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Option: linguistiques appliquees

**Students’ Perceptions of the Significance of Pronunciation  
Instruction: The Case of Third Year Students of English at  
The University Center Salhi Ahmed, Naama.**

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Requirement of The Master Degree.

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# Dedication

*I dedicate this work to my family.*

# Abstract

Pronunciation is a vital skill and a requirement for successful communication. Through the years, the status of pronunciation instruction has changed from an approach to another. Furthermore, there have been a number of studies about pronunciation instruction but unfortunately not many of them are interested in the learner's perceptions and attitudes. Thus, the present study attempts to investigate the perceptions of learners in relation to pronunciation instruction and its importance in the educational environment. To achieve that, the present research looks at 35 students of the third year LMD at the University Center Salhi Ahmed, Naama. The research opted for a structured questionnaire yielding quantitative and qualitative data. The results show that all the participants value pronunciation instruction. Moreover, the participants' goals of pronunciation appear to vary between being understood and having a native like pronunciation; however, in reality most of them do not possess clear goals. The results also reveal that the participants did not receive sufficient instruction. Furthermore, the majority have neutral attitudes towards the received instruction which is a result of their lack of clear goals good quality of instruction.

# List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

- ❖ LMD: License, Master, Doctora.
- ❖ EFL: English as a Foreign Language.
- ❖ L1: First Language.
- ❖ L2: Second language.
- ❖ CLL: Community Language Learning.
- ❖ CLT: Communicative Language Teaching.

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# **General Introduction**

## **General Introduction**

The English language is a medium in almost all activities and it has gained a central spot as by far one of, if not the most influential language in today's globalized world. Because of its importance, learning it represents a popular goal for many individuals and it is encouraged by several communities. Therefore, in order to become a competent user of the English language or any other language, one must master a myriad of linguistic skills; among which pronunciation plays a great role and requires substantial attention, and had its status change overtime in teaching methodologies.

Pronunciation teaching had been absent in language classrooms for a long time. It was believed that pronunciation is insignificant and impossible to be taught, and is acquired and picked up. These beliefs were questioned and pronunciation instruction changed (Silveira, 2002). Harmer (2001) identifies the importance of pronunciation instruction by saying that it increases the students' awareness of sounds, features and their meanings, and it enhances their speaking skills. Therefore, pronunciation should be taught and be taken into consideration in the language classrooms. That is why there have been several works, textbooks and methods depicting how to teach pronunciation and what techniques to use. However, the existence of the methods and materials does not mean the success of teaching pronunciation, seeing that pronunciation teaching is also influenced by other factors, and most of them are student related, such as his opinions, attitudes and aptitudes.

Most of today's studies on pronunciation even if they are sparse in number are focused on analyzing different aspects of spoken discourse, comprehension, and intelligibility, and also attitudes, stereotypes and assumptions of different accents (Sifakis & Sougari, 2005). However there are not many that are motivated to study student's

perceptions and beliefs concerning pronunciation learning and teaching and their place in the language classroom, which raises the flag for more studies in that topic.

Hence, the present work, by taking the third year LMD students of English at the University Center Salhi Ahmed as a sample of study, aims at gaining an insight on how learners perceive pronunciation instruction and its value. In other words its objectives are:

- Understand the student's attitudes towards pronunciation and the role of its instruction in English language classrooms.
- Figure out the students' needs, priorities and goals of pronunciation be them intelligibility or native like accent.
- Explore the attitudes of the students towards their teachers' instruction of pronunciation.

To achieve that, the following main research question was put forth: What are the perceptions of the Third year students of English at the University Center of Naama on the importance of pronunciation instruction in the EFL classroom?

Based on the research question, the following hypothesis is advocated:

- The students are very likely to value pronunciation instruction; however, their perceptions are different in matter of the focus of the instruction.

Taking into account the previous question, the following sub-questions are worthy to be investigated:

- What are the students' goals of learning pronunciation?
- How much instruction on pronunciation did the student's receive while studying English at the university center of Naama?
- What are the students' attitudes towards their teacher's instruction of pronunciation in relation to their pronunciation goals?

The above sub-questions lead to the assumption of the following hypotheses:

- The students' goals could vary between native-like pronunciation and intelligibility.
- The students did not receive sufficient instruction on pronunciation.
- The students could have negative attitudes towards their teachers' instruction of pronunciation in relation to their own goals.

By gaining an idea about the student's opinions, attitudes and experiences of pronunciation instruction, this work may help the teachers in their work and on how they approach pronunciation; thus, improving the results of their classes.

For the success of presenting the current research, it is framed to contain two distinctive chapters. The first one is rather theoretical. It attempts to present the basic notion concerning pronunciation instruction, how it was dealt with through the main language teaching approaches, its importance and the previous studies on learners' perceptions of pronunciation. The second chapter is practical. It describes the research methodology opted for in this work, the data collected from the questionnaire and its discussion.

## **Chapter One:**

### **Review of Literature on Pronunciation Instruction**

#### **1.1 Introduction**

#### **1.2 Overview of Pronunciation Instruction in Language Teaching Approaches**

#### **1.3 Pronunciation Teaching and Learning**

##### **1.3.1 Teacher's Role**

##### **1.3.2 Learner's Role**

##### **1.3.3 Pronunciation Goals**

#### **1.4 The Importance of Pronunciation Instruction**

#### **1.5 Perception of Pronunciation Instruction**

##### **1.5.1 Learner's Beliefs about Language Learning**

##### **1.5.1 Learner's Perceptions of Pronunciation Teaching**

#### **1.6 Conclusion**

## **1.1 Introduction**

A good pronunciation is a skill that no language learner will neglect. It is a basic and mandatory aspect of language, and an important part of competence. What's more it is one of the most important subjects of language to be instructed.

This first chapter will start with giving an overview on the way pronunciation was taken into consideration in different language teaching approaches. It will then talk about the teaching and learning of pronunciation. Later, it will show the importance of pronunciation instruction. Finally, students' perceptions to pronunciation and previous studies on the topic will be discussed.

## **1.2 Overview of Pronunciation Instruction In Language Teaching Approaches**

The field of foreign language teaching has gone through many changes paired with the introduction of different unique and interrelated approaches. Within these different approaches, language teaching followed certain methods and guidelines to help the learners gain expertise and knowledge in different aspects and skills of the language. Amongst the many targeted skills is pronunciation which was looked at differently from an approach to another ranging from full focus to total neglect.

According to Florez (1998), Pronunciation was irrelevant and rarely taught in the grammar-translation method; therefore, there is no need to cover that era. As for the rest of the approaches, the most prominent ones and their main beliefs in relation to pronunciation will be explained briefly following this paragraph.

