Problems Encounter Sudanese EFL Learners in Pronouncing English Diphthong Sounds
(A case study: University of Kassala)

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Abstract

This paper attempts to investigate Sudanese EFL learners' pronunciation problems of English diphthong sounds. These sounds seem to pose actual challenge for many Sudanese EFL learners. They seem to confuse /u:/, /ʊ:/, /ei/, /i/ and so on. The study seeks to identify the areas of difficulty and find the causes for such difficulty. To this end, the researcher used the descriptive analytical method to collect and analyze data. A student test was used as a tool for collecting data. SPSS program was used to calculate and analyze the data.

The study examined (100) EFL learners at University of Kassala in production of diphthong sounds. Their performance of diphthong sounds production was found to be shaky and poor. This weakness may be attributed to several factors such as lack of intensive and direct instructions on pronunciation as a major cause. Other causes include effect of learners L1 interference with L2, lack of computer-assisted listening aids such as language laboratory, audio-visuals, over-head projector and the like.

Based on the finding, the study presents some recommendations as follows: teachers should model teaching and learning pronunciation at both levels productive and receptive. The syllabus should be designed in a way to match the overcrowdedness of classrooms in Kassala educational institutions. Learners and teachers should expose themselves to English outside classrooms, e.g. radio and TV, online Social media site as well as electronic dictionaries for correct and acceptable pronunciation.

المستخلص
تحاول هذه الورقة البحث في مشاكل نطق أصوات العلة المركبة في اللغة الإنجليزية للدارسين السودانيين للغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية. ويبدو أن هذه الأصوات تشكل تحدياً حقيقياً للكثير من الدارسين السودانيين للغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية. وقد لاحظ الباحث أنهم يربكون في نطق الأصوات الآتية: /e:/, /ei/, /i:/, / ɔ:/, / ʌ:/, / ɒ:/, /i:/, / ʌi/, /ei/. وتسعى هذه الدراسة إلى تحديد الصعوبات ومعرفة مسبباتها. ومحاولة تحقيق هذه الغاية استخدم الباحث المنتج الوصفي التحليلي لجمع وتحليل البيانات وتم استخدام اختبار لطلاب كأداة لجمع البيانات وتم تحليل البيانات إحصائياً باستخدام برنامج الحزمة الإحصائية لعلوم الاجتماعية SPSS.

قامت الدراسة بإجراء اختبار نطق أصوات العلة المركبة على عدد (100) دارس سوداني للغة الإنجليزية في جامعة كسلا. وأشارت نتائج الدراسة إلى وجود ضعف لدى الدارسين في نطق الأصوات قيد الدراسة. ويمكن أن يعزى هذا الضعف إلى عدة عوامل مثل عدم وجود تدريس مكثف ومباشر لنطق تلك الأصوات كسبب رئيس. وهناك أسباب أخرى مثل تداخل اللغة الأم مع تعلم اللغة الأجنبية وعدم وجود الوسائل السمعية الحديثة الحديثة المحسوبة ومعامل اللغة والأجهزة السمعية والبصرية الأخرى.

وبناءً على النتائج تقدم الدراسة التوصيات الآتية: يجب على المدرسين تقديم نماذج صوتية في تعليم وتعلم الأصوات على المستوى النطقي والسمعي. وأيضاً يجب تصميم المنتج بحيث يناسب احتياجات الفصول بمؤسسات نصلا التعليمية. وعلى الدارسين والمدرسين الاهتمام بالاستماع إلى اللغة خارج قاعات الدراسة مثل الراديو والتلفاز وويلاستماع وتبادل التواصل الاجتماعي عبر شبكة الإنترنت وأيضاً الاستفادة من القاموس الإلكتروني للنطق الصحيح والمقبول.

1- Introduction:
Pronunciation is the most important skill of spoken English Gilakjani, A. P. (2011). Not surprisingly, pronunciation instruction plays a significant role in the teaching of English as a foreign language (EFL) Jahan, (2011). Also the majority of EFL learners seek to speak native-like English Derwing (2003). However, the importance of teaching pronunciation cannot be emphasized too much, Hismanoglu, (2006). Obviously, it is imperative that teachers help learners of English develop the ability for the communication needs and the ability for being understood easily Morley, (1991).

