Arab World English Journal

INTERNATIONAL PEER REVIEWED JOURNAL ISSN: 2229-9327

Pronunciation Problems Encountered by EFL Learners: An Empirical Study

Syed Farhat Jahara
Department of English Language and Translation
College of Sciences and Arts at Al-Asyah
Qassim University, Saudi Arabia
Correspondent Author Email: fa.syed@qu.edu.sa

Abbas Hussein Abdelrady
Department of English Language and Translation
College of Sciences and Arts at Al-Asyah
Qassim University, Saudi Arabia

Abstract
Arabs often mispronounce many sounds of English due to a lack of exposure to English as a foreign language. This research article focuses on pronunciation problems encountered by Arab undergraduate EFL learners. It uses questionnaires, recorded speech samples, and pronunciation tests as part of its methodology to analyze learners' performance orally through repetition drills to help participants articulate the sounds of English through Blackboard Collaborate Ultra Learning Management System. This research emphasizes the main question on the common problems encountered by EFL undergraduates with pronunciation skills. The study aims to train the students with pronunciation tests and phonemic inventory by repetition and imitation to overcome pronunciation miscues and fossilized miscues to enhance their pronunciation. This study is significant because it proposes feasible pedagogical techniques for imparting English sounds and initiating the learners to produce and acquire sounds more accurately, which will help Arab undergraduate EFL learners with their pronunciation problems. To achieve this goal, it proposes feasible pedagogical techniques to impart sounds of English and initiate the learners to produce and acquire sounds more accurately. One of the main findings of this research revealed that our EFL undergraduates have improved in their pronunciation through constant motivation and willingness to participate in the designed tests through Blackboard. Recommendations for further research would be on phonological awareness as an aid in learning EFL.
Keywords: Fossilization, EFL learners, miscues, phonemic inventory, pronunciation problems, sounds

Introduction

English is widely accepted as a medium of communication and occupies a definite place in the curriculum of EFL schools, colleges, and universities. Learning English as a foreign language is needed for female Arab learners to engage themselves in life skills. Though many Arabs struggle with foreign language acquisition, one of the most significant challenges is pronunciation. Many EFL students may find that pronouncing words is a barrier to effective communication. More importantly, pronunciation is a critical component of oral communication (Berry, 2021). Thus, without correct pronunciation, verbal communication can be done inadequately and can be rigorously impaired.

During the past few years and recently, there has been significant growth of interest and attention given to pronunciation teaching. Many research studies on pronunciation in the EFL context have been conducted (Abdul-Abbas et al., 2021). However, while these studies on pronunciation are performed, this area still needs to be investigated, and more research in EFL classrooms in the Arab world is required. "Pronunciation teaching has not always been popular with teachers and language teaching theorists" (Roach, 2009, p. 5).

There is renewed interest in phonological perception and production from linguistic, cognitive, and social perspectives, and there is a renewed emphasis on second language pronunciation. (Troike, 2006).

According to Reed and Levis (2019), language is regularly expressed and conceived in various systems. According to Berry (2021), the sound system is a system of speech units that learners need to pronounce clearly and correctly. These units of speech can generally be named vocabulary. The learners should make use of the vocabulary appropriately when they speak. The meaning system is called grammar, which is how the learners use the words to express meaning. Arab EFL learners must master and understand both approaches because they work together interchangeably. If EFL learners need to communicate successfully, then they need to master these systems together. The majority of language programs in the EFL context consider teaching these aspects of language systematically and should not neglect them.

The best way to comprehend people is to listen to them carefully to improve one's pronunciation. Many EFL learners experience inhibition and anxiety when they communicate. Because of inhibition, they lack the confidence to pronounce words appropriately (Nakazawa, 2012). Language learning and teaching environments must be learner-friendly and free from stress and anxiety so the learners can feel less stressed and consequently engage in conversations during classroom interaction (Krashen, 1982). One more reason for the importance of pronunciation is that the English language has become the primary language for oral communication globally (Crystal, 2003).

Study Rationale

The current research study aims to obtain an opinion of thirty-two female EFL undergraduate participants from the level five Bachelor of Arts program from Qassim University, Saudi Arabia, and their perception of pronunciation teaching and training. Therefore, as we mentioned earlier, this study aims to recognize the pronunciation problems of female undergraduate learners, identify the support needs, and implement strategy training for these

learners using Blackboard Collaborate Ultra LMS. It attempts to examine participants by introducing a variety of tests to enhance their listening and pronunciation skills.

To sum up, teaching pronunciation in an English language program for undergraduates is crucial and unavoidable. "There are many well-tried methods of teaching and testing pronunciation" (Roach, 2009, p. 6). According to Celce-Murcia et al. (1996), a more realistic goal that teachers and researchers are increasingly advocating is logical pronunciation speaking in a way that most listeners. Both native and non-native speakers can understand without too much effort or confusion. Understating pronunciation's importance will help design effective instructional and academic ways to teach pronunciation.

The following questions were addressed by the researchers, with an emphasis on pronunciation proficiency.
RQ1. What are the common problems encountered by EFL undergraduates with pronunciation skills?
RQ2. What is the perception of each EFL student towards pronunciation skills?
RQ3. What are pronunciation strategies, and how do undergraduate learners apply them in their learning process?

Research Objectives

The primary objective of this current research is to help Arab undergraduate EFL learners with their pronunciation issues by proposing feasible pedagogical techniques for imparting English sounds and initiating the learners to produce and acquire sounds more accurately. Another objective of this recent research study is to see how far Arab undergraduate EFL learners can improve their pronunciation of English words and phrases through repetition and imitation of pronunciation tests and phonemic inventory to overcome pronunciation miscues and fossilized miscues. An additional objective could be to raise the perception of each Arab undergraduate EFL learner towards pronunciation skills.

Literature Review

English holds an unusual position as a foreign language in Saudi Arabia. According to Alharbi (2019), the Saudi Arabian Ministry of Education decree has initiated EFL teaching in the primary schools of the kingdom since 1942.

