

THE TEACHING AND LEARNIGN OF ENGLISH PRONUNCIATION PATTERNS AND LISTENING SKILLS IN KENYA

By

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THE CHALLENGES IN THE TEACHING AND LEARNING OF LISTENING AND PRONUNCIATION ENGLISH SKILLS IN REFERENCE TO KENYA.

1.1 ABSTRACT

The study reported here contains the explication of my research which examined the learnability of English pronunciation patterns among second year high school students in Kenya and the pedagogical challenges the teaching of spoken English encounters. Its aim is to evaluate and discuss the critical aspects of spoken English in relation to communication effectiveness in multilingual contexts in which English functions as a second language. It focuses on underlying insights that are relevant in the attainment of auditory perception and production of intelligible pronunciation patterns particularly in voicing, stress, rhythm and intonation. The study proposes plausible interventions that can effectively enrich pronunciation learning where segmental features and discoursal cohesive devices in conversation are pragmatically and prosodically effective in communication efficiency. We demonstrate that awareness of communication strategies and fossilization including both avoidance and phonological reduction process which lead to deviant unintelligible pronunciation structures should be the focus of pedagogical approaches.

KEYWORDS: Pronunciation patterns learnability non-target-like structures
Communicative intelligibility stress elision assimilation intonation, deletion
substitution fossilization.

1.2 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

The learning and teaching of English listening and pronunciation skills in countries like Kenya have been considered a troublesome side issue to the mainstream of English language teaching. Many competent and experienced teachers quail at the prospect of pronunciation work and prefer to leave it alone. In other words, they rely on the learners' intuition and initiatives and trust that the authenticity of their pronunciation will improve as the production of other aspects of English such as lexis, syntax and morphology as well as other functional repertoire becomes more fluent. There

is however, a growing awareness among teachers that spoken English competence is critical and can be tackled as a problem in its own right as a result of emerging pedagogical challenges particularly in developing countries where English is taught and learnt as a second language. The teaching of English in these countries is undertaken by non-native English teachers whose proficiency and exposure to spoken English is minimal at a time when communicative intelligibility is gaining pedagogical significance. Divergent non-target-like English pronunciation patterns which show strong affinities with the ethnic languages of learners are often heard. The emerging, disparities in English pronunciation patterns can be explained from many varied perspectives, but the one that this study has given emphasis is concerned with lack of awareness of the speech pronunciation patterns of English.

The articulation of English sounds is a deeply sub-conscious physical habit. In order to produce English phonemes and sound 'more English', a second language learner has to undo the speech habits of a lifetime and learn to use all his speech organs in different ways. The exercise requires awareness of phonological knowledge of English, training and extensive practice. This is often the stumbling block. The learner needs to know how to undo the articulatory speech habits of the first language and use the speech organs so that he can produce the sounds of English authentically.

To neglect the preliminary reformation of habits and yet expect the learner to master English pronunciation is like assuming that a learner can acquire fluency in English pronunciation without exposure and formal intensive practice.

Lack of formal exposure of authentic spoken English in the classrooms to support the teaching of listening and pronunciation has fortified the attitude that listening comprehension and pronunciation practice cannot be approached systematically. Furthermore according to this view, the two language skills have inadequate coherent practical guidelines for learners and teachers of English.

The materials that are readily available tend to concentrate exclusively in details of the segmental features of individual sounds of English yet we are aware that native speakers communicate in sentences. They provide practice in the articulation of phonemes like [p], [t] and [k] or in the difference between the phonemes [p] and [b]. The learner who has acquired his first language probably also makes all these sounds of English which are similar to those of his first language and retains his essential 'foreignness' while speaking English. The problem that is easily ignored is concerned with those sounds that are deemed to be identical and distinctive in the first and the second language because they have essentially different characteristics which derive from general articulatory habits or settings of the two languages.

1.3 DATA BASE

The data on which this study is based was elicited from twenty form two learners of English as a second language whose first language is Gikuyu. Learners in the urban school setting are exposed to English in a multilingual social setting while those in the rural areas are exposed to English in an environment where the dominant first language is Gikuyu.

