

A THESIS

THE FACTORS OF ARABIC LANGUAGE (L1) THAT EFFECT LEARNING ENGLISH  
PRONUNCIATION AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE (L2)

(The Case of the Libyan Post Graduate Students of Diponegoro University)



ATHESIS

In Partial Fulfilment of the Requirement  
for master's Degree in linguistics

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Faculty of Humanities  
Diponegoro University  
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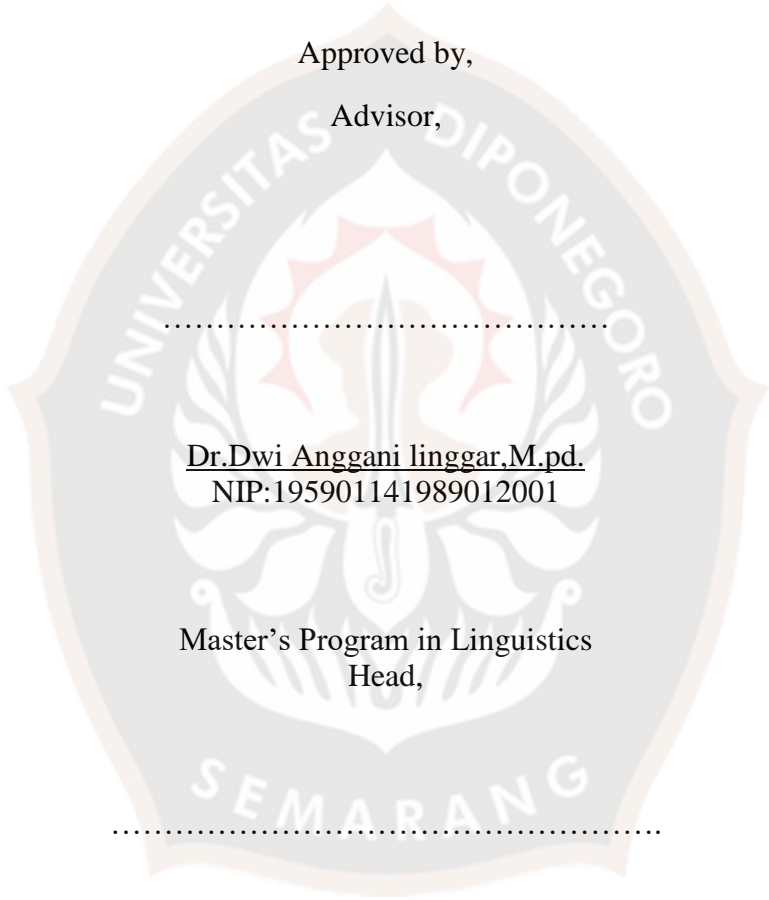
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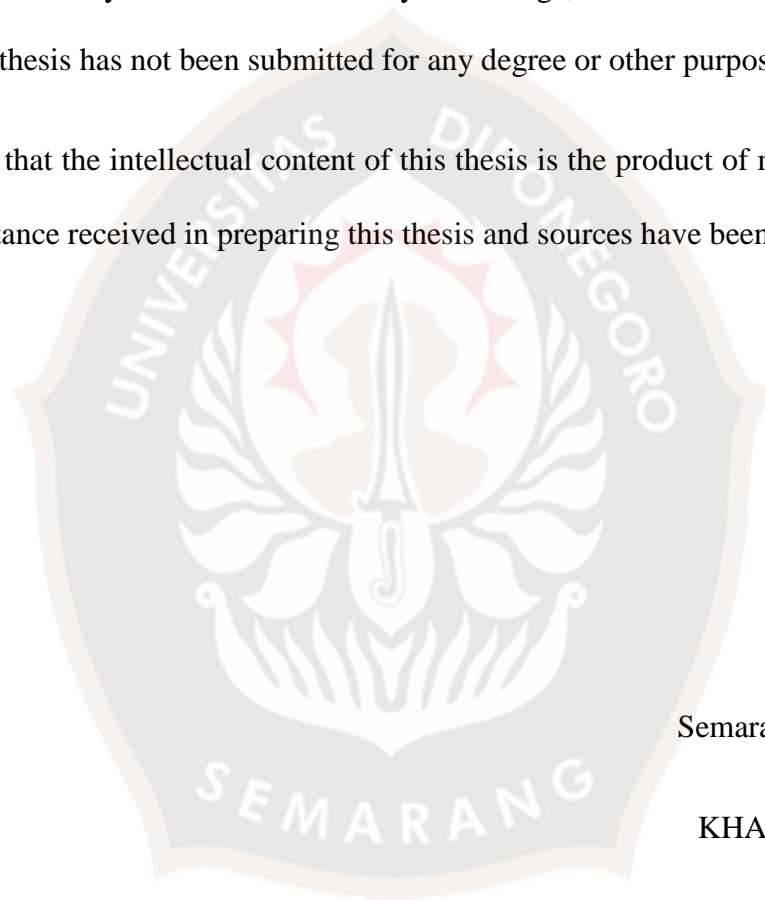
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### **Statement of Originality**