However, many of English language learners (ELLs) confront difficulties in learning English pronunciation Gilakjani (2011). Problems in pronunciation weaken their communicative competence, in Chen, L.(2014). More severely, many of them still Hinofotis, (1981) lack sufficient proficiency in pronunciation even if they have learned English in a FL course. In fact, it is understandable that a FL student using a non-standard variety of English might be negatively affected while acquiring English language if they are not familiar with standardized English Charity & Mallinson, (2011). Specifically, FL students’ as Benjamin (2002) says “pronunciation conventions differ from those of English speakers”. Accordingly, helping FL students learn standardized English should begin with understanding pronunciation variations that FL students possess while acquiring English.

Needless to say, to enhance FL students’ ability in English articulation, teachers should develop the awareness towards pronunciation variations while working with them (Morley, 1991). More precisely, it is necessary that teachers develop their awareness of diverse sound structures, further gaining insights into pronunciation variations that FL students are facing now. In particular, teachers who work with students from diverse backgrounds need to have informative knowledge about FL students’ English language variation in order to better serve those students.

English is not a phonetic language, that is to say, there is no matching between sound and symbol. For example (ph) is pronounced as /f/ not /p/ and /h/ .This is why it seemed difficult to write and pronounce English words. Although, no matching between sound and symbol, there are 26 letters in the English alphabet, the sounds that may be produced are almost double that number. The 44 English phonemes are represented by the 26 letters of the alphabet individually and in combination. As English
language includes phonetic transcription of English phonemes (vowel and consonant sounds) to increase the EFLs' understanding of English pronunciation, improve speech and reading, and help students consult a dictionary. The phonemic transcriptions in dictionaries are helpful for EFL students, because they include American and British accent as well as detailed descriptions about English sounds/letters and words. The researcher will focus particularly on sounds that are difficult and confusing for Sudanese EFLs to pronounce. According to the paragraphs above pronunciation ability in FL is important for EFL learners. Thus, this paper attempts to investigate Sudanese EFL learners’ difficulties in the production of diphthong sounds. The aim of which is to be able to provide a conducive environment for promoting students pronunciation competence.

2- Statement of the Problem

It was stated in the introduction above those Sudanese EFL learners, particularly at University of Kassala (second level students majoring in English language) encounter real problems in pronunciation. These problems are attributed to inadequate practice of pronunciation in the language syllabi. It is also stated that correct pronunciation is essential for successful communication and mutual understanding.

However, the researcher’s own teaching experience and results from previous studies observed that, EFL learners at the University of Kassala face problem in pronouncing English diphthong sounds/ei/, /uә/, /eә/, /ei/, /au/, /ai/, /ɔi/, /әu/, correctly. And this is expected to hinder their communicative competence. Another difficulty observed by the researcher is that students' inefficiency in pronouncing English diphthong sounds correctly is due to the interference of their mother tongue with EFL learning. Thus, the study sets out to investigate students' pronunciation of diphthong sounds, the aim of which is to find areas of difficulty and confusion for Sudanese EFLs and suggest theoretical and practical language teaching and learning programs that can help bridge learners' pronunciation gaps for the sake of successful communication.

3- Question of the Study

What are the English diphthong sounds that are difficult and confusing for Second level EFL students at the University of Kassala?

4- Hypothesis of the Study

English language diphthong sounds are difficult and confusing for Second level EFL students at University of Kassala to pronounce because
of the different phonological systems of the two languages and interference of learners' L1 with FL.

5- Objectives of the Study:
- To investigate English diphthong sounds that are problematic to Sudanese EFL learners at second level at University of Kassala.
- To investigate the influence of mother tongue in pronouncing English diphthong sounds.
2- Literature Review

Pronunciation is a set of habits for producing sounds. The habit of producing a sound is acquired by repeating it over and over again and by being corrected when it is pronounced wrongly. Learning to pronounce a second language means building up new pronunciation habits and overcoming the bias of the first language, Cook (1996).