Learning a second language (L2), according to the Direct method and the Naturalistic approach, was considered as a process similar to that of acquiring the mother tongue (L1). Therefore, L2 learners 'pick up' pronunciation after listening to a model. Thus, teaching pronunciation was based on imitation through repetition and going through an initial 'silent period', in which the learner is not forced to speak but he/she only listens to appropriate samples and models of L2 (Silveira, 2002)

Some significant changes to pronunciation teaching were established thanks to The Reform Movement. Since speech is the main objective, great emphasis is put on it from early stages of language learning. Moreover, phonetics is integrated in the process by training both teachers and learners on it. Thus pronunciation is taught explicitly using phonetic alphabet (Silveira, 2002).

Later on in the 1950s and 1960s, pronunciation instruction took central stage within the audio-lingual method. According to Gilajani **“This was a method that emphasized the behaviouristic drilling of sound contrasts and word pairs, and the articulation of individual sounds.”** (1991, p. 2). Thus it contributed with the concept of ‘phonemic contrasts’ (Silveira, 2002), which are thought to improve the learners’ perception and production.

Pronunciation stayed as an important part of the language curriculum for a while; however, it lost that place with the appearance and development of the Cognitive approach, which was based on the belief that language is acquired and not learnt. Consequently pronunciation teaching was believed to be meaningless since pronunciation as any other element of language is acquired and not learnt (Silveira, 2002).

Later on, in the 70s and the 80s, other methods like Community Language Learning (CLL) and The Silent Way, which were learner centered, still followed the Direct and Audio-lingual methods in their standpoint of the importance of correct and accurate pronunciation. Thus, they considered pronunciation as a mandatory part of the language classrooms (Richards and Rodgers, 2001).

Communicative language teaching (CLT) appeared with different views concerning pronunciation. According to Silveira, pronunciation was still held as an important aspect but it was looked at differently from past approaches, mainly since the aim was intelligibility rather than native like performance, and for the fact that previous methods did not consider language teaching as communication-oriented (2002). Even though the Communicative approach gave importance to pronunciation, it was not the case in the

early stages, since the focus was on communication rather than accuracy. However, later on, suprasegmental features were prioritized with underestimating the segmentals (Brinton. 2012). Then, there was a shift and a rise of a balanced focus on both segmentals and suprasegmentals in teaching intelligible pronunciation, which as Silveira states “...**should appeal to all kinds of learners and aim at an interaction between fluency and accuracy.**” (2002, p.34).

### **1.3 Pronunciation Teaching and Learning**

Pronunciation is an aspect of language and an important skill to be learnt by students. In a language classroom, there are many things to be taken into consideration in relation to pronunciation. From which teacher and learner’s roles and the goals of pronunciation will be examined.

#### **1.3.1 Teacher’s Role**

Through the years, there have been several language teaching approaches but most if not all of them shared the notion of the importance of a teacher even if its degree changed from approach to another. Kenworthy, in her book *Teaching English Pronunciation* (1987) have examined the different roles of the teacher in relation to pronunciation instruction. These roles are summarized next.

- **Helping learners learn:** A teacher has role in aiding the learners in perceiving sounds. Naturally the learners perceive sounds based on their native sound systems, which leads to misperceptions. Thus the teacher’s duty is to make sure that the learners are hearing the sounds appropriately and according the right categories.

- **Helping learners make sounds:** Students may encounter sounds that do not occur in the mother tongue and they may not be able to imitate them. Therefore, the teacher shows them hints and instructs them on how to articulate the new sounds.

- **Providing feedback:** Usually, the learners are not able to tell whether they are performing correctly or not; and that's when the teacher is supposed to tell them about their performance and correct their errors, hence providing feedback.

- **Pointing out what's going on:** Learners tend to miss important things related to pronunciation since speaking is mostly unconsciously controlled. Teachers have to raise the learners' awareness of sounds and their potentials in order to reduce errors resulting from the learners' ignorance. For example, stressing a word in a different manner can change the intended message.

- **Establishing priorities:** Learners can be aware of the flaws in their pronunciation in comparison to natives and that some features are different. However they cannot tell which is more important than the other. And that's where the teacher is needed where he guides the learners in deciding what to focus on.

- **Devising activities:** it is no secret that learning pronunciation is difficult. Such nature requires the teacher's careful effort in choosing the most appropriate activities and exercise that will result in maximal performance. It is also important that the activities are suitable for all the learners and their different styles and aptitudes.

- **Assessing progress:** learners always need feedback regarding their performance and it is the same thing with pronunciation. Therefore, teachers must inform the learners. And even if such information is difficult because of pronunciation's nature, it is still important to maintain motivation.

### 1.3.2 Learner's Role

According to Kenworthy (1987), the Learner's simple role is to respond to the teacher. However it is not that simple since a successful learning of pronunciation requires the students to put as much effort as they can. In the case where students are unwilling and not responsible enough to put the required efforts they will be less likely to

learn and improve their pronunciation even if the teacher was skilled enough in pronunciation and identifying mistakes.

Such assumptions show that the learner is a crucial element in the process of learning pronunciation. In which the degrees of his involvement and engagement greatly affect the results. Moreover, in order to achieve great results in matter of pronunciation there needs to be a coordination of both the teacher and learner's roles.

### **1.3.3 Pronunciation Goals**

How good should the students' pronunciation be? Should they sound identical to native speakers from England or Australia? Or they can just be understood? From these questions, two pronunciation goals are identified: A native-like pronunciation or a simple goal of just being understood.

A native-like pronunciation can be the goal of many learners for different reasons. An obvious one is that their jobs require that. A learner who wishes to become an English language teacher will want to sound as perfect as possible. In this case the learner has a valid reason for such a pronunciation goal. However, someone who works in air traffic control for example will prefer to be understood rather than perfect. (Kenworthy, 1987).

Therefore, even if a native-like pronunciation is an aim for some learners who according to Kenworthy (1987) should not be discouraged for having 'high goals'. Some will prefer intelligibility<sup>1</sup>. Harmer (2001) explained that a learner will aim to be intelligible and not like a native speaker but a foreign language speaker who retains his own accent because it is part of his identity. Therefore an Algerian speaking with an Algerian accent is not a problem as long as the communication is successful.

Speaking of intelligibility, Kenworthy (1987, P. 3) introduced the notion of 'comfortable intelligibility' which she refers to as a more reasonable goal for learners. This level of pronunciation consists of the ability to communicate effectively and without

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<sup>1</sup> For more about Intelligibility: Kenworthy (1987)

putting a strain on the listener in which he uses effort to understand the speaker and tolerate his mispronunciations.

### 1.4 The Importance of Pronunciation Instruction

Pronunciation is an important aspect and skill of language to learn. A speaker with good pronunciation is more likely to communicate confidently with native speakers or proficient non-native speakers; however, a poor pronunciation can hinder communication and the speaker may be asked to repeat what he said because he may have placed the stress on the wrong syllable and consequently turned a verb into a noun.

