Arabs' English pronunciation.

The third sound that Palestinians are observed to have problem with is the sound /dʒ/. Students are asked to pronounce the words "Germany, plagiarism, and Judge". The results show that 58.33% of the students who are asked to record their pronunciation of the words had wrong pronunciation of that sound; they replace it with the fricative counterpart [ʒ]. The reason why the students confuse between /dʒ/ and /ʒ/ is because they are allophones of the same phoneme in spoken Arabic. Thus, if you say /dadʒadʒ/ or /daʒaʒ/ for the same thing in Arabic, the meaning won't change and it will remain "hen".

The sound /ɹ/ is also observed to be problematic for Palestinian speakers of English. This sound is physically realized differently in spoken-Palestinian Arabic. Students are asked to pronounce the words "rabbit, carry, and hour". 71.66% of the respondents give the realization which is used in spoken Arabic [r]. So we can generalize that non-professional Arabs get affected in the manner of articulation of the sound /ɹ/ and produce it as a tap, not as an approximant.

The last sound which the researchers observe to be problematic is the sound /ŋ/. This sound involves two problems. The first problem is that students may use the two sounds /n+g/ or the two sounds /ŋ+g/ to indicate that sound in final position. Students were given the words "king, sing, and bring" to pronounce and 20% of the students used the two sounds /ng/ to

indicate /ŋ/ while 70% used the sequence of the sounds /ŋ+g/. This means that only 10% of the students gave the correct pronunciation /ŋ/ for this sound in final position.

The other problem is that students did not recognize when to follow the sound /ŋ/ with a /g/ and when not to in word-medial position. Students are given the words "singer, finger, longer, and singing". It was found that 66.6% of the students who recorded their pronunciation gave it wrong. They are not aware of the rule that states that the sound /ŋ/ is not followed by a /g/ at the end of the morpheme, but it is followed by a /g/ when it occurs in the middle of the morpheme. Nevertheless, this rule has an exception: the sound /ŋ/ is followed by a /g/ even when it occurs at the end of the morpheme only when followed by –er comparative or –est superlative forms (Harris, 1994). Therefore, the words would be pronounced as /sɪŋə/, /fɪŋgə/, /lɒŋgə/, and /sɪŋɪŋ/ respectively in standard British English.

In sum, the analysis of the data show that some English sounds are not pronounced correctly by speakers of Palestinian Arabic.

### Conclusions

As any other skill, learning pronunciation needs serious practice. The discussion above shows the sounds which Palestinians have difficulties in:

- 1- /p/ is pronounced as /b/.
- 2- /tʃ/ is sometimes realized as /f/.
- 3- The sound /dʒ/ is problematic because Palestinians either use /dʒ/ for /dʒ/ and /ʒ/, or they use /ʒ/ for both. So you hear them say "strange" and "garage" either as /streɪndʒ/ and /gəɾædʒ/ or as /streɪnʒ/ and /gəɾæʒ/.
- 4- /ɪ/ is physically realized as the Arabic /r/.
- 5- The sound /ŋ/ involves two problems:
  - a. It is sometimes pronounced as /ng/ or as /ŋg/ in word-final position.
  - b. Palestinian Arab speakers do not know when to have a /g/ following and when not to have it following in word medial-position.
- 6-

The main reasons behind the mispronunciation are attributed to the fact that the problematic sounds do not exist in the phonological system of Arabic; if they exist, they are not physically realized in the same way; and that English pronunciation is not practiced adequately by Arab Palestinian speakers.

### Recommendations

In the light of the previous findings, the researchers recommend that:

- 1- Teachers should make a diagnostic listening test at the beginning of the semester to know what kind of problems their students have so that teachers can help them solve the problem through the course.
- 2- English teachers must give their students the opportunity to speak in front of the class. They should correct only when necessary and do the correction gently.
- 3- Students are needed to train their ears to listen to English spoken by native speakers.
- 4- Students should do extra work; they can watch YouTube videos that teach pronunciation.
- 5- Students have to patient. Learning the pronunciation of a foreign language takes time

because a learner needs to establish the sound in his/her mental store before they pronounce it unconsciously.

- 6- Some knowledge of articulatory phonetics is needed to show exactly how the problematic sounds and other sounds are physically produced.

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**Yousef Abuzaid** is a graduate student of English Language and Literature. He is the top student in the department. Currently he is doing his master's and working as a teacher for Cambridge School in Nablus.

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### Appendix

#### An instrument of the research (the recorded test).

This test is used for the sake of a study which presents consonant pronunciation mistakes committed by Palestinian students at An-Najah National University. The test is going to be recorded.

Pronounce the following words carefully:

Pain, Paper, Sharp.  
Champion, Launching, Church.  
Germany, Plagiarism, Judge.  
Rabbit, Carry, Hour.  
King, Sing, Bring.  
Singer, finger, Longer, Singing