Pronunciation refers to the production of sounds that are used to make meaning. It includes attention to the particular sounds of a language (segments), aspects of speech beyond the level of the individual sound, such as intonation, phrasing, stress, timing, rhythm (suprasegmental aspects), how the voice is projected (voice quality) and, in its broadest definition, attention to gestures and expressions that are closely related to the way language is spoken. A broad definition of pronunciation includes both suprasegmental and segmental features. Although these different aspects of pronunciation are treated in isolation here, it is important to remember that they all work in combination when speaking, and are therefore usually best learned as an integral part of spoken language, Gilakjani, A. P. (2012:96).

2.1 The Importance of Correct Pronunciation for Communication and Mutual Understanding

Obviously, communication is a mutual relationship between the speaker and the hearer. This means that a student must comprehend what he/she hears in the target language and must produce the sounds of the language he/she is trying to learn accurately. Unless he has sufficient knowledge of the sound patterns of the target language, he can neither encode a message to anybody nor decode the message sent by another person.

"Therefore, pronunciation instruction is of great importance for successful oral communication to take place since it is an important ingredient of the communicative competence" Hismanoglu (2006).

Another merit for correct pronunciation is that nowadays there is an increasing demand internationally for competent speakers of English with clear pronunciation and accent. In this respect, Lord (2008) emphasizes that proficiency in language is not only vocabulary and grammar but also good pronunciation.

2.2 Arabic Speakers and EFL learning:

Arabic is native or first language in almost all of the Arab countries. However, the spoken Arabic in Sudan can be divided into several dialectical areas. These Arabic dialects are influenced by the learners local languages. So students come to English classes with different
Arabic sounds and accent versions. With such variations, they are again exposed to a new phonological system that may neither be similar to their Arabic version nor their local language sound systems. This means that any sound mastery of a new phonological system requires efforts and hard training. As a matter of fact their L1 sound system may influence their learning of FL sound system positively or negatively. Moreover, some researchers identify some common pronunciation variations facing Arabic speakers learning English. These variations are due to a language transfer from their native language. For example English permits syllable-initial clusters of up to three consonants,” such as “street” /strit/ Parker & Riley (2009). However, in Arabic, a vowel sound will be inserted when the stems have onset consonant clusters for the purpose of making the articulation conform to Arabic syllable structure Parker & Riley(2009). Arabic students learning English, for example, will insert the vowel /i/ in the following forms: floor [iflor], snow[isno], plane [iblen] and fred [ifred]. Arabic language allows more simple syllables than complex ones. This is why the vowel /i/ is inserted stem-initially. Pronunciation variations discussed here prove that language interference from the first language gives rise to Arabic-speaking FL learners’ learning outcomes in English Alshayban (2012).

2.3 English Vowel Sounds :
2.3.1 Short Vowel Sounds :

According to many linguists, vowel sounds are divided into; short vowel sounds, long vowel sounds, diphthong sounds and triphthong sounds .The present paper is confined to investigate learners diphthong pronunciation as diphthong sounds are a combination of short and long vowel sounds. Therefore only the long and the short vowel sounds articulation will be discussed below.

Roach, P. (2009) states that English has a large number of vowel sounds. These are short vowels, long vowels, diphthongs and triphthongs. Firstly, the short vowels are given the following conventional symbols ( i, e, u, Ə, æ, ʌ a ə). Roach says that short vowels are only relatively short. This means that the sounds may be influenced by neighboring sounds or context and situation, i.e. Vowels can have quite different lengths in different contexts.

The diagram below illustrates short vowel sounds regarding the nature of articulation with the position of the tongue.
English short vowels

Gephardt, F. (2010-2011, p.4) presented a brief account of short vowel sounds as follows:

/ɪ/ pin, English, business
/e/ bed, head, bury, exit
/a:/ cat, bag, apple, black
/o/ the, a, woman, banana
/ʊ/ look, put, could, cushion
/ʌ/ clock, what, because
/ʌ/ cut, come, mother

2.3.2 Long Vowel Sounds

Another significant feature of English vowels is the long vowel sounds. These sounds take long time duration. For example /a:/ sounds, the name of the first English alphabet. And the symbols consist of one vowel and two dots as illustrated between brackets (/i:/, /a:/, /ɜː:/, /ɔː:/, /uː:/). Roach (2009) claims that long vowels tend to be longer than the short vowels. Like short vowels, long vowel sounds are also relative as they are influenced by the context and presence and absence of stress. The diagram below illustrates the long vowel sounds articulation.
English long vowels

In addition, Gebhardt, F. (2010-2011.p,4) presented a few examples to show words with long vowel sounds.