Therefore, fixing pronunciation problems like the one of stress and others is beneficiary especially to communication, which is the ability to understand and be understood, and it is the main aim of learning and teaching languages. Thus, since the classroom is the main source of language teaching, teachers of EFL (English as a Foreign Language) ought to be aware of such problems and the factors affecting pronunciation. However there are teachers who do not value pronunciation; Harmer says **“It is possible that they are nervous of dealing with sounds and intonation; perhaps they feel they have too much to do already...”** (2001, P.183). He even adds that the teachers may use the excuse of the existence of students who learn pronunciation without overt instruction (2001).

Harmer explained that even if some students have better aptitudes in matter of pronunciation, it cannot be considered as valid reason to ignore pronunciation instruction. In addition to raising the students' awareness of sounds and their features, instruction on pronunciation enhances their speaking considerably; since focusing on sounds and the place of their articulation as well as showing where stresses should be, will definitely improve comprehension and intelligibility (2001).

## **1.5 Perception of Pronunciation Instruction**

### **1.5.1 Learner's Beliefs about Language Learning**

Through the last decades, great interest has been put on the learners and how they can affect the learning process. Their beliefs are amongst the many individual characteristics that can influence the learning success. Wenden defines Lerner's beliefs as **"...opinions which are based on experience and the opinions of respected others, which influence the way they act..."** (1986, P. 5). Therefore, the beliefs of learners about L2 and L2 learning stem from their experiences and understanding of others' experiences; and these beliefs will definitely affect the learning process.

The topic of learner beliefs about language teaching has been a subject of research for some time. It has been found that such assumptions greatly influence the learner's performance and overall achievements in the language classroom. For instance, Bernat showed how almost two decades of research in second language acquisition field has uncovered how the beliefs of students influence their psychological and cognitive processes, thus affecting their classroom actions (2008). Furthermore, and according to Alghazo (2015) there is a strong relation between learner's beliefs and both anxiety and motivation which in turn are important variables in L2 learning. Finally, Alghazo also mentioned that learner's beliefs have another impact worth mentioning which happens on the level of the use of language learning strategies, an important means for learning success (for example, Cohen, 1998; White, 2008; Yang 1999). Therefore, such beliefs should always be taken into consideration when attempting to do curriculum and course designs and teachers ought to understand their students' objectives and motivations in language learning.

### **1.5.1 Learner's Perceptions of Pronunciation Teaching**

After giving a general idea about learner's beliefs, it is time to talk about learner's beliefs in relation to pronunciation instruction. According to Alghazo (2015), Little has been done in exploring beliefs about pronunciation instruction, and most of the existing studies put their focus on investigating the teachers' beliefs about such matter and how such beliefs impact classroom practices. However, the number of studies about students' perceptions of L2 pronunciation instruction is too small in comparison to teachers' and there is not enough literature about it. Nevertheless, there are still some studies worth mentioning.

Cenoz and Lecumberri (1999) conducted a study which, according to them, attempted to investigate beliefs, awareness and attitudes of Basque and Spanish learners of the English language in relation to pronunciation and its importance. Results revealed that the learners consider pronunciation as an important aspect of language but also as a difficult skill to learn and this difficulty can be related to learner's attitudes towards certain accents. It was also found that the learners consider interaction with native speakers and listening training as important factors in acquiring pronunciation.

Another study, as mentioned in Chien (2014), is that of Tseng (2011) which followed Cenoz and Lecumberri's (1990) footsteps in using their survey to investigate 106 Taiwanese learners of English' perception of pronunciation acquisition. The results of the study showed that the learners valued pronunciation teaching as it is important in the development of their communicative competence. The research also showed that the learners believed that having a native-like pronunciation might increase their intelligence.

Finally, He and Miller (2011) have conducted a study to figure out Chinese college student's preferences concerning English language pronunciation. It was discovered that 82% of the research population preferred having a native-like pronunciation. Furthermore,

79.6% have expressed their belief of their ability of achieving native-like proficiency and speak in Standard version of English.

Finally, it can be concluded that the fact that there are not many researches done in the subject of learner's beliefs in relation to pronunciation raises a flag for the need of more attempts and efforts in this matter. And if that were to happen, more data about learner's perceptions will be available and it could be used in other studies of the same topic or in designing curriculums and lessons.

## **1.6 Conclusion**

This chapter tackled the main language teaching approaches' views on pronunciation. It then discussed teaching and learning of pronunciation by generally explaining teachers' and learner's roles as well less language pronunciation goals. Furthermore, it showed how important it is to teach pronunciation. Finally learner's beliefs in general and their beliefs concerning pronunciation were discussed as well as some studies on the topic of learner's perceptions on pronunciation instruction.

## **Chapter Two**

### **Research Methodology: Data Collection Results and Analyses**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

#### **2.2 The Aim of the Research**

#### **2.3 Participants**

#### **2.4 Research Instrument**

#### **2.5 Data collection and design**

##### **2.5.1 Pilot of the Study**

##### **2.5.2 Description of the Questionnaire**

#### **2.6 Data Analysis and Interpretation**

##### **2.6.1 Questionnaire's Results**

##### **2.6.2 Interpretation of the Results**

#### **2.7 Recommendations and Suggestions**

#### **2.8 Conclusion**

## **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter is concerned with presentation and analysis of the research findings. It will describe the research and its aspects. Later, it will present the data collected through a questionnaire then proceed into analysis, discussion and drawing of conclusions.

## **2.2 The Aim of the Research**

The research attempts to gain insight on how students of the third year of English language at the University Center Salhi Ahmed perceive the role of pronunciation instruction in their educational settings. Therefore the data collected of the study aims at the following:

1. Understand the students' attitudes towards pronunciation and the role of its instruction in English language classrooms.
2. Figure out the student's priorities and goals of pronunciation which can be either intelligibility or native like pronunciation.
3. Explore the attitude of the students towards their teachers' instruction of pronunciation.

## **2.3 Participants**

The population of the research consists of 35 third year students of English at the University Center Salhi Ahmed in Naama, Algeria. 26 of them were females and 9 of them were males, with their ages ranging from 21 to 24. They were chosen as participants in the research for different reasons. The first reason is that they are easily reached by the researcher. The second reason is that they are still studying English language as opposed to higher classmen. The third reason, however, lies in the fact that they have spent the biggest amount of time studying modules that may include pronunciation such as oral expression. Finally, considering their ages and the years spent studying English language, means that they are more likely to have an intermediate level of English which will reduce chances of them not understanding the research instrument's language.

## 2.4 Research Instrument

The study implemented one research tool that is a self-administered questionnaire based on the research questions and aims and also adopting ideas from previous researches such as the works of Alghazo (2015) and Kang (2010). A questionnaire is suitable for this research because as Walliman stated “**Questionnaires are a particularly suitable tool for gaining quantitative data but can also be used for qualitative data**” (2011, P. 97). Furthermore such a research tool is convenient, cheap and allows for the flexibility of collecting data, since the researcher will not be facing the participants directly, a wide range of questions can be asked with a low possibility of bias.