As a result of this awareness, ten learners who provided the data were selected from rural based schools while the other ten were drawn from urban based schools.

Each of the twenty students was asked to write a one page composition based on the topic, "*The Crime I Witnessed*". They were then advised to familiarize themselves with the content of the written compositions in preparation for narrating their experiences (without making references to the written texts) to their colleagues in class.

Twenty oral compositions were recorded in an audio tape and then transcribed. The transcribed oral compositions were used to identify the content words as well as the function words which the learners had actually used in their narratives. It was anticipated that the theme of *murder* would generate relatively similar lexical items from the learners. It was also expected that learners at this level would use similar sentence connectors.

The individual words, expressions, phrases and sentences which recurred in more than 50% of the learners narratives were listed and coded for purposes of analysis, elaboration and discussions of the nature and characteristics of spoken English as a second language.

The following words which were coded A1, A2 etc were culled from the learners' narratives:

A1 talk	A14 witness	A 27 screamed
A 2 talking	A15 stunned	A 28 behind
A 3 doorstep	A16 farmhouse	A 29 terror
A 4 vanished	A17 interview	A 30 savage (Adj.)
A 5 identified	A18 interviewed	A 31 scrape
A 6 anomalies	A19 screamed	A 32 stagger
A 7 convinced	A20 shaking	A 33 stare
A 8 sickening	A21 calamity	A 34 police
A 9 troubled	A22 setup	A 35 imagination
A10 disappeared	A23 instinct	A 36 sustain
All possess.	A24 probably	A 37 disappear
A12 pursue	A25 vanished	A 38 interruption
A13 weapons	A26 maybe	A 39 wounded
		A 40 abreast

The second category of data comprised twenty phrases and expressions which were coded B1, B2, B3 etc were culled from the learners narratives in which the following phrases were used.

B 1 scared of	B 12 panicked and bolted from the scene
B 2 afraid of	B 13 prepared to leave
B 3 he's trying to	B 14 stares at
B 4 leave on	B 15 hiding inside
B5 showed up	B 16 waiting to strike
B 6 taken off	B 17 again and again
B 7 killed her	B 18 giving vent to the anger
B 8 in a house	B 19 meager view
B 10 at the house	B 20 creaks open
B 11 scene of the murder	

The third category of data comprised twenty sentences which were identified for discussion and were identified and coded C1, C2, C3, C4 etc.

- C1. They were getting ready to go to bed.
- C2. Did he tell you what was in the car?
- C3. You should start your search here.
- C4. He fought back, so he struck him hard with the pipe.
- C5. Get a pipe and finish him off.
- C6. They left the scene hurriedly.
- C7. The hardest thing I've ever had to do was to relate what I saw.
- C8. But how do you get rid of the body?
- C9. Wrap him with a blanket first.
- C10. We can't protect you.
- C11. He heard screams coming from the house.
- C12. They would get away .with murder
- C13. It was late at night.
- C14. He motioned his colleagues to get in.
- C15. Come on, get rid of it now.
- C16. I knew about the murder that happened in the village
- C17. There was no evidence of murder.
- CI5. The interrogation seems to be going nowhere.
- C19. The investigator studied every detail of the case.
- C20. I was hiding inside, waiting to see what happening.

1.4 METHODOLOGY

The recurring words in code A and the phrases and expressions in code B as well as the sentences in code C that the learners had used were phonetically transcribed. The second language learners' realizations of English words pronunciation were compared with audio recorded models of English pronunciation patterns by Peter Roach (2000) and Donn Byrne/ Gordon Walsh (2000) and Donn Byrne/Gordon Walsh (1973) in order to identify features of non-target-like and target-like pronunciations of English.

This model was selected over others as a result of its close association with the internationally recognized Daniel Jones' described model of pronunciation. It resembles the type of pronunciation regarded as a kind of 'standard' having its base in the educated pronunciation of speakers of South British English. The comparison of pronunciation patterns of 'second language learners with the modified model of pronunciation described in Daniel Jones' *English Pronouncing Dictionary* (1997) and Peter Roach's *English Phonetics and Phonology* (2000) and Byrne & Walsh *Listening Pronunciation Practice* was beneficial in this investigation since it was flexible, and easily available in audio-recorded form.