/ɜː/ girl, burn, word, heard
/a:/ car, art, heart, half
/ɔː/ or, board, door, small
/iː/ sea, bee, people, receive
/uː/ too, blue, fruit, fool

2.3.3 Diphthongs:

A diphthong sound is a combination of two vowel sounds; long and short vowel sounds. For example, the diphthong sound /ai/ is a combination of long sound /a/ and short /i/ sound.

Roach, P. (2009) identifies eight diphthong sounds. These are illustrated in the constituent structure below that divided them into three groups.

The centering diphthongs glide towards the /ə/ (schwa) vowel, as the symbols indicate.

- /iə/ (example words: 'beard', 'weird', 'fierce') The starting point is a little closer than /i/ as in 'bit', 'bin',
- /eə/ (example words: 'aired', 'cairn', 'scarce') This diphthong begins with a vowel sound that is more open than the e of 'get', 'men'.

Diphthongs
• /uə/ (example words: 'moored', 'tour', 'lure') . For speakers who have this diphthong, this has a starting point similar to /u/ in 'put', 'pull'. Many speakers pronounce /ɔ:/ instead.

Centring diphthongs

The closing diphthongs have the characteristic that they all end with a glide towards a closer vowel. Because the second part of the diphthong is weak, they often do not reach a position that could be called close. The important thing is that a glide from a relatively more open towards a relatively closer vowel is produced. Three of the diphthongs glide towards /i/, as described below:
• /ei/ (example words: 'paid', 'pain', 'face') The starting point is the same as the /e/ of 'get', 'men',
• /ai/ (example words: 'tide', 'time', 'nice') This diphthong begins with an open vowel which is between front and back; it is quite similar to the /ʌ/ of the words 'cut', 'bun',
• /ɔi/ (example words: 'void', 'loin', 'voice') . The first part of this diphthong is slightly more open than /ɔ:/ in 'ought', 'born'.
Two diphthongs glide towards /U/, so that as the tongue moves closer to the roof of the mouth there is at the same time a rounding movement of the lips. This movement is not a large one, again because the second part of the diphthong is weak.

- /әu/ (example words: 'load', 'home', 'most') The vowel position for the beginning of this is the same as for the "schwa" vowel /ә/, as found in the first syllable of the word 'about'. The lips may be slightly rounded in anticipation of the glide towards /u/, for which there is quite noticeable lip-rounding.

- /au/ (example words: 'loud', 'gown', 'house') This diphthong begins with a vowel similar to /ai/. Since this is an open vowel, a glide to /u/ would necessitate a large movement, and the tongue often does not reach the /u/ position. There is only slight lip-rounding.

- /eɪ/ take, pay, wait, ballet.

In addition, Gebhardt, F. (2010-2011.p,4) presented a brief account of diphthong sounds with examples as follow:
/ai/ five, sigh, height, buy
/әi/ noise, boy, lawyer
2.3.4 Vowel Features

Kreideler. W (2004) discusses the vowel features and divides them into the following categories:
[+ syllabic], capable of carrying stress and pitch
[− consonantal], made without impeding the air flow
[+ continuant], articulated with air going continuously out from the mouth
[+ sonorant], made with regular patterns of vibration
[+ voice], produced with vocal cords vibrating
[− sibilant], produced with a flat tongue surface

2.4 Language Transfer:

Language transfer has been a controversial issue in Foreign Language Acquisition (FLA henceforth) for a long time. Its importance in foreign language (FL) learning has also been reassessed time and again. Along with the developments of research into language transfer, linguists have realized that first language (L1) acts as “a major factor in FLA” (Ellis, 1990, p.297). There are evidences of L1 influences at every aspect of FL learners’ interlanguage: discourse, lexicon, semantics, syntax, morphology (including bound morphemes), phonetics, and phonology. In order to get a comprehensive understanding and fully recognize the significance of language transfer, it is necessary to have a close look at its research developments at different stages and various definitions. Over a hundred years ago, Whitney (1881) used the term transfer to refer to cross-linguistic influences, which had been used by many linguists ever since. However, the terminology is not without problems and leads to different conceptions. Corder (1983) and Kellerman & Smith (1986) advocated abandoning the term or using it with high restriction, yet many linguists continued to use it without any limitation. Up-to-date, linguists still do not have an exact definition of language transfer, which varies along with the developments of research into it. In the twentieth century, the developments of language transfer research fell into mainly three periods and categories, namely, behaviorist, mentalist and cognitive view (Ellis, 1994, p.297-300). Behaviorists regarded language leaning as habit formation. In the view of mentalists, language acquisition was a
creative construction of linguistic rules. Cognitive linguists focused on factors that influence language acquisition. Ever since 1990s, language transfer research has experienced unprecedented developments no matter in depth or breadth.