The questionnaire consisted of 16 items separated into four different rubrics, which are: background questions, importance of pronunciation instruction, goals of pronunciation, and experience of pronunciation instruction. The questionnaire implemented different types of questions. It used multiple choice questions, open ended questions and likert scale questions to investigate the participants’ opinions and attitudes.

## 2.5 Data Collection and Design

The current part of the chapter is concerned with how the data collection was administered. It also demonstrates and provides further explanation on the content of the research questionnaire.

### 2.5.1 Administration of Data Collection

The data collection was initiated on the 9<sup>th</sup> of April, by the researcher personally distributing 48 questionnaire papers among the students of both groups of the third year English at the University Center Salhi Ahmed. By the 15<sup>th</sup> of April 35 answered papers were collected by the researcher and by the help of some participants.

### **2.5.2 Description of the Questionnaire**

The participants were asked to answer a questionnaire that consists of sixteen questionnaire items (see the Appendix). The whole questionnaire was organized in the form of 4 different rubrics implementing multiple choice, open ended and five point Likert scale judgmental questions.

The first category of questions is demographic questions. It consists of 4 items with the goal of acquiring a general idea about the participants; the first three require the participants to state their age, gender and years of study at the University Center Salhi Ahmed. Those questions were asked to gain a general idea about the participants and allow for the possibility of drawing further conclusions later on based on such data. The fourth question in this group asks the participants to estimate their own English language pronunciation levels. Those questions were chosen to trigger the participant into thinking about their own pronunciation, and that will probably help in answering the rest of the questionnaire.

The second category (rubric one) is concerned with the importance of pronunciation instruction. It was written in a table in the format of a five point likert scale. The participants were required to give their opinions on 5 statements by ticking one of the 5 possible answers of a scale in the format of strongly agree, agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree and strongly disagree. The questions were asked in order to investigate the participants' perceptions of the importance of pronunciation instruction in the EFL (English as a foreign language) classroom.

The third category (rubric two) is concerned with the learners' goals of pronunciation. It consists of 3 questions aiming at discovering if the learners prefer to have a native like pronunciation or just to be understood even if they have accents. The first question was a multiple choice question attached with a space to write the reasons behind the answer. The second question was also a multiple choice with an additional

space for answers other than the ones provided. The third question was a multiple choice question.

The fourth category (rubric three) was designed to get a general idea about the participant's own experiences of pronunciation instruction in their time of study at the University Center Salhi Ahmed. It attempts to know the amount of pronunciation instruction that the participants received as well as their attitudes to the received instruction and how it goes with their pronunciation goals. This part contained 4 different questions: an open ended question, a frequency question and two judgmental scale questions.

## 2.6 Data Analysis and Interpretation

The following section will present the collected results of the questionnaire as well their interpretation.

### 2.6.1 Questionnaire's Results

The questionnaire was answered by thirty five LMD students of the English department at the University Center of Naama. In the present phase, the researcher presents the findings of the mentioned questionnaire

#### Demographic Questions:

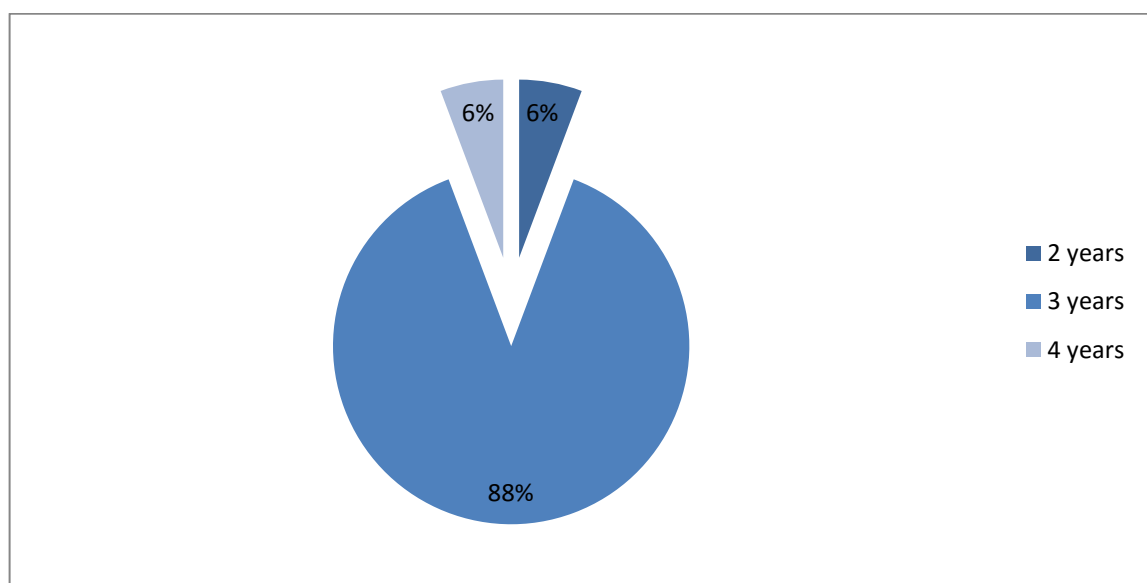
*Questions one and two:* The two questions are concerned with the age and genders of the participants. The following table represents the findings

| Gender  |       | Age                  |
|---------|-------|----------------------|
| Females | Males | Ranged from 21 to 24 |
| 26      | 9     |                      |
| 74%     | 26%   |                      |

**Table 2.1 Participants' Gender and Age**

The table shows that the number of the female participants exceeds that of males with 26 females (74%) and 9 males (26%).

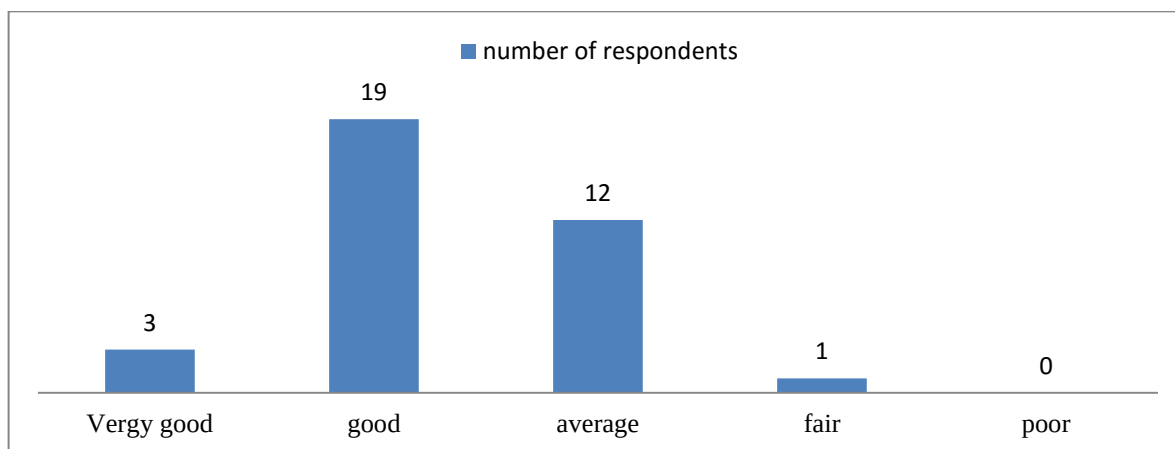
*Question three:* The following pie chart represents the number of years of study at the University Center Salhi Ahmed.