The rating of non-target-like pronunciation used a modified UCLA's *Speaking*

Performance Scale for Oral Proficiency Test for Non- Native Learners of English (1996) and the *Speech Intelligibility/Communicability Index for Describing Speech and Evaluating its Impact on Communication* (1994) adapted from *Pronunciation Pedagogy and Theory* (1994:76-77).

In these instruments, pronunciation with perfect articulation of phonemes and appropriate fluency is ranked four (4). The pronunciation pattern with a distinct foreign accent which does not inhibit communication with native speaker is ranked three (3) while pronunciation patterns with detectable errors but intelligible with effort is ranked two (2). Spoken English that is dominated by pronunciation errors and only intelligible to native speakers who are familiar to the normative speech pronunciation habits is ranked one (1) while pronunciation patterns which are unintelligible and incomprehensible to the native speaker is ranked zero (0).

It permitted the adoption of a model that is premised on quality of pronunciation that recognizes a wide range of permissible variation in which the term 'Educated English' has received acceptance among the majority of speakers of English as second language.

Speakers of Educated Varieties of English share perfectly intelligible characteristic English. The teaching and use of these varieties raises challenges of quality of pronunciation in second language learning that is premised on enhancing communication and understanding.

The corpus of words and phrases from each narrative which were perceived to be unintelligible and lacked communicative effect were phonemically transcribed after each of the narrators was asked to pronounce the individual words. They were then compared and the pronunciation patterns analyzed in relation to phonetic, stress, rhythm and intonation approximation in Roach (2000) and Walsh (1973) in order to demonstrate the non-target patterns of English pronunciation leading to the following observations.

- | | | | |
|------|-------------|---------------|---|
| A 1, | talk | /tɔ:k/ | : No vowel length was heard. |
| A 2, | talking | /tɔ:kɪŋ/ | : vowel length of first syllable remained the same as the second syllable |
| A 3 | doorstep | /dɔ:step/ | :first syllable is shortened . |
| A4 | Vanished | /vænɪʃt/ | : is pronounced as if / f / . / tʃ / is sounded as / f / . |
| A5 | identified | /aɪdentɪfaɪd/ | : the diphthong /ar / was pronounced as /i/. |
| A6 | Anomalies | /ənɒməɪəs/ | : initial vowel was pronounced as / a /. |
| A7 | Convinced | /kənvnst/ | : initial syllable was pronounced as / ko / and / v / was converted to / f /. |
| A8 | Sickening | /sɪknɪŋ | : / s / was converted to / ð /, /θ / and / e / vowel is inserted . |
| A9 | Troubled | /trʌbd/ | : final syllable pronounced / bod /. |
| A 10 | disappeared | /dɪsəprɪəd/ | : initial syllable pronounced as / i / |
| A 11 | Possess | /pəzes/ | : second syllable was pronounced as / s / instead of / z / |
| A 12 | Purpose | /pɜ:pəs/ | : second syllable was pronounced as / əu / |
| A 13 | Weapons | /wepənz/ | : second syllable was pronounced as / o / and |