Saudi Arabia's education system was established in 1926 with the teaching of schoolboys. During the reign of King Saud bin Abdul-Aziz Al Saud, the Ministry of Education was established in 1952. According to the new education policy, the Ministry of Education has incorporated English as a foreign language (EFL) into the Saudi Arabian education system as one of the mandatory options beginning in primary school and continuing through university. Ministry of Education (2021) as cited in Jahara & Abdelrady (2021). As a result of its global recognition, EFL has become a requirement for learners in the educational context. At around twelve years old, most of our study's participants were introduced to EFL in sixth grade, the final year of primary school. They had three years of EFL exposure in intermediate school and three years in higher secondary school. The total number of years spent learning EFL is seven. Despite years of learning and exposure to EFL, most learners cannot engage in day-to-day conversations in English, have the poor reading ability, and have pronunciation issues. These problems were

also investigated by Alshehri,(2020). He stated that "Pronunciation is vital for the EFL learners in terms of intelligibility of pronunciation and understanding of oral material." (p. 208). They lack confidence in communicating with their teachers and peer group.

During the last decade, researchers investigated pronunciation problems made by EFL Arab learners in terms of learning difficulties in English phonology. Al-Rubaat & Alshammari (2020) discovered that EFL learners had difficulty correctly pronouncing the first three consonant clusters and the final three in English. He concluded that learners were mistakenly pronouncing these clusters as employed reduction, substitution, or deletion as alternate methods.

Another related study by Al-Rubaat and Alshammari (2020) asserts that Saudi EFL students face similar difficulties developing speaking and pronunciation skills. The objective of the EFL curriculum introduced at the undergraduate level with specific reference to teaching listening and speaking instruction aim at raising awareness among the learners about the importance of pronunciation instruction. The emphasis was stressed on listening to sound systems to enhance pronunciation and communication skills in English. This issue is also emphasized by Vadakalur Elumalai et al. (2021), who affirmed that English language pronunciation is a sub-skill of speaking modules during a second language learning process. To improve the language skills of the EFL learners, exposure to pronunciation is necessary (Abker, 2020), as it would help learners distinguish good English from poor English. "Good" speech may define as a way of speaking which is intelligible to all ordinary people. "Bad" speech is a way of talking that is difficult for most people to understand. (Jones, 1956 as cited in Roach, 2009).

Furthermore, the issue of pronunciation was looked into by (Khaleghi et al., 2020). He asserted that adult EFL learners in Saudi Arabia would get good training in mastering English phonetics. The learners would then learn to pronounce the phonemes more accurately in English.

A similar study was conducted at Jouf University (J.U.) in the north of Saudi Arabia to investigate the pronunciation difficulties encountered by Saudi EFL learners. The researchers of that study achieved their goal by implementing two main instruments: a pronunciation sensitivity response experiment and two interview formats. (Al-Rubaat & Alshammari, 2020). They found that: initial consonant cluster, ending consonant cluster, multi-syllabic words, novel sounds, vowels, and voiced or voiceless phonemes were among the six phonetic and phonological problematic patterns experienced by EFL students (Al-Rubaat & Alshammari, 2020).

To sum up, this study is ultimately different from all the above studies because it was more practical and realistic. The researchers set out the strategy and then applied it through training the EFL learners through Blackboard LMS. The study's findings will be hoping to help in teaching pronunciation and consequently resolve adult female Arab EFL learners' pronunciation problems.

Methods
Participants
Thirty-two B.A undergraduate students took part in our research study from third-year level five. Before participating in the present study, they completed a self-reporting questionnaire to gather information about their English learning experiences and pronunciation

behaviors. The primary reason for concentrating on undergraduate learners was based on the researcher's experience teaching to B. A undergraduates at Qassim University. The proposed study was intended to be an online research study using Blackboard Collaborate Ultra LMS that seeks an understanding of the importance of pronunciation instruction in the EFL classroom designed for undergraduate learners. This study used qualitative and quantitative methods to investigate the participant's pronunciation ability. The researchers did the periodic assessment to evaluate the learners' pronunciation skills through recordings from Blackboard LMS.

The Qassim University Curriculum Program

The Qassim University's curriculum for B.A. program is designed with 127 total credit hours to complete undergraduate studies in the English Language and Translation Department. The students achieve learning through their study time, in-class participation, assignments, projects, presentations, and library work with three credit hours for each course and 15 to 18 hours of learning each week per semester. The university's curriculum focuses on developing skills that encourage listening, speaking, reading, writing, and pronunciation through individual, pair, and group activities, as well as making participants able to talk about their ideas, daily lives, and surroundings through a variety of exercises and tests. The pronunciation syllabus in the third-year first semester for level five participants was designed to enable them to understand English's segmental and suprasegmental features as per the requirement of undergraduates by the university. The listening and pronunciation practice units were taken from the prescribed curriculum, and the installed C. D's were provided by the course books.

Procedure

The researchers work as faculty in English in the College of Sciences and Arts at Qassim University in Al-Asyah. This research was carried out using Qassim University Virtual Classroom Blackboard Collaborate Ultra Learning Management System for one semester for level five undergraduates. The course was taught with three credit hours twice a week for fourteen weeks throughout the semester. All the thirty-two undergraduates of B. A third-year from level five actively participated in the online lectures throughout the semester on Blackboard LMS.

Design of the Research Study and Tools

The study adopted qualitative and quantitative research methods and was divided into two stages: Preliminary investigation stage I and Primary investigation stage II.

Preliminary Investigation Stage I

In the first stage, a preliminary study will be undertaken to focus on the different factors to be studied and examined concerning the problems of teaching and learning pronunciation skills online. The emphasis is also to get an idea of the participant's pronunciation ability, their challenges on pronunciation, and their perception of pronunciation skills. This baseline data was hoped to help the second stage of research. Preliminary investigation is very significant for the present study because this stage is expected to provide basic information like the background information, pronunciation proficiency, participants' ability to focus on individual letters and sounds, and their competence in employing suitable strategies. A sixteen-statement questionnaire on pronunciation challenges was administered to investigate the preliminary investigation stage.

Primary Investigation Stage II

In the primary investigation, pronunciation instruction followed various online pronunciation tests using Blackboard Collaborative Ultra LMS for one semester. This study was put in operation for three months by the researchers. Initially, it was intended to observe EFL learners from vernacular medium whose pronunciation and language competence in English was inadequate through the sixteen responses from the questionnaire. These fundamental observations will help the researchers organize interactive online sessions and tests through Blackboard LMS for learners to understand their pronunciation ability. For this purpose, the researchers have administered the following research tools to explore further insights into the study: initial pronunciation test, phonemic word square, phonemic inventory of consonant and vowel phonemes, and final pronunciation test. After each pronunciation test, the participants were encouraged to clarify their doubts regarding their pronunciation ability on the conducted test.

The following stages could be identified as part of our primary study.
    a. The pronunciation ability of participants was assessed using Blackboard recordings.
    b. Participants' pronunciation issues were identified during online participation, and they were analyzed.
    c. Analyzing the strategies adopted by the participants in pronunciation tasks.
    d. Compiling the list of each participant's pronunciation skills.