This is to certify that to the best of my knowledge, the content of this thesis is my own work. This thesis has not been submitted for any degree or other purposes.

I certify that the intellectual content of this thesis is the product of my own work and that all the assistance received in preparing this thesis and sources have been acknowledged.



Semarang, 2, April 2013

KHAIRI A.Zaglom

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## DEDICATION

To my parents who are the source of my existence,  
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To anyone who looks at my research,  
I dedicate this work with love and faithfulness.

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## Abstraksi

Berdasarkan pengalaman peneliti dalam mengajar EFL (English as a Foreign Language), dia memperhatikan bahwa kebanyakan pembelajar Libya mengalami masalah dalam mempelajari bahasa Inggris. Penelitian ini bermaksud untuk menggambarkan salah satu permasalahan dalam kemampuan berbicara (pronunciation) yang mahasiswa Libya di UNDIP hadapi pada berbagai bunyi konsonan dan vokal bahasa Inggris. Studi ini juga berfokus pada kompetensi komunikatif (kemampuan berbicara). Studi ini merupakan penelitian deskriptif untuk mengetahui permasalahan pengucapan bahasa Inggris mahasiswa S2 Libya di UNDIP dalam berbicara bahasa Inggris. Subjek penelitian adalah mahasiswa Libya yang menggunakan Bahasa Inggris sebagai EFL (English as a Foreign language) pada tingkat menengah. Studi ini tidak melibatkan bangsa arab lainnya dan hanya mengambil beberapa sampel untuk mendukung ide tesis ini. Data diambil melalui dua instrument yaitu observasi dan kuestioner terstruktur. Data dalam bentuk deskriptif. Studi ini menyajikan teori dalam pengucapan, bunyi konsonan dan vokal dalam bahasa Inggris dan penjelasan tentang munculnya error. Semua peserta dalam penelitian ini merupakan pembelajar ESL dan mereka belum pernah berada di English Speaking Country. Mahasiswa berasal dari berbagai bidang studi dan berasal dari berbagai daerah di Libya. Hasil dari penelitian ini berjalan sejalan dengan asumsi peneliti. Jelas bahwa kebanyakan mahasiswa Libya mengalami kesulitan dalam pengucapan beberapa bunyi konsonan dan vokal. Bunyi konsonan tersebut adalah /p/, /ʃ/, /dʒ/, /ʰ/, /v/, /s/, kelompok bunyi /gh/ and /tʃ/ dan bunyi vokal /a/, /e/, /i/, /o/, dan /u/. Pada akhir, peneliti berusaha memberi saran dan metode yang bisa membantu mahasiswa, pengajar, dan pembelajar bahasa Inggris EFL dalam meningkatkan pengucapannya.