- / s / was not pronounced as / z / .
- A 14 Witness /wɪtnəs/ : / i / was inserted between / t / and / n / .
- A 15 Stunned /stʌnd/ : first syllable was lengthened,
- A 16 farmhouse /fɑ:mhaus/ : first syllable was not lengthened.
- A 17 interview /ɪntəvju:/ : first syllable was pronounced as / i / and / v /
sounded like / f /
- A 19 Shaking /ʃeɪkɪŋ/ : Initial consonant / ʃ / was sounded Like / ʃ /
- A 20 Calming /kɑ:mɪŋ/ : long vowel syllable was shortened
- A 21 Setup /setʌp/ : / s / consonant was pronounced like /ð/
- A22 instinct/ɪnstɪŋkt/ : the consonant cluster / ŋkt / sounded like /tkt /.
- A 23 probably /prɒbəbli/ : initial syllable sounded like / o / and second
syllable was sounded like / ɑ: /.
- A 24 Vanished /vənɪʃt / : / ʃ / was pronounced, as / ʃ / ; and / ʃt / was
pronounced like / ʃt / .
- A 25 May be /meɪbi:/ : pronounced like two separate words.
- A 26 scared /skeəd/ : Initial / s / sounded like / ð / .
- A 27 behind /bɪhaɪnd/ : initial syllable was lengthened.
- A 28 terror /terə/ : second syllable /rə/ was pronounced like /lə / .
- A 29 savage /sævɪdʒ/ : / s / was pronounced like / ð / and / v / as / f /
while / dʒ / was pronounced like / ʃ /
- A 30 scrape /skreɪp/ : / r / was pronounced like / l /
- A 31 stagger/stæɡə/ : first syllable was lengthened
- A 32 stare /steə/ : first syllable was pronounced / iə /
- A 33 police /pəli:s/ : first syllable was pronounced / pə: /
- A 34 imagination /ɪmædʒɪneɪʃn/ : the first syllable was pronounced as / i: / the
second as /ɑ: / and the final as / ʃn / .
- A 35 sustain /səsteɪn/ : first syllable was pronounced as / sʌ /
- A 36 disappear /dɪsəpɪə/ : first syllable was pronounced / i: /
- A 37 interruption /ɪntərəpʃn/ : The first syllable was pronounced as / i: /
and final syllable as / ʃn /
- A 38 wounded/wu:ndɪd/ : final syllable was pronounced as / ded /
- A 39 abreast /əbrest/ : initial syllable was pronounced as /æ/
- A 40 window /wɪndəu/ : / n / was not sounded.

2.0 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS.

The non-target English phoneme variants that have been coded and recorded as A1, A2.....up to A40 represent exemplification of instances of pronunciation deviations when compared with Peter Roach (2000) demonstrated patterns of English pronunciation for learners of English as a second language. The non-correspondence of their pronunciation patterns with the target English pronunciation raises questions of communicative intelligibility and pedagogical nature. The model of target English that

is learnt as a second language creates specific challenges in sociocultural contexts associated with norms of correctness.

The speakers of Gikuyu as a first language and all students in schools in Kenya learn English in formal school settings where norms of correctness are largely influenced by the quality of teaching. The resources available to facilitate the teaching of English pronunciation that is intelligible and is understood by speakers of the educated variety of English in another vital determinant. The teaching of pronunciation patterns relies on teachers' handbooks and class texts. Patterns of deviant pronunciations associated with the realization of the following words were noted:

- I. Lack of lengthening of the phoneme /ɔ:/ as in the words *talk* and *doorstep*.
- II. The voicing of the voiced labiodentals fricative /v/ which speakers of Gikuyu pronounce as if it is the voiceless labiodental fricative /f/ and hence the words *vanishes* is realized as a *fricative*.
- III. The inability to articulate the voiceless fricative palato-alveolar /ʃ/ as in the word *ship* so that it was perceived as the voiceless affricative palato-alveolar /tʃ/ as in the word *chip*.

The pronunciation of vowel phonemes in initial environments of words such as *a'nomalies*, *'Interview*, *'instinct*, *imagi'nation*, *inter'ruption* and *a'breast* were lengthened whereas in normal speech they should not be lengthened. The pronunciation of vowel phonemes in initial position of most English words in many instances do not require lengthening since they tend to affect the stress patterns and thus distort the communicative effect which is pragmatically relevant in the perception of spoken language. Shortening of the pronunciation of vowel phonemes in initial positions of words imply that- their pronunciation would be realized as;

/ənomələs/:/ɪntəʋnju:/,/ɪnstɪŋkt/,/ɪmædʒɪneɪʃn/,/ɪntərəʋpʃn /and/ əbrest/.

The speakers of Gikuyu as a first language tend to realize the short vowel phonemes /ɪ/ as /i:/ while the neutral vowel phoneme in initial position of English words is rendered as /ɑ:/ instead of /ə/.