Initial pronunciation test: To motivate the participants to develop the perception of sounds, particularly the pronunciation, accent, and intonation, they were encouraged to recite the sounds with examples with their teacher. The researchers introduced sounds of English and gave articulatory descriptions with the help of a microphone. We used a fundamental level pronunciation proficiency test from Unit two of the prescribed curriculum for B.A. third-year was selected to begin our preliminary research. The researchers asked the participants to pronounce a list of four short vowel sounds, for example "/æ/, /ʌ/, /ɪ/, /e/" and eight sample pronunciation words for instance: "bread, rough, foot, hymn, pull, cough, mat and friend" (Roach, 2009, p. 15). This test was administered to analyze the participant's pronunciation of different sounds and words of the English language at an initial stage of the research study. All the thirty-two participants took the initial pronunciation test, and their voice was recorded through Blackboard LMS, and the results were analyzed.

Phonemic word square: A phonemic word square pronunciation test was given to enrich English pronunciation, with missing phonemes identified and added to phonemic word squares to create meaning full words as cited by (Jahara & Abdelrady, 2021). The researchers gave the participants ten examples of "English vowels" and asked them to guess the words related to short vowels, long vowels, and diphthongs, such as "/i:/ beach, /aɪ/ rhyme, /ɔ:/ talk, /ɒ/ shop, /e/ sell, /æ/ cap, /ʌ/ cut, /ʊ/ bush, /eɪ/ pain and /əʊ/ tone" (Hancock, 2012, p. 136). The researchers requested the participants to fill in the missing phonemes in the phonemic word squares and create four meaningful words, and their responses were recorded on Blackboard LMS.

Phonemic inventory vowel and consonants: The participants of our study were familiar with the sounds of English. They were given ear training on the perception of sound and identification of sounds with examples. The learners were exposed to forty-four phonemes

focusing on twelve monophthongs, eight diphthongs, and twenty-four consonant phonemes (Roach, 2009). After giving sufficient ear training in sounds with the help of "English Phonetics and Phonology Audio C.D" to our participants, the researchers recorded the speech samples of phonemes through Blackboard LMS care was taken to minimize the internal disturbances during the recording of online sessions. All the participants of our study participated in learning the sounds of English. The researchers analyzed the participant's pronunciation by pronouncing the list of vowel and consonant phonemes using their microphone. All the study participants took the phonemic inventory test, and the results were scored listening to participants' pronunciation and their voice recordings.

Final pronunciation test: The researchers have chosen pronunciation to varied sounds by choosing simple day-to-day conversations for the final pronunciation proficiency test. This test covered six conversations of everyday life based on English vowel and consonant phonemes. The conversations were selected from the curriculum (Hancock, 2012). The test was conducted to direct and analyze the participant's attention to different sounds of English, their pronunciation difficulties, their ability to focus on individual letters and sounds, focus on sounds in combination, and make distinctions of sounds in conversations. All the participants of our study completed the final pronunciation test by listening to the conversations and writing their responses. The researchers analyzed the participant's responses, and the results were scored.

Results
Preliminary Investigation Stage I
Preliminary investigation stage I presents the discussion, analysis, and interpretation of the data collected through a questionnaire from thirty-two female undergraduate EFL participants from level five from Qassim University. After the researchers had distributed the questionnaire to the participants, they constructed the required tables for collected data. This step consisted of transformation of the qualitative (nominal) variables (strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, strongly disagree) to quantitative variables (1,2,3,4,5) respectively. The collected data has been well computerized and analyzed by SPSS. The researchers analyzed the statements in the questionnaire in terms of frequencies and percentages.

To know the trend of the participant's opinions about each statement in the questionnaire, the researchers computed the median, which is one of the central tendency measures that used to describe the phenomena, and it represents the centered answer for all respondents' answers after ascending or descending order for the answers.

Table one presents the participant's responses based on sixteen questions from the questionnaire. It was observed that a majority of participants gave fair and positive reactions to the statements asked. The responses were in variables of strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, and strongly disagree, and these statements were calculated by median value after getting the responses from the participant's questionnaire.

Findings of the Questionnaire
Statement one: It is clear from Table one (see Appendix A) that sixteen participants in the study's sample have strongly agreed with (50%) on the statement as a learner, I did not learn how to differentiate between /p/ and /b/ sounds properly during school. Five participants (15.6%)

agreed, and only one participant (3.1%) had undecided the statement. It was observed that in the Arabic language, only /b/ sound is found, and /p/ sound is not available, and this could be a significant barrier for the Arab learners to discriminate /p/ and /b/ phonemes.   Statement two: As a learner, I usually get confused and mix between /ʃ/ and /tʃ/ sounds. This statement from Table one (see Appendix A) was intended to elicit the participants' opinion on pronunciation words like the chauffer, chic, sharpen, and chair.   Statement three: I usually get confused, and mix /ɪ/ and /e/ sounds as a learner. This statement from Table one (see Appendix A) was intended to know students' perception of the short vowel /e/ sound and the pronunciation of words like bread and resume. Statement four: As a learner, I usually get confused with /ɪ/ short vowel and /i:/ long vowel sounds. This statement from Table one (see Appendix A) was intended to know students' perception of the pronunciation of short vowel /ɪ/ and long vowel /i:/ sounds. It was observed that many students mix these sounds while reading or pronunciation of words like hymn, mean, and peace. Statement five: I do not know how to differentiate between /tʃ/ and /dʒ/ sounds as a learner. The above statement from Table one (see Appendix A) was intended to elicit the participants' opinion on the /tʃ/ sound. It was observed that many students get confused with words like chin and chime. Statement six: As a learner, I do not know how to differentiate between /æ/ and /ɑ:/ sounds. The above statement shows from Table one (see Appendix A) explains that most of the students do not know to distinguish between /æ/ and /ɑ:/ sounds. It is observed that /æ/ sound does not exist in the Arabic language, which confuses the participants, and /ɑ:/ sound confuses the participants with spelling miscues. Statement seven: I find it difficult to pronounce the following minimal pairs meet and meat as a learner. The above statement from Table one (see Appendix A) clearly illustrates that the majority of the students face challenges in pronouncing the minimal pairs accurately. Statement eight: As a learner, I always get confused, and mix between /s/ and /θ/ sounds as in thousand and south. This statement from Table one (see Appendix A) intends to show that most of the students mix between /s/ and /θ/ sounds. Statement nine: As a learner, I face pronunciation difficulties in general usage of words due to the differences between Arabic and English. This statement from Table one (see Appendix A) illustrates that there is much difference between Arabic and English grammar and sound systems, making many students commit miscues about transfer, interference, and overgeneralization. Statement ten: As a learner, I get confused when I pronounce the following words leave and great. The statistics in this statement from Table one (see Appendix A) shows that students get confused when they pronounce pure vowels and diphthongs. Therefore, pronunciation sufficiently permits effective communication. Statement 11: I get confused when I pronounce /r/ as in doctor and teacher as a learner. This statement from Table one (see Appendix A) displays that students face difficulty pronouncing/r/ at the end or adding this sound to the word, which leads to mispronunciation. Statement 12: As a learner, I do not differentiate between weak and strong forms as in that, could and have. The above statement from Table one (see Appendix A) indicates that many students do not know weak and strong forms. One of the noticeable features in English pronunciation is its syllables, and students of EFL need to know its distribution and pronunciation. Statement 13: As a learner, I usually mix between the /dʒ/ and /g/sounds. The above statement from Table one (see Appendix A) indicates that many Arab speakers substitute /dʒ/ sound with /g/ sound.   It stimulated the participants' opinion on pronouncing the /dʒ/ and /g/ sounds. Statement 14: As a learner, I get confused with the pronunciation of /ʒ/ sound as in treasure, measure, and pleasure. This statement from Table one (see Appendix A) illustrates that the majority of the students get confused with the pronunciation of /ʒ/ sound because this sound does not exist in the Arabic language. Statement