2.5 Methodology:

2.5.1 Participants:

The population of the study targets Sudanese EFL learners at the tertiary level. Particularly, University of Kassala students. They are taken as a sample for the study because they have been learning English for more than five years and still their pronunciation is not convincing. Thus, investigating their pronunciation performance can provide a better understanding of the causes of their weaknesses.

2.5.2 Instruments:

The instrument used to collect data is an s-test administered to the second level EFL students at University of Kassala. The test consists of eight diphthong sounds. Students are required to complete the transcription of the provided words with the correct diphthong sounds.

2.5.3 Procedures:

The researcher and her assistant tested the students in their classroom during their working hours. The students were given two hours’ time to do the test. The number of (100) students, male and female, did the test. Two students failed to submit their answer sheets and so the number of (98) answer sheets were collected and marked by the researcher.

2.5.4 Validity and reliability:

For validity of the tools used to collect data, some expert teachers from Kassala university were consulted. Their valuable comments, modifications and adjustments produced valid test questions that tested students ability in pronouncing diphthong sounds.

Regarding students’ test reliability, the SPSS analysis found that the reliability is very high as it is closer to one. Calculated diphthong sounds reliability was found to be high as shown in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Diphthong sounds</th>
<th>Reliability</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

13
3- Discussion

The finding of the study reveals poor performance in pronunciation of diphthong sounds among Sudanese EFL learners at University of Kassala. In fact most English classes in Sudan whether at general or higher education levels focus on teaching reading and writing skills. A lot of grammar and vocabulary learning activities are included in EFL syllabi in Sudan. Composition writing is given a separate class as well as a separate exam in general education institutions. At university level it is no better, as a number of courses require students to enhance their writing skills. For example courses such as paragraph writing, advanced writing, composition writing, reading comprehension and advanced grammar are allotted to students at different levels. But very few courses are allotted for listening and speaking. Students are not exposed to audio-visuals or tapes or recorded authentic materials that include native speakers accent and pronunciation. Such courses, i.e. recorded authentic materials, if adequate, are expected to raise learners pronunciation abilities. So pronunciation and speaking activities are almost neglected in Sudanese EFL classrooms. Therefore, many Sudanese students who graduate with a degree in English seemed to be unable to communicate orally, although they may communicate in writing.

Another important factor that might have influenced students’ poor performance is the interference of the mother tongue. The Sudanese spoken Arabic is the mother tongue of most, if not all, the Sudanese EFL learners. Interestingly, Arabic is a phonetic language in the sense that a symbol represent a sound whereas English is not a phonetic language in the sense that a symbol does not represent a sound. Contrastive analysis linguists claim that features of languages that are similar are easier to learn than those which are different. And they believed that learners may transfer some features of L1 while learning L2. So it could be possible that Sudanese EFL learners transfer the phonetic system of Arabic, i.e. a symbol for sound when pronouncing English diphthong sounds.

Reinforcing Sudanese EFL learners’ pronunciation abilities in general and pronunciation of diphthong sounds in particular, requires an ideal foreign language teaching and learning plan. Firstly, students’
attention should be drawn to importance of oral communication for better job opportunities. Secondly, students and teachers should be directed to listen to English outside classroom from native speakers on TV channels such as the BBC, CNN, Gezira English Channel, the internet and foreign radio in English. Students should be asked to bring along to classrooms for discussion briefs and summaries of what they hear. This trend is expected to expose students to different accents and accepted pronunciations as well as raising their comprehension abilities. Thirdly, direct pronunciation instruction in Sudanese EFL classrooms should be stressed. Pair and group activities, drills, exercises and games that include diphthong sounds should dominate the classroom. Teaching timetable should include a class per week for enhancing pronunciation. And students should be given much more talking time than teachers. Fourthly, syllabi writers should include adequate pronunciation activities in the syllabi at both general and higher education levels. And last but not least, teachers awareness of the standard received pronunciation and the different accepted accents of native speakers should be raised. Regular workshops, debates, symposiums and rallies by key note native speakers should invite teachers to attend and contribute to the discussion. Such trend is expected to raise the awareness of both teachers and students of the important role of correct pronunciation for communicative competence and mutual understanding.