- IV. The pronunciation of words containing the consonant phoneme -clusters such as the words *trouble*, *scream*, *probably*, *scrape* and *abreast* in which learners modified the pronunciation of words by introducing a vowel in the medial positions is phonologically significant. The structure of phonemes in Gikuyu vocabulary has the pattern CVCV and no two consonants are articulated together. Furthermore all Gikuyu words have voiced final vowel phonemes whereas the last vowel phoneme in most English words is silent.

The fact that two or three consonant phonemes can be found in one cluster is phonologically significant on pedagogical grounds since Kikuyu speakers tend to insert a vowel in medial environments of consonants so that it is not unusual to hear patterns of pronunciation such as *tirouble* for *trouble*, *sikiream* for *scream*, *purobably* for *probably*, *sikirape* for *scrape* and *abureasiti* for *abreast*. In this case the word *Christmas* would be realized as /kɪrɪðɪmɑθi/.

The recorded tapes of learners pronunciation patterns of individual words demonstrated lack of awareness of stress patterns in English in the following words:-

- A 3: *Doorstep*; in which the second element of the compound was made prominent
 A 6: *Anomalies*; in which first syllable was stressed.
 A 7: *Convinced*; in which prominence was given to the first syllable
 A 10: *Disappeared*; in which the first syllable was stressed
 A 16: *Farmhouse*; in which the second element of the compound –was stressed.
 A 21: *Setup*; both syllables were made prominent.
 A 37: *Interruption*; the first syllable was made prominent.
 A 39: *Abreast*; the initial syllable was stressed.
 A 24: *Vanished*; the initial phoneme was not voiced
 A 33: *Police*; the first syllable was stressed
 A 40: *Window*; The phoneme / n / was not sounded

Listening to the tape-recorded pronunciation of individual words that have been listed demonstrates inhibited clarity of utterance, loss of communicative effectiveness and unintelligible sound features. The use of unfamiliar English pronunciation associated with stress and intonational patterns accounts for inhibited decoding of speakers message.

The listeners were therefore forced to use other sentential and semantic clues in order to understand the intended message.

The sentence, *they stayed close to the window* where the phoneme / n / is silent yields *widow*.

The pronunciation of /r/ in many words such as A3 *doorstep*, A9 *troubled*, A10 *disappeared*, A12 *pursue*, A16 *farmhouse*, A17 *interview*, A19 *screamed*, A24 *probably*, A29 *terror*, A33 *Stare*, A38 *interruption*, A40 *abreast* was observed to create significant difficulties. To start with, English has many phonetic variants of the /r/ phoneme. When /r/ occurs in intervocalic positions in R.P as in the words *sorry*, *forever* and *very*, an alveolar sounding is acceptable. Learners had no difficult in producing the phoneme as intervocalic. But when /r/ is a fricative or frictionless continuant in initial positions it was observed that learners have special difficulties because strongly rolled sound is not acceptable. Essentially /r/ is heard only before a vowel. In words like *stare* (A33) and others like *poor* and *there* ‘r’ is not heard as it merely indicates the central vowel element of the diphthong

In RP, no kind of “r” sound is used finally or before another consonant except that final /r/ is used to link with an initial vowel in a following word. The common allophone of R.P /r/ is a voiced post alveolar frictionless continuant. The voiced post alveolar fricative allophone is made with slight friction and was observed to cause little difficulty as it is significant among the speakers of Gikuyu and native speakers of English.

2.1 STRESS PATTERNS IN ENGLISH

Stress constitutes an essential part of the pronunciation and speech patterns of English. This is where many divergent pronunciation patterns which differed from native speakers of English were observed. Stress is the comparative amount of force which a speaker uses on the syllables of the words he pronounces. Some syllables are given more emphasis and are made to stand out from other syllables because they are spoken with more force. Syllable force is an ingredient that constitutes stress and speakers of English use it to be intelligible and to express varied shades of meaning. Word stress concerns the force given to individual syllables in words. Monosyllabic

words have no problems because they have only one syllable that is stressed. The words we identified in this study showed the varying degrees in which the respondents were able to apply the stress patterns in English. In a number of instances stress patterns were used in conformity with the recorded model of R.P patterns. But in the following words it was observed that the pronunciation of words in respect to stress patterns differed significantly. The words A28 *behind* (A28), *interviewed* (A18) *interview* (A17), *anomalous* (A6) *abreast* (A40), *farmhouse* (A16) *talking* (A14) *doorstep* (A3) and *instinct* (23) were identified since the pronunciation patterns the respondent used did not approximate that of native speakers exemplified in the recorded material.