## Abstract

Based on the researcher experience in teaching English language as a foreign language, he noticed that most of Libyan learners face problems in learning English language. This study aims at illustrating one of the speaking problems (pronunciation) that Libyan post graduate students at Diponegoro university face with different English consonant and vowel sounds. It also concentrates on the communicative competence (speaking skill). The research measures the speaking abilities of Libyan academic students in Diponegoro University in order to find out the difficulties that they encounter in speaking (pronunciation) in the target language (English). It is a descriptive research used to investigate about the pronunciation problems faced by Libyan post graduate students at Diponrgoro University in speaking English. The subjects were Arab Libyan learners of English as a foreign language who are intermediate level. It does not focus on any other Arab nationalities, and just cited some examples to support this thesis idea. The data were collected through two instruments which are observation and a structured questionnaire. This data described as the research is a descriptive one. The research provides an introduction on pronunciation, consonant and vowel sounds in English and the reasons that lead to these errors. All the participants in the study are ESL learners and they have never been to any English speaking country .The students are from different majors and they belong to different areas in Libya. The results of this research went side by side with the researcher assumption. It was so clear that most of Libyan learners find difficulty in pronouncing some English consonants and vowels. The problematic consonant sounds are: /p/, /ʃ/, /dʒ/, /ʒ/, /v/, /s/, the cluster /gh/ and /tʃ/ and vowel sounds /a/,/e/,/i/,/o/, and/u/. Finally, the research attempts to provide some suggestions and methods that could help students, teachers and learners of English as second languages improve their pronunciation.







## CHAPTER I

### INTRUDUCTION

#### 1.1 Background of the Study

Every language has a rule for combining sound segments to make meaningful words. Children adopt these sound rules through listening followed by trial and error. Later they develop a linguistic competence through which they recognise and produce meaningful sounds.

On the other hand, when students learn a second or foreign language, they face some overlaps because of the very different phoneme systems of both languages. So, when they try to speak a second language, they produce the sounds which are closest to the sounds and also exist in their mother tongue. For example, most Arab speakers pronounce the words *play* and *cheap* as *blay* and *sheep*. This kind of pronunciation problem creates a big hindrance in the process of communication amongst speakers. Moreover, it spoils the teaching and learning efforts in second language learning settings.

English is the second language taught in Libya after Arabic. Students are introduced to it in their first grade at school. It is also an integral part of university curricula with all universities incorporating a number of English communication courses in their study plans. These courses usually cover the basic skills of reading, writing, listening and speaking. According to the wide spread, English



language remains the most important language among the other languages. It is being as the language of communication more and more with the progress of time. In acquiring a language and using it to communicate, students need a process. Furthermore, in fact, speaking is more complicated than it seems at first and involves more just receiving and pronouncing some words. It happens because it also employs the process of thinking of ideas and the ability to transfer the ideas to the listeners. Furthermore, there are still macro skills in speaking so that the message that the speakers want to transfer can be understood. Those micro skills include pronunciation, stress, rhythmic patterns, and intonation patterns of the language, the correct forms of words, dictions, language variety, connectors, and many others.

In the author's four years of experience teaching English to Libyan students at the Secondary Year level and private courses to the academic study students, it has been found that the students are hardly able to pronounce certain consonant sounds correctly. For example, the voiceless bilabial plosive /p/ has no counterpart in the phonemic system of Arabic language, thus, its voiceless-ness is not easily realized by Libyan students, and it is always replaced by its voiced counterpart /b/, which has a phonemic value in the Arabic phonemic system. The same case is noticed with the palato-alveolar affricates /tʃ/ ,palato-alveolar fricatives /ʒ/ and labio-dental fricatives /v/. The sounds / tʃ /, /ʒ/ and /v/ don't have counterparts in the Arabic consonantal system and are not normally realised by Libyan students, consequently these are often replaced by the sounds /ʃ/, /dʒ, ʒ or z/ and /f/ respectively—for example, the sound /tʃ/ as in *cheap* is replaced by the

sound /ʃ/ as in *sheep*; the sound /ʒ/ as in *leisure* is replaced by the sound /dʒ/ as in *ledger* or by the sound /z/ as in *laser* and finally the sound /v/ as in *vine* is replaced by the sound /f/ as in *fine*.