15: As a learner, I get confused and mix with the pronunciation of /s/ and /ʃ/ sounds. The above statement from Table one (see Appendix A) demonstrates that most students fail to distinguish between /s/ and /ʃ/ sounds and commit pronunciation miscues. Statement 16: As a learner, I usually get confused when I pronounce/r/ sound as in car and cart. This statement from Table one (see Appendix A) clearly illustrates that the majority of the students get confused when they pronounce/r/ sound in the middle or end of a word such as car, cart, or particular, which leads to pronunciation miscues. EFL learners who wish to get close to native-like competency should be careful not to pronounce /r/ that is often found to correspond to the spelling.

Primary Investigation Stage II
Findings of Initial Pronunciation Test
  As the present research focused on improving the pronunciation skills of the participants, an integrated initial pronunciation test was conducted to test the participants' knowledge to identify four vowel sounds and eight sample words through Blackboard Collaborate Ultra LMS. It was observed that a majority of the participants were incompetent speakers of EFL, and they gave importance to spelling rather than sound and the accent was a significant barrier for the participants to understand the correct pronunciation for the given sample words. Therefore, it was decided and confirmed that the participants needed training from scratch to gain proficiency in English pronunciation skills.

Table 2. *Summary of participants responses in initial pronunciation Test Primary Investigation Stage II*

Participants' responses	Sounds scored	Percent %
C	97	3.0%
IC	23	0.7%
D	08	0.3%
Total	128	04%

Note. Scale C = correct responses, IC = incorrect responses, D = divergences

  Table two presents the participant's performance based on their correct and incorrect responses in identifying the four short vowel sounds and eight sample words. We used a measuring scale of C-for correct responses, IC-for incorrect responses, and D-divergences. It was observed that a majority of participants gave positive responses in the pronunciation of short vowel sounds. Practicing sounds helped the participants perceive sounds, particularly by repetition and rehearsing sounds with suitable examples. The scores of the initial pronunciation test are 97 correct responses, 23 incorrect responses, and eight were divergences in pronunciation of sounds.

Table 3**.** *Summary of participants responses in initial pronunciation test primary investigation stage II*

Participants' responses	Words scored	Percent %
C	134	4.2%
IC	104	3.3%
D	018	0.6%
Total	256	08%

Note. Scale C = correct responses, IC = incorrect responses, D = divergences

Table three illustrates the participant's performance based on their correct and incorrect responses in pronunciation of eight sample words. We used a measuring scale of C-for correct responses, IC-for incorrect responses, and D-divergences. It was perceived that most participants were low achievers in pronouncing sample words compared to sounds in the initial pronunciation test. The initial sample words test scores were 134 correct responses, 104 incorrect responses, and 18 were divergences. Vocabulary is the main element of language proficiency. Learning words is a lifelong process, and EFL students should constantly update their vocabulary to achieve spelling and pronunciation proficiency. It has to be taught so that participants may be trained to pronounce and write naturally and effectively. There is no fixed method to enhance vocabulary in a day or two. Its acquisition demands meticulous and step-by-step learning. It can be enriched gradually, and one should always evince enthusiasm in finding, education, and understanding new words.

Findings of the Phonemic Word Squares

Phonemic word squares helped to develop pronunciation by attention focusing, anticipating sounds, and inferencing the phonemes in word squares, as cited by (Jahara & Abdelrady, 2021). After sufficient training through Blackboard LMS, most participants were able to understand native and near-native English speech. They improved in identifying English sounds to fill the phonemic word squares, for example, /i:/ beach, bean, cheese and knees, /æ/ bat, tap, cap and sat /e/ sell, tell, set, yet, /ɔ:/ tall, talk, call, laws and so on. This game can be adapted to teach any vocabulary item, and it is a great way to teach English pronunciation more clearly and distinctively, as cited by (Jahara & Abdelrady, 2021). After the initial pronunciation test, the other tests administered to the participants are exposed to open-ended tasks to enrich their listening and pronunciation skills and experience predicting abilities to perform better.

Table 4. *Summary of participants responses in phonemic word squares primary investigation stage II*

Participants' responses	Words scored	Percent %
C	204	6.3%
IC	96	0.3%
D	20	0.6%
Total	320	10%

Note. Scale C = correct responses, IC = incorrect responses, D = divergences

Table four explains the participant's performance based on their correct and incorrect responses in pronunciation of ten phonemic squares. We used a measuring scale of C-for correct responses, IC-for incorrect responses, and D-divergences. It was detected that the majority of participants showed positive responses and completed the phonemic word squares. The phonemic word squares test scores are 204 correct responses, 96 incorrect responses, and 20 were divergences.

Findings of the Phonemic Inventory Consonants

The participants were given training through Blackboard LMS in consonant phonemes. After sufficient ear training, their voice was recorded to identify their pronunciation and articulation of consonants. The phonemic inventory consonants were introduced to make participants know how to transcribe words and pronounce transcribed words, to be able to understand and explain the difference between consonant and vowel phonemes, and to be able to

produce intelligible English utterances. In the pronunciation of consonant phonemes, the majority of the participants gave positive responses, with 654 accurate answers.