Respondents were observed to produce non English stress patterns in all words which were neutral vowel / ə / initial such as *instinct* (A23) *abreast* (A40) *anomalies* (A6) *interview* (A18) and *interviewed* (A17). There were other words which the respondents used in their narratives with inappropriate stress patterns such as '*father*, '*open*, *re'lation*, *po'tatoes* and a '*partment*. Whereas the notion of syllables is easily understood, the concept of stress and how it changes the communicative intention of the speaker was found to be elusive especially in words of more than one syllables. There were other words which were used in the stories such as '*father*, '*open*, *re'lation*, *po'tatoes* and a '*partment* where the stress pattern was inappropriately applied. The notion of stress is not easily understood and it requires more practice than explanation.

The second category of data comprised phrases and expressions which were coded B1, B2, B3, B4, B5 B11. The pronunciation patterns of these expressions when compared with the ones on the tape recorded materials demonstrated lack of awareness of how stress is used in sentences. Essentially only the content words should be pronounced with emphasis while the structure words such as prepositions, auxiliaries and conjunctions etc should not be stressed because they are connectors and relational words. In utterances, the words that are more prominent are the nouns, adjectives, verbs and adverbs because they carry most information. In the expression *panicked and bolted from the scene* (B12), the italicized words carry the message while the words *and*, *from* link and show the relationship of other words. The pronunciation of structure words is influenced by the sound patterns of the adjacent syllables in the content words so that the preposition *to* will be realized differently in *he's trying to* B3, *prepared to leave* B13, *waiting to strike* B16 and *giving vent to the anger* B18. The observations which were made in respect to the phrases in category B applies to the data in category C which were coded C1, C2, C3 up to C20. Respondents were observed to be unaware of the placement of stress patterns and ended up pronouncing nearly all syllables in the words with equal force. Their pronunciation patterns affected the intonational patterns in so far as loudness, speed of utterance and variation of voice were concerned. This is an area that is very difficult to teach in second language learning and teaching environment where teachers are not native speakers of English.

2.2 ELISION AND ASSIMILATION

Spoken English unlike most Bantu related languages creates additional challenges to both learners and teachers as a result of the tendency of the alteration of sound within the environment they occur. The terms elision and assimilation are used to characterize these process. Assimilation is a

process in which sounds in syllables of words tend to exert influence to other sounds near them or around them. The term elision refers to deletion of some sounds in specific consonant sound environments in spoken English. In the pronunciation of the words given in our examples, learners transfer the phonological rules of the sound patterns of their first language to the target language sound patterns through generalization. This means that the pronunciation of the auxiliary *was* in C2, C7, C13, C17 and C20 in the data has variant sound values. Native speakers of English are aware of the variant forms the auxiliary verb *was* is likely to take in spoken English in various sound environments. The pronunciation of the auxiliary *was* is assimilated in the syllables that are prominent in the words. Non-target pronunciation patterns in this area which were evident in the speech of the learners revealed that speakers relied on overgeneralization of the second language learning rules they are familiar with. The production of inappropriate pronunciation patterns can be attributed to fossilized structures in the first language. In that case the pronunciation of *was* the sound remains the same in all environments of use. Similarly the pronunciation of /z/ remains /s/, and /s/ remains /tʃ/ in all instances of pronunciation by second language learners. Pre-existing sound patterns in the first language exert major influence where fossilization tends to inhibit adoption of appropriate foreign but unfamiliar sound pronunciation patterns.