**Graph 2.1 Years of Study**

The above pie chart represents the number of students in relation to how many years they have spent studying at the university center Salhi Ahmed. From the results, it can be seen that the 88% of the population have been studying for three years. Whilst 6% have spent 2 years and the other 6% have spent 4 years.

*Question four:* The graph below demonstrates the participants' self-rating of their pronunciation levels.



**Graph 2.2 Self-evaluation of Pronunciation Levels**

From the responses shown above, it can be seen that there is not a very big diversity in pronunciation levels. 54% of the students (19) think that their pronunciation is at a 'good' level. 34% of the raining participants (12) answered that their pronunciation is average. Only 6% of the participants (3) said that they have a very good pronunciation. And finally only one individual ticked on the 'fair' box.

### **Rubric one: Importance of Pronunciation Instruction.**

The following table summarizes the results of question one to question five of the rubric concerned with the importance of pronunciation instruction. The questions were designed in the form of a likert scale which elicits the participants' beliefs via a five point scale: SA = Strongly agree; A = Agree; N = Neither agree nor disagree; D = Disagree; SD = Strongly disagree.

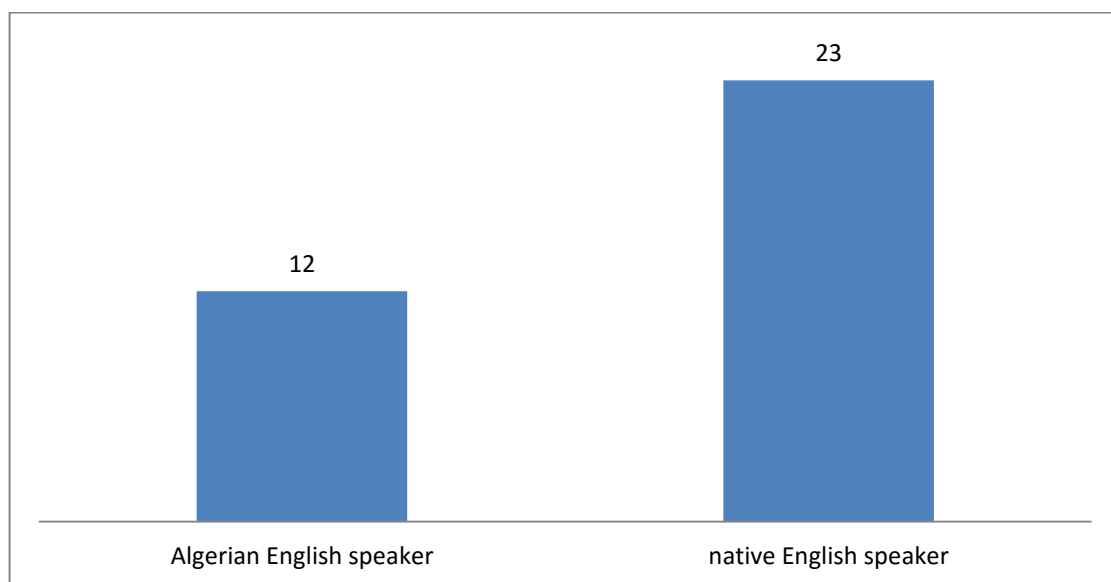
| statement                                                                                    | SA          | A           | N          | D         | SD        |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|-------------|------------|-----------|-----------|
| 1. I am concerned about my English language pronunciation.                                   | 12<br>(34%) | 16<br>(46%) | 4<br>(11%) | 1<br>(3%) | 2<br>(6%) |
| 2. Practicing pronunciation is beneficiary.                                                  | 28<br>(80%) | 7<br>20%    | 0<br>(0%)  | 0<br>(0%) | 0<br>(0%) |
| 3. Practicing English pronunciation will aid me in understanding native speakers of English. | 22<br>(63%) | 12<br>(34%) | 1<br>(3%)  | 0<br>(0%) | 0<br>(0%) |
| 4. Practicing English pronunciation will aid native speakers of English in understanding me. | 11<br>(31%) | 18<br>(51%) | 5<br>(14%) | 0<br>(0%) | 1<br>3%   |
| 5. Pronunciation should be integrated in language classrooms.                                | 10<br>(29%) | 21<br>(60%) | 4<br>(11%) | 0<br>(0%) | 0<br>(0%) |

**Table 2.2 Importance of Pronunciation Instruction**

From the answers to the statements 1 and 2 it can be seen that the majority of the participants believe in the importance of pronunciation practice and instruction; Since 80% of them said that they strongly agree or agree that they are concerned about their pronunciation, and 100% stated that the practicing pronunciation is beneficiary. As for the third statement the majority (97%) believe that practicing pronunciation is important in understanding native speakers. Additionally, there is no big difference from statement three in statement four where also, the striking majority agrees or strongly agrees that practicing English pronunciation will aid native speakers to understand them. Finally 29% strongly agrees and 60% agrees on the statement that pronunciation should be integrated in language classrooms; whilst 11% have neutral opinions.

### **Rubric Two: Goals of Pronunciation.**

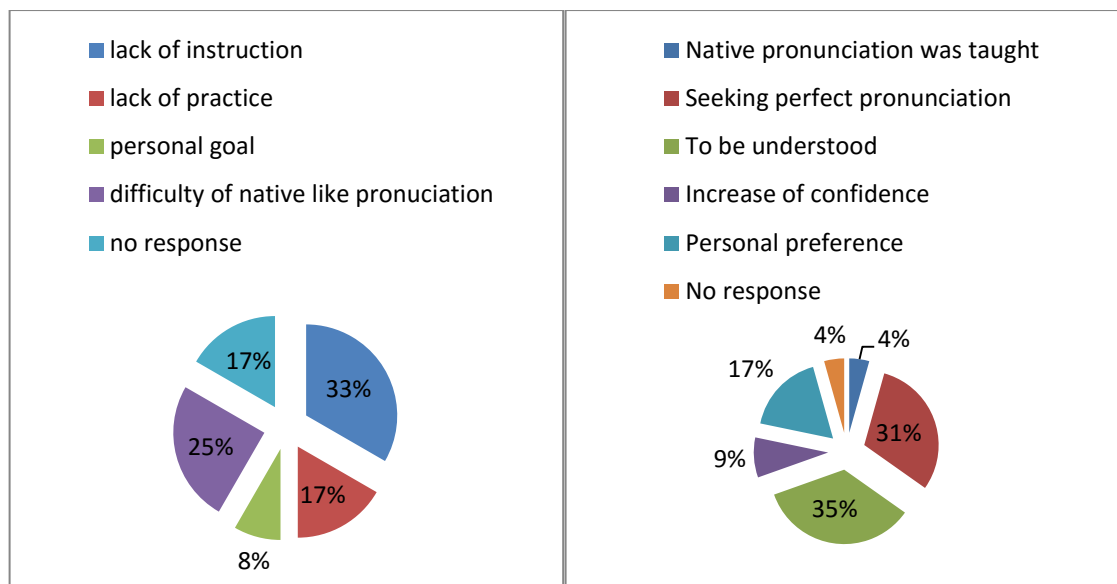
*Question one:* The following graph elicits the responses of the participants to the statement concerned with whether they prefer to sound like Algerian speakers of the English language or like native English speakers.