It was observed that a few participants have confusion in distinguishing between the voiceless bilabial plosive /p/ with voiced bilabial plosive /b/sound. It was observed that only /b/ sound is found in the Arabic language, and /p/ sound is not available, which could be a significant barrier for the Arab learners to discriminate between the voiced and voiceless bilabial /p/ and /b/ phonemes. Fricatives posed a problem for some of the participants. The recorded speech samples indicate that in a majority of the speakers, the voiced dental fricative /ð/ and voiceless dental fricative /θ/ sounds were observed to be problematic as the participants were confused with the articulation of /θ,ð/ and these sounds were substituted by /t,d/sound in p5, p6, p12, p18, p25, and p28. Similarly, the voiced palato alveolar fricative /ʒ/ was substituted by /dʒ/ sound in p3, p6, p11, p13, p14, p16, p18 and the voiceless palato alveolar fricative /ʃ/ was substituted by /s/, and /dʒ/ sounds in p1, p3, p4, p6, p8, p11, p14, p15, p16, and p18. It was noticed that a few participants found the voiced labiodental fricative /v/ confusing, and this sound was substituted by /w/ sound in p12, p16, and p22. For a few speaker's affricates posed a problem. The voiced palato alveolar affricate /dʒ/ was substituted by 'jaa' in p3, p6, p11, p13, p14, p16, p18 and the voiceless palato alveolar affricate /tʃ/ was substituted by 'cha' sound in p3, p10, p11, p12, p15, and p16.

It is observed that a majority of participants were confused to distinguish between voiceless palato alveolar fricative /ʃ/ p1, p3, p4, p6, p8, p11, p14, 15, p16, p23, p25 with voiceless palato alveolar affricate /t ʃ/ p3, p10, p11, p12, p15, and p16 sound. Some participants were confused with voiced velar plosive /g/and substituted with voiced palato alveolar affricate /dʒ/. Some participants were confused with voiced approximant /j/ p5, p7, p8, p9, p10, p14, p17, p19, p29, and this sound was absent in the phonemic inventory of a few participants p1, p3, p4, p6, p8, p11, p14, and a few participants substituted this sound by voiced palato alveolar affricate /dʒ/ sound. Two letters in English can have one sound, but many Arab learners do not know how to pronounce and differentiate sounds such as ch, sh, ph, gh, and so on.

Similarly, some participants were confused with lateral alveolar voiced approximant /l/ p7, p8, p16, p19, p21, p23, p28, p31 and substituted it by 'laa.' The researchers observed that nasals also were problematic to some participants, and some of the participants p4, p6, p16, p22, p23, p24 were confused to pronounce voiced alveolar nasal /n/ and for some of the participants p6, p15, p22, p23, p25 the voiced velar nasal /ŋ/ were absent. However, it is observed that the majority of the speakers showed positive responses in the phonemic consonant inventory.

When looking at the phonemic inventory's total divergences, it was observed that a few participants, p16 and p 24, committed miscues in the pronunciation of voiceless bilabial plosive /p/ as 'paa.' Two participants, p19 and p 26, committed miscues in the pronunciation of voiceless alveolar plosive /t/ as 'taa.' Participants p16 and p28 committed miscues in the pronunciation of voiced bilabial plosive /b/ as 'baa.' As referred to in the majority of our findings of the learners faced problems with fricatives. The voiceless labio-dental fricative /f/ was substituted by 'faa' in p3, p23, and p 25 participants, and the voiced labio-dental fricative was substituted as 'vaa' in p23, p25, and p29 participants. In the majority of the speakers, the voiced dental fricative /ð/ and voiceless dental fricative /θ/ sound was observed to be problematic as the speakers were

confused with the articulation of /θ,ð/ and these sounds were substituted by /t,d/ sounds in p18, p19, and p26 participants. Similarly, the voiced palato alveolar fricative /ʒ/ was substituted by /dʒ/, /ʃ/ sounds in p3, p6, p11, p13, p14, p16, and p18 and the voiceless palato alveolar fricative /ʃ/ was substituted by /s/ sound in p1, p3, p4, p6, p11, p13, p14, p16, p18, p23, p25 participants. It is noticed that a few speakers found the voiced labiodental fricative /v/ confusing, and this sound was substituted by /w/ sound in participants p12, p16, and p22.

Table 5. *Summary of participants responses on phonemic inventory consonants primary investigation* s*tage II*

Participants' responses	Sounds scored	Percent %
C	654	20.4%
IC	111	3.5%
D	36	1.1%
Total	801	25.0%

Note. Scale C = correct responses, IC = incorrect responses, D = divergences

Table five demonstrates the participant's performance based on consonant phonemes, and we used a measuring scale of C-for correct responses, IC-for incorrect responses, and D-divergences. It was perceived that the majority of participants gave positive responses in the pronunciation of consonant sounds with 654 correct responses, 111 incorrect responses, and 36 divergences

Findings of the Phonemic Inventory Vowels

The participants were given training through Blackboard LMS in vowel phonemes. After sufficient ear training, their voice was recorded to identify their pronunciation and articulation of vowels. The phonemic inventory vowels were introduced to teach participants how to transcribe and pronounce words, understand, compare and contrast different theories of rhythm, assess the phonetic and phonological merits and demerits of English speech, and produce intelligible English utterances. A majority of positive responses have been observed from all the participants in vowel phonemes with 486 correct responses.

However, vowels posed problematic to some of the participants, and they were confused to distinguish between the close front vowel /ɪ/ p14, p22, p27 with close-mid front vowel /e/ p11, p19, p26. Some participants p10, p22 was confused to distinguish between the short vowel /ɪ/ with long vowel /i:/. It was observed that some participants do not know how to distinguish between the short vowel /æ/ p1, p3, p11, p19, p23, p25, p28, p29, p30 with long vowel /ɑ:/ sound p3, p5, p6, p19, p27 failed to produce the acceptable sound patterns. A majority of participants p1, p3, p5, p6, p7, p11, p12, p13, p14, p15, p19, p23, p25, p27, p31 failed to distinguish the short vowel /ʌ/, /ɒ/ and /ə/ and these sounds were absent in some participants p3, p5, p6, p7, p12, p13, p15, p19, p23. It is observed that some of participants p3, p5, p6, p19, p27 were confused to distinguish the long vowel sound /ɑ:/ with diphthong /eə/ and participants p4, p6, p8, p13, p14, p16, p17, p19, p22, p23, p24, p27, p29 failed to produce the good sound patterns. Short and long vowel sounds are not easy to master by Arab learners without constant practice. Arabic orthography is different from English orthography, which raises challenges for Arab learners to recognize and understand the sound pattern and alphabet. It is observed that many silent letters in the English language also confuse Arab learners because the Arabic language does not have many silent letters compared to the English language.