The examples used here for illustration demonstrate lack of awareness of elision and assimilation processes in spoken English as follows:

- i) In the word newspaper /nju:speɪpə/ for example the /s/ should be unvoiced while in the news /nju:z/ it should be voiced. Speakers did not comply with this rule.
- ii) In the pronunciation of inflectional endings /s/ and /ed/ speakers should be aware that voicing or devoicing is dependent on the sounds before them. Thus the pronunciation of *dogs* is realized /dogz/ while *capped* is realized as /kapt/. Examples revealed similarity in the pronunciation of the phonemes without proper compliance with voicing and devoicing rules leading to deviant sound changes.
- iii) In many instances the movement of the tongue affects assimilation leading to the following sound changes;
 - a) /z/ changes to /s/ in *vision*
 - b) /s/ changes to /ʃ/ in *tissue*

Similar sound changes occur in words like *amount*, *statement*, *banned for life*, *vanguard*, *movement* and *wontgo* where assimilation of some sounds should be observed in spoken English.

The fact that learners of English rely on the written forms to practise the use of sentence constructions creates a situation where mastery of oral speech patterns are given minimal practice. The phenomenon of elision which concerns the tendency for sounds to be omitted altogether in certain circumstances in spoken English especially where words are moulted as in *Christmas* where /t/ is elided between *s* and *i* the same process is found in the *bustle* where *s* elides with *l*. The phoneme /d/ in *handsome*, *windsor*, *grandmother*, *kindness* and *handkerchief* is silent.

There exists lack of awareness among the learners that the phoneme /t/, /d/ and /n/ in the examples are not prominent in English native speaker pronunciation. The sounds are deleted in normal conversation in order to preserve fluency and speech rhythm. Attempts to produce these sounds provide evidence in our findings of pre-existing reliance on the written forms of English.

This leads to production of non-target like speech patterns due to reliance on the written forms. Learners of English as a second language assume that by eliminating these sounds, the meaning they intend to convey would be lost.

Basically, elision and assimilation arise due to the need for economy of pronunciation as most vowels and consonants are not given their full value in normal connected speech as follows;

- i) *first three* t in first is omitted
- ii) *last year* t in last is omitted
- iii) *most recent* t in most is omitted
- iv) *West Germany* t in west is omitted
- v) *Interest free* t in interest is omitted
- vi) *Must be* t in must is omitted

The phoneme /d/ in spoken English as we observed elides more readily than /t/ and in many environments where respondents had difficulties in the following expressions.

Discharged prisoners

Nothing stands still

Chapel's loudspeaker

World wild life fund

Three thousand were

2.3 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Arising from the observations and discussion, there is an overwhelming evidence to support this view that the learning of pronunciation skills is a neglected area that needs to be addressed in order to achieve higher levels of intelligibility and communicative effectiveness.

The notion of communication strategies of second language learners which is defined as *potentially conscious plans for solving what to an individual presents itself as a problem in reaching a particular communicative goal* (Fearch and Kasper 1983a) is relevant in this study since pedagogical practice should recognize that there are specific learnability challenges that are associated with the learning of English pronunciation patterns. The occurrence of vowel phonemes in initial positions of words for example is weakened and therefore not stressed e.g.

(A39) a breast /əbreɪst/ (A6) anomalies / ənomələs/. This phonological rule and many others should be observed in order to produce English target language pronunciation structures in conversation.

There are specific pronunciation rules which are observed by native speakers of English in relation to stress patterns in normal speech stress is applied in the syllabus in respect to specific prosodic rules in the root word as opposed to affixes.

It was found that learners who use and speak English have a reasonable vocabulary control which displays weakness in pronunciation of:

- Separate speech sounds
- Stress patterns
- Intonation and rhythmic patterns

- Voicing and devoicing of significant vowels and consonants in English.

Faulty pronunciation patterns led to over-pronunciation of unstressed syllables either within the framework of a single word or within the supra-segmental patterns of a phrase or sentence.

The learning and teaching of production of accurate pronunciation patterns of English in multilingual contexts is an important goal where communicative effectiveness should be emphasized.

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