**Graph 2.3 Pronunciation Preference**

The results show that 66% of the participants' population wishes to sound like native speakers when speaking the English language; whereas the remaining 34% prefers to sound as Algerian speakers of the English language. Apparently the results show diversity in the choice of pronunciation as opposed to the previous rubric where the responses were more similar to each other in matter of the value of pronunciation instruction.

After answering the previous question, the participants were asked to justify their answers by stating the reasons in few words. The following two graphs demonstrate the main themes under which the responses of the participants were organized.



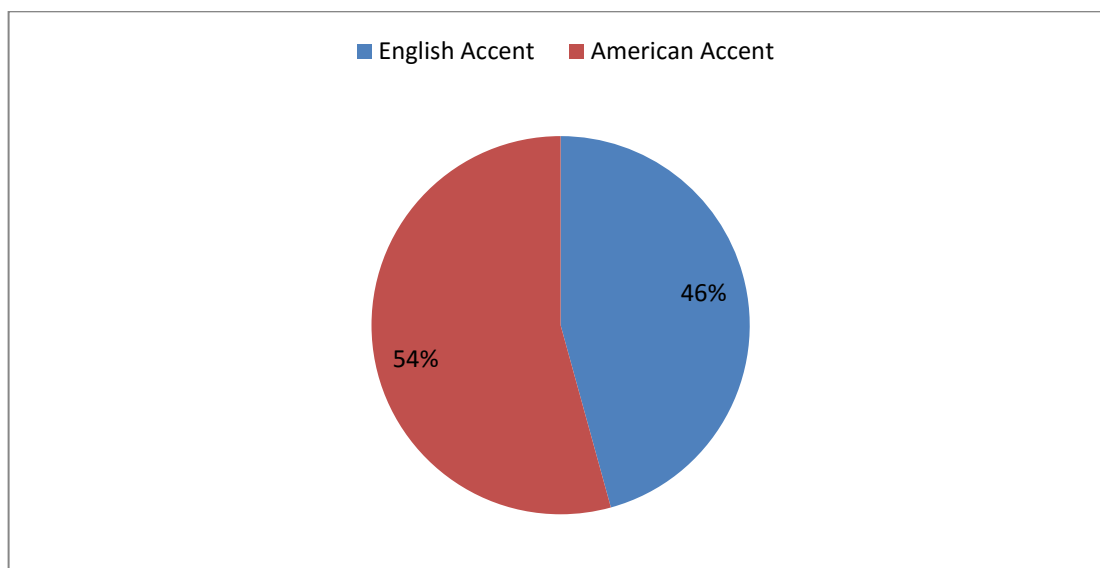
**Graph 2.4 Participants Preferring Algerian English Pronunciation vs Native-like Pronunciation (left to right)**

The first graph on the left shows the answers of the participants who chose sounding as Algerian English language speakers as their preference. 33% reported that their choice was because of the lack of instruction in native like pronunciation. 25% justified their answer by saying it is difficult for them to sound like native speakers and this can be a result to many things such as aptitudes and instruction. 17% reported that they lack practice. Another 17% gave no response. Finally, 8% of the participants reported that they just prefer to sound like people from their country.

The second graph on the right represents the responses of those who chose to sound like native English language speakers. 35% said that they want to be understood when they speak English. 30% sought perfect pronunciation. 17% stated that it is their personal preference. 9% reported that speaking like native speakers would increase their confidence. As for the rest 4%, no answers were given.

*Question two:* The participants were asked to mention whether it is the English accent they prefer or it is the American one. They were also offered the chance to tick on

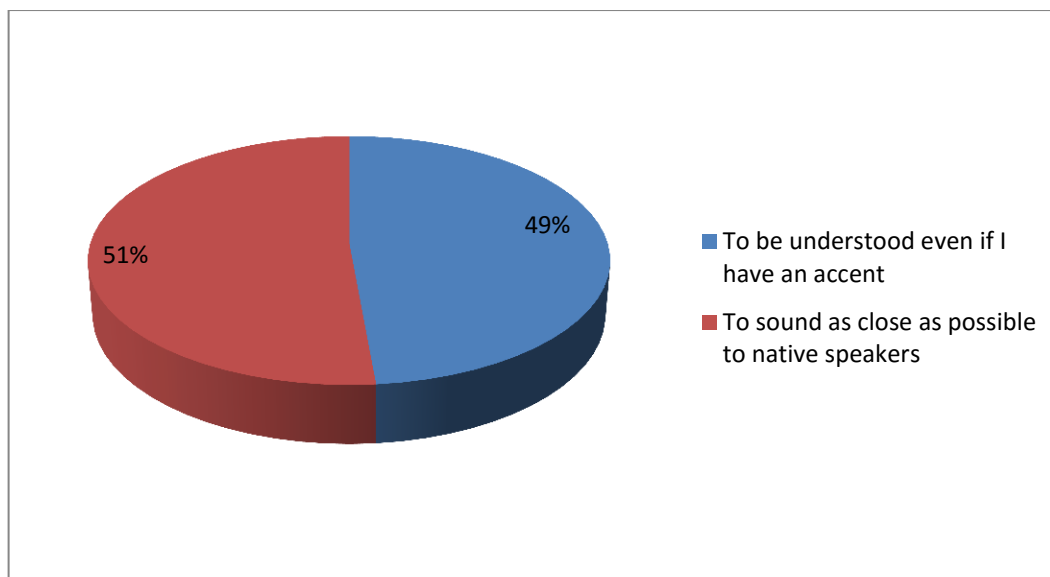
‘other’ and were offered a space to expand their answer if ‘other’ was chosen. The following pie chart demonstrates their answers.



**Graph 2.5 Accent Preference**

The above chart shows that a little beyond half of the population (54%) prefer the American accent; while the rest (46%) prefer The English accent. It must be noted that no participant ticked on other and mentioned the Algerian accent, despite the fact that in the previous question, 12 participants out of 23 said that they wish to sound like Algerian English speakers. This confusion shows that some of the participants do not possess clear goals of pronunciation.

*Question three:* Question three asked the participants about their goal of pronunciation, and they were able to choose between “To be understood even if I have an accent” and “To sound as close to native speakers as possible”. The following graph represents their answers.



