

ABSTRACT

This research seeks to examine the key English pronunciation difficulties faced by Egyptian learners, encompassing both segmental and suprasegmental issues, through a corpus of audio and video recordings collected from English conversation and presentation skills classes taught to Egyptian university students, all of whom are native speakers of Egyptian Colloquial Arabic (ECA). The study employs both contrastive analysis (comparing the phonological systems of English, Egyptian Arabic, and Modern Standard Arabic/MSA) as well as error analysis, with the aim of identifying the phonological features that should be prioritised in English instruction for Egyptian EFL learners drawing on the Lingua Franca Core (LFC) model recommendations. Accordingly, the study aims to outline pedagogical implications to inform the design and selection of effective teaching materials and techniques targeted at addressing the identified pronunciation challenges.

The research is also an attempt to investigate issues with pronunciation learning in Egypt, from the viewpoint of Egyptian EFL students and teachers based on their responses to questionnaires that aimed to place emphasis on: opinions regarding pronunciation performances, expectations from their instructors/learners and study programmes, difficulties encountered when learning/teaching English pronunciation, target proficiency levels, perceptions of English and the content covered in their programmes, first language (L1) influence, as well as opinions on what learners and teachers would want to see implemented in classrooms and textbooks.

The study participants exhibited segmental problems including consonant alteration, vowel alteration and consonant cluster simplification. The analysis showed that most of the phonological challenges are a product of the influence of the learners' L1 on English as a foreign language (EFL) as manifested in a series of negative transfer instances in the target language practice. Nevertheless, some were caused by the lack of knowledge of the second language (L2) rules and/or the inadequacy of training available for the learners.

Based on the questionnaire responses from both students and instructors, several implications could be drawn: (1) it is essential to ensure the professional qualification and competence of educators. (2) Teaching should be conducted primarily in English to increase learners' exposure to the target language. (3) Furthermore, teacher-centred instruction should be minimised, with greater emphasis placed on active student participation and engagement during

class. (4) Efforts should also focus on creating a stimulating and motivating learning environment by avoiding traditional, outdated teaching practices that hinder meaningful communicative interaction. (5) Assessment methods ought to prioritise students' developmental progress rather than scores, seeking to improve students' critical and creative thinking skills. (6) Pronunciation should be integrated into the teaching of other language skills to promote more effective language learning. (7) Finally, it is important to ensure that the study materials are both appealing and culturally appropriate in order to fulfil the students' expectations, fit this specific EFL setting and address the actual instructional and learning objectives.

In addition, interviews with Egyptian participants rated by Hungarian listeners were conducted to gain external evaluations of intelligibility and accentedness, offering a comparative perspective on how Egyptian English pronunciation is perceived outside the local context. Despite varied proficiency levels and strong accents influenced by Arabic, overall intelligibility was high. Key issues included vowel and consonant substitutions, flat intonation, misplaced stress, and unusual rhythm. Speakers demonstrated self-correction and fluctuating fluency, with recommendations emphasising targeted instruction on segmental and suprasegmental features to improve clarity and confidence.

As an attempt to capture the complexity of pronunciation learning in Egypt, this research also aims to shed more light on key concepts such as correctness and accentedness from the pragmatic perspective of users of English for academic purposes. In view of the findings of the current study, the learners' perspectives on English pronunciation seemed to reflect the need to redefine pronunciation teaching/learning in Egypt based on the principle of correctness rather than nativeness, highlighting the role of English as a lingua franca as a more down-to-earth paradigm.