learning English provides the person with an advantage as an active participant in today's world, opening new horizons to a better future. The ultimate goal of most second language learners is to attain native like fluency. They want to be indistinguishable from native speakers. However, for many learners, this dream has remained a dream and has not come true especially in the area of pronunciation as native speakers usually identify them as non-native speakers because of their accent. A large number of second language learners believe that the main difficulty they encounter when speaking the second language is pronunciation and consider this difficulty as the main source for their communication problems.

It is believed that one goal of pronunciation training in any course, is intelligible pronunciation not perfect pronunciation. The former is an essential component of communicative competence. The attainment of the latter should no longer be the objective. Instead, we should set realistic goals that are reasonable, applicable and suitable for the communication needs of the learner. Learners need to develop their ability to be easily understood in communication, their ability to meet the communication needs they face and increased self-confidence.

English has developed from a foreign language used between native speakers and non-native speakers to an international language, or to

a means of global communication, spoken far more often by non-native speakers among themselves than between native speakers. Therefore, it is vital that students learning English for international communication learn to speak it as intelligibly and comprehensibly as possible not necessarily like native speakers, but well enough to be understood. Moreover, it is equally important that they learn to understand it when spoken by people with different accents speaking in natural conditions.

Different approaches to language learning have had conflicting views on the teaching of pronunciation in the classroom. While it had no role to play in the grammar- translation method, it had strong footing in the audio-lingual approach (Otlowski, 1998:1). Remarkably enough, one major method of English language teaching, the communicative approach has also had its share of challenges where accent and pronunciation are concerned. There are many theories that have influenced second language learning. Robert Lado's Contrastive Analysis Theory is one of the most influential theories of language learning. It is based on the close scrutiny of two different languages, investigating the similarities and differences in their grammar, phonology, culture and writing. The main aim of the theory is to assist the language learning process. It was mainly propagated by Robert Lado, himself an adult language learner. Lado learned English in his twenties and developed a strong understanding of and sensitivity to the language learner. Lado states that in his prominent book "Linguistics across Culture" "individuals tend to transfer the forms and meanings, and the distribution of forms and meanings of their native language and culture to the foreign language and culture" (Lado,

1957:2). This is what became to be known as the concept of transfer. Lado also argues that learners will tend to apply the rules of their mother tongue to that of the language they are trying to learn. Learners will find it easier to learn a language that has similar structures to their own mother language than one that is not. This is referred to as positive transfer by some linguists. Negative transfer is the opposite. Learners will experience it when the difference between the two languages is great, and where the second language does not correspond to the mother tongue (Isurin, 2005:115).

All the samples of this study were adult learners (Libyan post graduate students at Diponegoro University). They studied English language just in their M.A degree. Regarding to the theory which mentioned below we can get another reason why the majority of the samples of this study find difficulty in pronunciation. Another important theory is that of Critical Period Hypothesis which was introduced by Lenneberg in 1967. This theory argues that learners have a certain period in which they can attain native fluency. A period which ends by the age twelve and which proponents of this theory connect with the cerebral lateralization of the brain Al-Saidat (2010:15). According to this theory adults will find it much more difficult to become fluent in a second language because they have missed that window of opportunity.

Furthermore, Al-Saidat argues that the purpose behind teaching pronunciation is not to attain perfect pronunciation but rather to allow students to become intelligible speakers. This could be reinforced with the arguments presented by the aforementioned theory. This leads to our question, what is

pronunciation and what constitutes good pronunciation? Oxford dictionary defines pronunciation as a "person's way of speaking a language" (Hornby, 1978:503). This is true of all languages. Native speakers of English in this case, acquire language unconsciously. This is mainly due to the mentally stored elements in their brains as discussed in (Carr, 1999:35).