13- Results and Findings

The table below shows students’ performance of diphthong sounds.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class/second level students</th>
<th>Number of students</th>
<th>Words</th>
<th>Diphthong sounds</th>
<th>Students' performance T</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>98</td>
<td>Make</td>
<td>/ei/</td>
<td></td>
<td>28.57</td>
<td>71.43</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>98</td>
<td>Sure</td>
<td>/uә/</td>
<td></td>
<td>44.90</td>
<td>55.10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>98</td>
<td>Bear</td>
<td>/eә/</td>
<td></td>
<td>18.37</td>
<td>81.63</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>98</td>
<td>Hear</td>
<td>/iә/</td>
<td></td>
<td>25.51</td>
<td>74.49</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>98</td>
<td>Town</td>
<td>/au/</td>
<td></td>
<td>35.71</td>
<td>64.29</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>98</td>
<td>Island</td>
<td>/ai/</td>
<td></td>
<td>22.45</td>
<td>77.55</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>98</td>
<td>Employ</td>
<td>/әi/</td>
<td></td>
<td>35.71</td>
<td>64.29</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>98</td>
<td>Know</td>
<td>/au/</td>
<td></td>
<td>25.51</td>
<td>74.49</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total frequency</td>
<td>784</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>232</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage %</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>29.59</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Also, the pie chart below shows students’ performance of diphthong sounds.

The table and the pie chart above reveal that the students’ performance was poor as the percentage of 70.41% were unable to produce the correct sound for the diphthongs under question. And the minority of 29.59% correct diphthong sounds reflects the fact that diphthong sounds are problematic to many Sudanese EFL learners.

4- Conclusion

Clearly, the results of the test reflect that Sudanese EFL learners at University of Kassala face noticeable problems when pronouncing any English words that include diphthong sounds. Obviously, the researcher can argue that Sudanese EFL learners are not able to pronounce a word with diphthong sounds which glide from one sound to another.

So, the researcher, based on her teaching experience as a lecturer at the University of Kassala, noticed that there are different factors that affect the EFL learners pronunciation in general, and vowel sounds (diphthong sounds in particular). These factors include; lack of EFL teacher
training, bad EFL classroom atmosphere, inadequate time allotted to teach pronunciation, course design does not achieve the exact purpose of teaching and learning pronunciation, course duration also is not enough to practice English sounds. Students themselves aren't aware of segmental and supra segmental features of pronunciation, i.e. the syllabus divisions, glide sounds, word stress, differences between English and Arabic sounds, the importance of Phonetic transcription, etc. Also the students' own language and dialect affect EFL pronunciation negatively. As they transfer symptoms of their L1 into FL. There is no any recorded authentic materials to enhance EFL learners listening skills on received pronunciation so that they can produce the correct sounds when they use the foreign language. Just a course of listening throughout the students' academic life at university is all they can get besides a general course on phonetics. And least but not last the lack of English laboratories in Sudanese educational institutions reduces learners chances for exposing themselves to native or native-like pronunciation and accent.

Based on the findings and discussion above, the research presents the following recommendations:

1/ EFL teachers should model teaching and learning pronunciation at both levels productive and receptive.

2/ Teachers should have a better and deeper insight into phonology and phonetic concepts to help improve EFL learners' pronunciation.

3/ The syllabus should be constructed and designed in a way that help improve English pronunciation problems among speakers of other languages. It is noticeable that EFL classes in Kassala city are overpopulated with different cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

4/ Both EFL learners and teachers should give a lot of time to practice English pronunciation inside and outside classrooms.

5/ Sudanese EFL program at all levels should consider using modern computer technologies and social media sites online.

6/ Students should resort to specialized and reliable electronic dictionaries for accurate pronunciation.
References


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