



University of Tikrit

College of Education for Women

Department of English

Subject: General English Language

Stage: 2nd year Students

Name of Instructor: Assist. Prof. Elaf Subhi Abdullah

(Ph.D.)

Title of Lecture : The Problems that Face Students in Studying

Phonetics and Phonology

Email: elafsubhi1979@tu.edu.iq

Learning English pronunciation is very important for all studying English as a foreign language. English is non-phonetic language as there is no direct correspondence between spelling and the actual sounds produced and perceived by learners. So, Iraqi students of English encounter some phonetic and phonological problems reflected in the perception , identification and production of various English speech sounds. Most of these problems are related to the inconsistent relationship between spelling and pronunciation of English and the differences between the sound system of Arabic and English. They often result in some pronunciation challenges for students of English with respect to consonants , consonants cluster , vowels , diphthongs and words used in connected speech.

Besides , some of the areas of difficulty that result in student's failure to produce an accurate pronunciation related to their previous inaccurate pronunciation they have got from their teachers . Teachers are either unaware of the student's mispronunciation or they simply concentrate on comprehension and speech perception more than teaching students speech sounds and to organize them in well-defined sound patterns.

The main problems

There are some problems that the researcher has reached from the analysis of the students' answers of this question. The question has distributed on second year students – English department – College of Education for Women because they are studying the book of phonetics and phonology in this stage of learning .The question is (What are the Problems

that face you as a student in studying phonetics and phonology?). These are some problems that the tester has reached from the analysis of the answers of this question.

1- The weakness of the students in writing the transcription of the words.

2-The time which is allotted to teach this subject inside the classroom is very short.

3-The students don't read the subject of the lecture until the period of the exam. Thus, they face difficulty in answering the questions of the exam.

4-The students don't prepare their homework and they don't read more about this material. So, they face difficulty in studying phonetics and phonology.

5- The syllabus of this subject is difficult for the level of the students . As a result , the students are asked to change some subjects that suitable for their understanding .

6- The students are asked to prepare more devices for hearing the correct pronunciation of the words by native speakers.

The suggestions to avoid these problems

1-Students should be aware of the differences between the sound system in English and Arabic and possible areas that are related to first language interference.

2-Extensive practice and a lot of exercises to be given for students on problematic English sounds.

3- Teachers should be asked to devote much of their attention to concentrate on pronunciation problems facing the students and not on the issue of comprehension only.

4- Text book and syllabus designers should introduce a lot of exercises about the problematic sounds especially transcription.

5- A lot of practice should be given for students about the problems related to voicing distinctions e.g.(pin, bin, pray, bray). Also consonant clusters , syllabic consonants and sounds in connected speech.

6- Encouraging students to imitate native speakers, CDs, tape- recordings, TV, etc.