By and large, most of the participants seemed to have monophthongs in their inventory. Concerning centring and closing diphthongs, the sounds, /əʊ, aʊ, eə, aɪ, ɔɪ/ were missing from the inventory of a few participants p3, p5, p9, p14, p15, p18, p19, p24, p26, p28, p29, and some participants had divergences with the production of diphthongs. Centring diphthong /eə/ was substituted as 'yeh,' 'year' and /aɪ/'oye' 'aaea' was substituted by participants p4, p5, p7, p13, p15, p17, p19 and /aɪ/ was replaced by 'oye' 'aaea' by participants p3, p5, p7, p9, p14, p15, p17, p19. Finally, all the participants of the research study took the phonemic inventory vowels and showed positive responses.

Table 6. *Summary of participants responses on phonemic inventory vowels primary investigation stage II*

Participants' responses	Sounds scored	Percent %
C	486	15.1%
IC	152	4.8%
D	18	0.6%
Total	656	20.5%

Note. Scale C = correct responses, IC = incorrect responses, D = divergences

Table six elucidates the participant's performance on vowel phonemes, and we used a measuring scale of C-for correct responses, IC-for incorrect responses, and D-divergences. It was witnessed that the majority of participants gave positive responses in the pronunciation of vowel sounds with 486 correct responses, 152 incorrect responses, and 18 divergences.

Findings of Final Pronunciation Test

The final pronunciation test covered six conversations of day-to-day life based on English vowel and consonant phonemes. The participants showed tremendous progress and improvement from their initial pronunciation test to the final pronunciation test. The participants were informed to read the conversation, pronounce the appropriate sound, and fill in the blanks. The final test was given to participants to assess their attention to speech sounds that differ in significant components of the phonological system, possible sequences of consonant and vowel phonemes, and to recognize which speech sounds can and cannot occur in combination. The participants need to understand the right sound to fill in the blanks and pronounce it accurately to improve their pronunciation and listening skills. "Proficiency in phonological perception and intelligible production is essential for successful spoken communication" (Troike, 2006, p. 143).

The first conversation was on bilabial plosive /p/ and /b/ (Hancock, 2012). It was experiential that most participants were familiar with /p/ and /b/ sounds. They actively participated in the conversation test and showed positive responses in identifying the appropriate sounds. The second conversation was on alveolar fricative sounds /s/ and /z/ (Hancock, 2012). It was observed that though most of the participants were familiar with /s/ and /z/ sounds, very few participants were confused with /s/ sound and replaced it with /z/ sound in the given conversation. The third conversation was on velar plosive sounds /g/ and /k/ (Hancock, 2012). It was experimental that most of the participants were familiar with /g/ and /k/ sounds and actively participated in the conversation test. They showed positive responses in identifying the appropriate sounds. The fourth conversation was on palato alveolar fricative /ʃ/ and palato alveolar affricates /dʒ/ and /tʃ /sounds (Hancock, 2012). It was practical that the majority of the participants were familiar with the affricates /dʒ/ and /tʃ / and a few of them mistook palato alveolar fricative /ʃ/ and substituted it with /tʃ /. The fifth conversation was on vowel sounds /ɑː/

and /eə/(Hancock, 2012). It is observed that a majority of participants were confused with the vowel sounds/ɑ:/ and /eə/ and failed to produce syntactically acceptable patterns. Furthermore, the final conversation was on vowel sounds /aɪ/ and /ɪ/ (Hancock, 2012). The majority of the participants showed positive responses in identifying the appropriate sounds and the scores of the participants showed remarkable progress in their performance.

Table 7. *Summary of participants responses on final pronunciation test primary investigation stage II*

	Grades	Number of participants grade	Percent %
A-	+90	18	56.25%
B-	+80	9	28.1%
C-	+70	1	3.1%
D-	+60	4	12.5%
	Total	32	100 %

Note. Scale A = excellent, B = good, C = average D = needs improvement

Table seven proves the participant's performance on the final pronunciation test. We used a measuring scale of A-for +90 excellent, B-for +80 good, C- for +70 average, and D- for +60 needs improvement. It was observed that the majority of 18 participants achieved an excellent grade performance in the final pronunciation test; nine participants scored B grade good performance, one participant scored C grade average performance, and four participants scored D grade who needed improvement in their pronunciation skills.

Discussion

Pronunciation, listening, and speaking skills prosper with active interaction between teachers and students. One of the essential aspects of foreign language teaching and learning is English pronunciation because it affects students' communication skills and performance.

Lack of pronunciation skills reduces learners' self-confidence and limits their social interactions. EFL teachers can help their learners obtain the necessary skills of pronunciation they need for effective communication (Gilakjani & Sabouri, as cited in Jahara & Abdelrady, 2021).

Listening to different sounds and words involves recognizing the sounds of words, perception of sound, accent, and tonal variation to recognize the speech sounds of the words. Articulation disorders include problems with the articulation process and their sound patterns; heard sounds can be substituted, have divergences, left off without articulating, linguistic innovation, or change the sound. Some participants were confused with the perception of sounds due to mother tongue influence, articulation disorders, and lack of exposure to attentive listening and pronunciation skills in the initial pronunciation test. It was noticed that some of the participants committed miscues due to their incompetent pronunciation skills. It was discovered that though listening and pronunciation skills are a part of the curriculum, it is hardly taught systematically.

The learners' questionnaire responses and other tests revealed that Table One (see Appendix A) while listening and pronunciation were taught as part of the curriculum beginning at level one, they were not trained in accordance with their needs. This research study aims to improve the listening and pronunciation skills of B. A program undergraduates in order to

improve their reading and speaking skills. Various listening and pronunciation tests were developed to help participants improve their listening and pronunciation skills to help the unsuccessful speakers pronounce better.