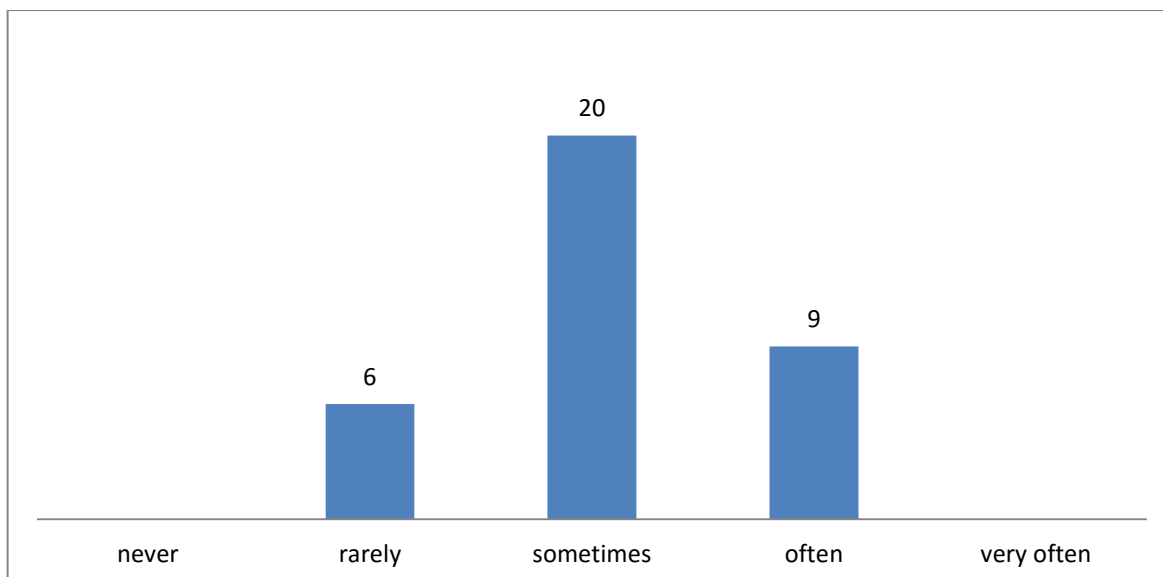
**Graph 2.6 Goals of Pronunciation**

The results show that 51% of the population prefers to sound as possible to native speakers while 49% prefer being understood even if with an accent. The results are striking, because this question is very similar to the first question in this rubric, where 66% chose to sound like Algerian speakers whereas 34% liked sounding like native speakers. These results are indicators of the participants' confusion.

### **Rubric Three: Experience of Pronunciation Instruction.**

*Question one:* The participants were asked to mention the Subjects of study at the University Center Salhi Ahmed that they think pronunciation was part of. This question also had a purpose of making the participants remember their experience. Almost all of them mentioned Phonetics, phonology and oral expression, except 2 participants who did not answer at all.

*Question two:* The following graph shows the answer of the question “How often did you practice pronunciation in classroom?”.



**Graph 2.7 Frequency of Pronunciation Practice in Classroom**

Even though almost all of the participants have studied together for at least three years, the question generated a wide range of responses. 20 participants out of 35 said they practiced pronunciation in the classroom ‘sometimes’. 9 participants said they practiced often. The remaining 6 reported they rarely practiced pronunciation.

*Question three:* The following table demonstrates the answers to the question “How satisfied are you of your teachers’ instruction of pronunciation in relation to your own pronunciation goals?”.

| Very satisfied | Satisfied | ok       | Dissatisfied | Very dissatisfied |
|----------------|-----------|----------|--------------|-------------------|
| 1 (3%)         | 13 (37%)  | 18 (51%) | 3 (9%)       | 0 (0%)            |

**Table 2.3 Satisfaction of Pronunciation Instruction in Relation to Pronunciation Goals**

The above table shows diversity in the attitudes of the participants towards the received instruction in relation to their pronunciation goals. 51% had neutral views by choosing 'ok' as an answer. 37% mentioned that they are satisfied. 9% said they were dissatisfied. Finally 1 participant chose 'very satisfied' as an answer.

*Question four:* The participants were asked to tick their answer on a five point judgmental scale of their agreement about statement concerned with them wanting more instruction of pronunciation in their classroom. The following table shows the results.

| Statement                                                          | SA          | A           | N         | D         | SD        |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|-------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| I would like to spend more time on pronunciation in the classroom. | 14<br>(40%) | 18<br>(51%) | 1<br>(3%) | 2<br>(6%) | 0<br>(0%) |

**Table 2.4 More Time on Pronunciation Instruction**

The above table shows that the majority of the participants (91%) answered 'strongly agree' or 'agree', and would like more classroom time for pronunciation instruction. While the rest either had no opinion (1 participant) or disagreed and do not want any addition pronunciation instruction (2 participants) .

### **2.6.2 Interpretation of the Results**

The questionnaire attempted to investigate the students' perceptions and opinions on pronunciation instruction, their goals of pronunciation and their experiences and attitudes towards the received instruction.

From the results of the first rubric it was confirmed that almost all of English language students of the third year LMD at the University Center Salhi Ahmed agree on the value of instruction on pronunciation. Furthermore, the majority believes that pronunciation should be integrated as part of the language classrooms. Thus proving the main hypothesis.

The second rubric, on the other hand, was concerned with the goals of pronunciation which are either intelligibility or native like pronunciation. The questions yielded some diversity in the results. Initially the students were asked to state whether they preferred to sound like Algerian speakers of the English language or as native speakers. 23 participants chose to sound as native speakers while the remaining 12 preferred Algerian English pronunciation. Then on the following question 19 of the participants said they prefer the American accent and 16 chose the English accent, but none of them ticked on 'other' and added the Algerian accent even though 12 participants chose it in the previous question. Furthermore, on the third question the participants were asked about their pronunciation goals. This question is very similar to the first one; however the results were not. 59% (18) chose to sound like native speakers while 49% (17) chose to be understood even if they had an accent. These results show the participants confusion which is likely the result of their ignorance of clear ideal goals of pronunciation. Such ignorance might be a conclusion of their lack of pronunciation. In light of what was said the first sub-hypothesis was partly proven but more was discovered.