The researchers first checked each received pronunciation (R.P) sound in the Blackboard Collaborate Ultra LMS when introducing phonemic inventory vowels, and consonants refer to Tables five and six. The participants were instructed to use a microphone to record their voices by uttering the consonant and vowel phonemes. If the sound was missing or not correctly articulated, the phoneme sound is marked as missing in the speaker's inventory and treated as a miscue or error. Suppose the sound articulated correctly in the text but not in a place where it should occur but occurred elsewhere were treated as divergences. The recorded sound of each participant is analyzed and evaluated based on a measuring scale presented as C-for correctly pronounced response IC-for incorrectly pronounced response and D-for divergences. All the participants of our research study participated in phonemic inventory consonants and vowels, and their responses were recorded and analyzed. The participants were initially hesitant to participate and articulate the phonemes when their voice was recorded using Blackboard Collaborate Ultra LMS refer Table one initial pronunciation test.

The researchers gave participants regular practice sessions. They were repeatedly asked to pronounce sounds with the help of sample words refer to Table two and comparative words to overcome fossilized pronunciation errors. It was explained to the participants that practicing English sounds would help them improve their pronunciation and communication skills. It was discovered that developing listening skills with attentiveness can improve participants' pronunciation. According to Chang (2005), pronunciation practice is a methodology meant for EFL teachers who have little background in phonetics or phonology and those who feel a need for expansion in their lesson repertoire. It is noted that many instructors are reluctant to teach pronunciation in adult EFL classrooms, often because of a lack of formal training. However, significant numbers of EFL students want pronunciation instruction. Although stand-alone pronunciation courses are for second-language (L2) learners, many students cannot access them. Pronunciation activities in general-skills L2 textbooks are one approach to meeting the needs of both instructors and students. (Derwing et al., 2012, as cited in Jahara & Abdelrady, 2021).

According to Troike (2006), L2 learners must be proficient in phonological perception in most educational settings, and intelligible pronunciation is required for listening and speaking. Arab learners frequently experience articulation and phonological difficulties due to inadequate phonics and phonetics instruction, which leads to mispronunciation issues. All our participants received education in the English language from their sixth grade of primary schooling. The participants did not receive proper guidance in English pronunciation at school, and the language gained outside the classroom was minimal. Incompetent EFL teachers are also one of a reason. Therefore, the English language teachers must be trained at various levels through appropriate curricula in listening and pronunciation skills to become reasonably familiar with different styles of pronunciation and accent. Trained teachers will help students identify the text of any speech and understand the content from the correct perspective. The curriculum should include teaching phonics and phonetics at early stages or levels of learning.

It was experiential that most participants improved their pronunciation skills from preliminary investigation stage I to primary investigation stage II. There has been tremendous progress in the pronunciation skills of participants from the initial pronunciation test to the final pronunciation test. Most of our participants had a joyous urge to enrich their pronunciation skills. They were highly motivated towards learning the sounds of English to develop their pronunciation and listening ability. Finally, the enthusiasm and motivation to learn trains the participants in intensity and persistence in pronunciation activities related to the content and context of our research study. Therefore, to master the skill of pronunciation, one needs expert guidance initially and constant practice after that with a few sample words every day. The art of articulation requires the participants to practice their skills and make them into a habit.

Limitations

This study has some limits. The present research study has investigated the listening and pronunciation problems faced by EFL Undergraduates learning English as a Foreign Language. The study has focused on qualitative and quantitative research methods using questionnaires, recorded speech samples, and pronunciation tests to analyze learners' performance orally through Blackboard LMS on English pronunciation. The methodology and tools of this research study will address the students' opinions on pronunciation skills.

Conclusion

The English language is becoming increasingly crucial in Saudi Arabia and around the world. No one can deny the value of the English language nowadays because it is the language of science, technology, trade, and global communication. Everyone needs to know how to pronounce words correctly to communicate effectively with others. This study focused on pronunciation issues encountered by Arab female undergraduate EFL students at Qassim University. As part of its methodology, it used questionnaires, recorded speech samples, and pronunciation tests to analyze learners' performance orally through repetition drills to help participants articulate the sounds of English using the Blackboard Learning Management System. It was experiential that most participants improved their pronunciation skills from preliminary investigation stage I to primary investigation stage II. There has been tremendous progress in the pronunciation skills of participants from the initial pronunciation test to the final pronunciation test. The study aimed to train students using pronunciation tests and phonemic inventory through repetition and imitation to overcome pronunciation and fossilized miscues and improve their pronunciation of English words and sentences. The study found that our EFL undergraduates' pronunciation enhanced due to their constant motivation and willingness to participate in the designed tests through Blackboard Collaborate Ultra LMS. To overcome their mispronunciation problems, the EFL undergraduates had a joyful desire to improve their pronunciation skills. They were highly motivated to learn the sounds of English to improve their pronunciation and listening ability. The study revealed that mastering pronunciation requires expert guidance at first, followed by consistent practice with a few sample words every day. Finally, the researchers hoped that the study's findings would aid in teaching pronunciation and, as a result, resolve adult female Arab EFL learners' pronunciation issues.

Acknowledgments

Translation Department faculty, College of Sciences and Arts at Al-Asyah. We are grateful to the level five participants from the Department of English Language and Translation.

About the authors

Syed Farhat Jahara has received Ph.D. in English Language. She is an Assistant Professor at the Department of English Language and Translation, College of Sciences and Arts at Al-Asyah, Qassim University, Saudi Arabia. Her research interests include effective methods to improve listening and speaking skills, designing task-based activities based on learner needs, soft skills, learning styles, and learner strategies. ORCID ID: 0000-0002-2057-5982

Abbas Hussein Abdelrady has received Ph.D. in Applied Linguistics. He is an Assistant Professor at the Department of English Language and Translation, College of Sciences and Arts at Al-Asyah, Qassim University, Saudi Arabia. His research interests include, but are not limited to, linguistics, historical linguistics, applied linguistics, psycholinguistics, second language acquisition, and education policy and pedagogy. ORCID ID: 0000-0002-7920-887X

References

Abdalla Ahmed Abker, I. (2020). Difficulties in pronouncing English morphemes among Saudi EFL students at Albaha University. A case study in Almandag. *Arab World English Journal*, *11*(2), 395-410. https://doi.org/10.24093/awej/vol11no2.27

Abdul-Abbas, I. H., Rashid, Q. J., & RasimYounus, M. (2021). Belief and practice in the teaching of pronunciation in the Iraqi EFL context. *PalArch's Journal of Archaeology of Egypt/Egyptology*, *18*(3), 451-470.

Alharbi, Y. G. (2019). A review of the current status of English as a foreign language (EFL) education in Saudi Arabia. *Global Journal of Education and Training*, *1*(2).

Al-Rubaat, A. M., & Alshammari, H. A. (2020). Analysis of phonetic and phonological constraints of Saudi EFL learners. *English Language Teaching*, *13*(1), 63-72.

Alshehri, A. (2020). Perception of the English phonotactics by Saudi English majors: A comparative study. *Arab World English Journal*, *11*(4), 207-222. https://doi.org/10.24093/awej/vol11no4.14

Berry, D. M. (2021). Level up your pronunciation: Impact of a mobile game. *MEXTESOL Journal*, *45*(1), n1.

Celce-Murcia, M., Brighton, D. & Goodwin. J. (1996). *Teaching Pronunciation*. Cambridge University Press.

Chang, M. (2005). Pronunciation practice activities: A resource book for teaching English pronunciation. *The Canadian Modern Language Review/La revue canadienne des langues vivantes*, *61*(3), 436-439.

Crystal, D. (2003). *English as a Global Language*. (2nd ed). Cambridge University Press.

Derwing, T. M., Diepenbroek, L. G., & Foote, J. A. (2012). How well do general-skills ESL textbooks address pronunciation? *TESL Canada Journal*, 22-22.

Hancock, M. (2012). *English Pronunciation in Use*. Cambridge University Press.

Jahara, S. F., & Abdelrady, A. H. (2021). English Café: An initiative to encourage undergraduate learners of Al-Asyah Province to showcase their spoken proficiency in English. *Journal of Ethnic and Cultural Studies*, *8*(3). https://doi.org/10.29333/ejecs/776

Jones, D. (1956). *The Pronunciation of English*. (4th ed).   Cambridge University Press. (first published 1909).

Khaleghi, M., Batobara, M., & Saleem, M. (2020). A case for teaching pronunciation to adult EFL learners, using metrical versification. *International Journal of Learning, Teaching and Educational Research*, *19*(3), 460-474.

Krashen, S. (1982). *Principles and Practice in Second Language Acquisition*. Oxford: Pergamon Press.

Ministry of Education. (2021). *The Emergence of the Ministry*. Retrieved 15/02/2021 from https://www.moe.gov.sa/en/aboutus/aboutministry/

Nakazawa, K. (2012). The effectiveness of focused attention on pronunciation and intonation training in tertiary Japanese language education on learners' confidence: Preliminary report on training workshops and a supplementary computer program. *International Journal of Learning,* 18 (4), 181-192.

Reed, M., & Levis, J. (2019). *The Handbook of English Pronunciation*. Wiley Blackwell.

Roach, P. (2009). *English Phonetics and Phonology. A Practical Course*. (4th ed). Cambridge University Press.

Troike, M. S. (2006). *Introducing Second Language Acquisition*. Cambridge University Press.

Vadakalur Elumalai, K., Sufian Abdullah, M., P Sankar, J., & R, K. (2021). English language pronunciation barriers encountered by the expatriate students at King Saud University, Riyadh. *Arab World English Journal*, *12*(1), 293-308. https://doi.org/10.24093/awej/vol12no1.20

Appendix A. Participants questionnaire Preliminary investigation stage I

Table 1. *Summary of participants' responses to the statements of questionnaire* p*reliminary investigation stage I*

Statements	Responses					
	Median	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1- Aa a learner, I did not learn how to differentiate between /p/ and /b/ sounds correctly during school.	16	16 (50%)	5 (15.6%)	1 (3.1%)	7 (21.9%)	3 (9.4%)
2- As a learner, I usually get confused and mix between /ʃ / and /t ʃ/ sounds.	15	15 (46.9%)	4 (12.5%)	6 (18.8%)	3 (9.4%)	4 (12.5%)
3- As a learner, I usually get confused and mix /ɪ/ and /e/ sounds.	17	17(53.1%)	5 (15.6%)	3 (9.4%)	1 (3.1%)	6 (18.8%)
4- As a learner, I usually get confused with /ɪ/ short vowel and /i:/ long vowel sounds.	15	15 (46.9%)	6 (18.8%)	6 (9.4%)	3 (9.4%)	5 (15.6%)
5- As a learner, I don't know how to differentiate between //t ʃ/ and /dʒ/ sounds.	16	16 (50%)	7 (21.9%)	3 (9.4%)	0 (0%)	6 (18.8%)
6- As a learner, I don't know how to differentiate between /æ/ and /ɑ:/ sounds.	14	14 (43.8%)	4 (12.5%)	6 (18%.8)	4 (12.5%)	4 (12.5%)
7- As a learner, I find it difficult to pronounce the following minimal pairs meet and meat.	15	15 (46.9%)	8 (25%)	4 (12.5%)	1 (3.1%)	4 (12.5%)

8- As a learner, I always get confused and mix between /s/ and /θ/ sounds as in thousand and south.	14	14 (43.8%)	8 (25%)	3 (9.4%)	3 (9.4%)	4 (12.5%)
9- As a learner, I face pronunciation difficulties in general usage of words due to the differences between Arabic and English language.	11	11 (35.5%)	9 (29%)	3 (9.7%)	4 (12.9%)	4 (12.9%)
10- As a learner, I get confused when I pronounce the following words leave and great (diphthongs).	11	11 (34.4%)	8 (25%)	4 (12.5%)	6 (18.8%)	3 (9.4%)
11- As a learner, I get confused when I pronounce /r/, as in doctor and teacher.	13	13 (40.6%)	7 (21.9%)	1 (3.1%)	7 (21.9%)	4 (12.5%)
12- As a learner, I don't differentiate between weak and strong forms as in that, could and have.	11	11 (34.4%)	7 (21.9%)	5 (15.6%)	6 (18.8%)	3 (9.4%)
13- As a learner, I usually mix between /dʒ/ and /g/ sounds.	12	12 (37.5%)	6 (18.8%)	4 (12.5%)	7 (21.9%)	3 (9.4%)
14- Aa a learner, I get confused with the pronunciation of /ʒ/ sound as in treasure, measure, and pleasure.	12	12 (37.5%)	8 (25%)	4 (12.5%)	5 (15.6%)	3 (9.4%)
15- As a learner, I get confused and mix the pronunciation of /s/ and /ʃ/ sounds.	11	11 (34.4%)	9 (28.1%)	3 (9.4%)	7 (21.9%)	2 (6.3%)
16- As a learner, I usually get confused when I pronounce the/r/ sound as in car and cart.	14	14 (43.8%)	7 (21.9%)	1 (3.1%)	8 (25%)	2 (6.3%)