The third rubric was concerned with the participants' own experiences of pronunciation instruction during their years of study at the University Center Salhi Ahmed. According to the participants, they have studied pronunciation under the modules of phonetics, phonology and oral expression. The results also showed that the participants did not receive an extensive pronunciation instruction but they still did receive some, since most of them (20 participants) answered that they practiced pronunciation in the class 'sometimes' and a lower number (9 participants) answered 'often'. Furthermore, they were asked about their satisfaction with their teachers' instruction of pronunciation, but in relation with their personal goals. 13 were satisfied, 1 was very satisfied and 3 were dissatisfied; however, the remaining 18 had neutral views, which is more likely because they did not possess goals in the first place, and that was observed in the previous rubric and was justified with the probability of them lacking instruction. The final question confirms that assumption, since 91% reported that they would like to spend more time on pronunciation in the classroom; but that contradicts with the answers to question number

two where the majority said they either practiced pronunciation sometimes or often. This contradiction leads to the assumption that the students indeed require more instruction but it is more quality of instruction rather than quantity, especially in the matter of helping the learners to have clearer goals of pronunciation. In light of what was said, the second sub-hypothesis was confirmed. As for the final hypothesis, the results suggest an alternative answer, since the majority of the participants had neutral and not negative attitudes towards their teachers' instruction in relation to their goals of pronunciation; and that's because of their ignorance about the potential end goals of pronunciation.

## **2.7 Recommendations and Suggestions**

In light of the results and findings of the primary and also the secondary data, the current study about perceptions of the third year students of English at the University Center Salhi Ahmed about pronunciation instruction and its value presents the following pedagogical recommendations:

- Make use of the language laboratories to show the participants the different varieties of English language pronunciations.
- Instruct teachers on the pedagogical aspects of pronunciation.
- Create more opportunity for the students to give feedback concerning the received instruction.
- Guide the learners into figuring out their pronunciation goals by showing them the pros and cons of the available options
- More time for pronunciation instruction with equal focus on the main goals

This research also opens doors for further research options such as :

- Conducting the same research but on other population
- Conducting an experimental study to compare effect of certain pronunciation teaching methods on the proficiency of the participants

- Comparing the students with teachers' perceptions about pronunciation instruction
- Conducting a study on the factors affecting the students' perceptions on pronunciation.

## **2.8 Conclusion**

This chapter intended to describe, analyze and discuss the data collected from the questionnaire. The current research is investigative and its analysis was quantitative carrying some qualitative attributes. Its aim is to investigate the students' perceptions of pronunciation instruction and its value.

It was found out that the majority value pronunciation instruction, which confirms the main hypothesis. As for the rest of the questions, it was found out that the participants prefer to sound more like native speakers rather than to be intelligible, but that is only on the surface, because there were confusions reflecting their ignorance of their own pronunciation goals. Furthermore it was discovered that the participants were not very satisfied with the received instruction, even if they said they received some amount of instruction, the striking majority showed that they would like to receive more. From analyzing the results it was also found out that a better quality of pronunciation is needed since the participants do not even have clear goals of their pronunciation. Therefore, the department of English can harvest many benefits from giving pronunciation more attention.

## **General Conclusion**

## **General Conclusion**

Pronunciation is a language skill crucial for the success of communication. Through the years, the place of pronunciation instruction in the language classroom has changed from a language teaching approach to another, ranging between focus and neglect. However, considering the countless benefits a good pronunciation instruction can yield it is a very important process.

The present study is concerned with pronunciation instruction, but not its nature or how it ought to be taught; instead it attempts to investigate how the learners perceive pronunciation instruction and its importance as a part of EFL classroom. It therefore aims at discovering the learners' perceptions of the value of pronunciation instruction, what they wish to achieve through it, and their attitudes to the received instruction.

Hence, the present study implemented a carefully designed questionnaire to investigate its sample of population and gain qualitative as well as quantitative data about their perceptions and attitudes. The researcher chose the students of the third year LMD at the University Center Salhi Ahmed in Naama as participants in the work to represent a larger population.

The research data provided by the questionnaire had yielded evidence to support the main hypothesis of the research. It was found out that the participants truly value the instruction of pronunciation. As for the sub hypotheses, they were proven to be right but not in a traditional fashion.

From the results of the questionnaire it was discovered that the participants' goals of pronunciation vary where a number of the participants wished to be intelligible and the others preferred native like pronunciation. However by further analyzing, it was discovered that those results were only on the surface; the participants have shown some confusions and contradictions in the answers which means that most of them do not possess clear goals of pronunciation, and this can be blamed in their received instructions. This leads to the second sub-hypothesis that was proven to be correct.

The responses of the participants displayed that they did not receive enough instruction, since they reported to have received a decent amount of instruction but they expressed their willingness to receive additional instruction. It was also concluded that it is not only the amount of instruction that is necessary, but also a better quality. As for the final hypotheses, it was not confirmed, since most of the participants had neutral and not negative attitudes; which is a result of them not having clear goals because they were not instructed enough.

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# Appendix

## Questionnaire

**Dear fellow students,**

The following questionnaire is part of a study for the purpose of attaining a master's degree. It aims at understanding what EFL students think of their pronunciation instruction, and it is solely for research purposes. Therefore, it will do us a tremendous favor if you focus on the questions and answer honestly. Any information you provide will be anonymous and confidential.

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### **Background information:**

1. Age: \_\_\_\_\_
2. Gender:      male ☐ female ☐
3. For how many years have you been studying English at the university center Salhi Ahmed Naama?: \_\_\_\_\_
4. How would you rate your English language pronunciation? (1 = very good; 2 = good; 3 = average; 4 = fair; 5 = poor ) : \_\_\_\_\_

### **Rubric one:**

Tick (✓) your answer. (SA = Strongly agree; A = Agree; N = Neither agree nor disagree; D = Disagree; SD = Strongly disagree)

| Statement                                                                                    | SA | A | N | D | SD |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|---|---|---|----|
| 1. I am concerned about my English language pronunciation.                                   |    |   |   |   |    |
| 2. Practicing pronunciation is beneficiary.                                                  |    |   |   |   |    |
| 3. Practicing English pronunciation will aid me in understanding native speakers of English. |    |   |   |   |    |
| 4. Practicing English pronunciation will aid native speakers of English in understanding me. |    |   |   |   |    |
| 5. Pronunciation should be integrated in language classrooms.                                |    |   |   |   |    |

**Rubric two:**

1. When I speak English I like to sound like:

An Algerian English speaker ☐                      A native English speaker ☐

Please specify the reason in few words:

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2. My preferred English accent is      English ☐    American ☐    other ☐

If other specify:

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3. My goal of pronunciation is:

1/To be understood even if I have an accent ☐

2/To sound as close to native speakers as possible ☐

**Rubric three:**

The following items are concerned with your experience of pronunciation instruction within your whole years of study at the university center of Naama.

1. What are the subjects (modules) that you think pronunciation was part of:

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2. How often did you practice pronunciation in classroom?

Never ☐    rarely ☐    sometimes ☐    often ☐    very often ☐

3. How satisfied are you of your teachers' instruction of pronunciation in relation to your own pronunciation goals ( rubric two, question 3 )

Very satisfied ☐    Satisfied ☐    Ok ☐    Dissatisfied ☐    Very dissatisfied ☐

4. In the following table tick (✓) the right answer

| Statement                                                         | SA | A | N | D | SD |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------|----|---|---|---|----|
| I would like to spend more time on pronunciation in the classroom |    |   |   |   |    |

*Thank you for your cooperation.*