The importance of investigating pronunciation difficulties stems from the fact that pronunciation stands as an obstacle in communication especially when the meaning of a certain word or an expression is altered because of the wrong pronunciation of an item as when one says *bark* for *park*, or *sheep* for *cheap*. As the formal English is the one taught in the institution in which there must be no way to have any mistake, the students may suffer from the mother tongue influence and the cultural differences which may be the main causes of these difficulties encountered by the students.

Pronunciation is a key element in conveying ideas. Intelligible pronunciation enables an individual to convey his ideas clearly. The problem with Libyan post graduate students is that they have a difficulty in learning pronunciation because teachers usually focus on grammar, vocabulary and reading skills and they sometimes neglect to focus on the sounds that may be problematic to students. Burkart (1998:1) notes that speaking ability is not only the product of language learning but also a crucial part of learning process. It is not enough for the students just to study it but they have to be able to acquire it. Therefore, it is not surprising when students of English as a Second Language/English as a Foreign Language (ESL/EFL) find it hard in learning these skills. As English is

used as a foreign language in the Arab world (Libya), therefore, students may suffer from difficulties in using English in general and especially in speaking.

## **1.2 Problem Statement**

Based on the experience of the researcher in teaching English language as a foreign language, he noticed that many of Libyan students encounter problems in speaking (pronunciation) English skill. A close observation of Libyan post graduate students disclosed that they confused the pronunciation of some set of words. It also observed that Libyan post graduate students at Diponegoro university do not differentiate between some vowel and consonant sounds which have more than one way of pronunciation e.g. vowel in 'mat' and 'mate'. The replacement of bilabials (b and p) with each other so they usually use /b/ instead of /p/ and rarely /p/ instead of /b/ for instance word like (park, paper, apple) they pronounce them as /b:k/, /beib/, /ble /. According to this observation the researcher thought of studying the pronunciation errors and factors that caused them.

### **Research Questions:**

1. What are the pronunciation problems faced by the Arab Libyan academic students at Diponegoro University level at relation to speaking skills?
2. Which consonants are pronounced with difficulty by the Arab Libyan academic students at Diponegoro University?
3. Which English vowels cause problems to Arab Libyan academic students in Diponegoro University?

4. Why are certain English vowels and consonants pronounced with some difficulty by the Arab Libyan academic students at Diponegoro University?

### **1.3 Objectives of the Study**

The aim of this study is to investigate the relationship between pronunciation errors and factors such as mother tongue interference, differences in the sound system between L1 and L2, inconsistency between spelling and English sounds especially Arabic and English. The study mainly aims to:

1. To highlight the speaking (pronunciation) problems of Libyan academic students in Diponegoro University.
2. To identify the difficulty of the consonant pronunciation.
3. To identify the vowel pronunciation errors among Libyan academic students in Diponegoro University.
4. To find out the reasons behind the finding of difficulties in pronouncing English vowels and consonants.

### **1.4 Assumption of the Study**

It is assumed that Libyan post graduate students of Diponegoro University face difficulties in speaking (pronunciation) in English as well as using the best techniques that enable them to speak English language as a foreign language. These difficulties are due to influence of mother tongue (L1) and sound system.

## **1.5 Scope of the Study**

This study concentrates on the communicative competence (speaking skill). The research measures the speaking abilities of Libyan academic students in Diponegoro University in order to find out the difficulties that they encounter in speaking (pronunciation) in the target language (English). This study focused on the speaking (pronunciation) competence. It also focuses on the enhancing of the pronunciation skill among academic students. By exploring the problems and the areas of weaknesses, the study makes some suggestions that may help in developing the pronunciation skill of Libyan post graduate students at Diponegoro University.

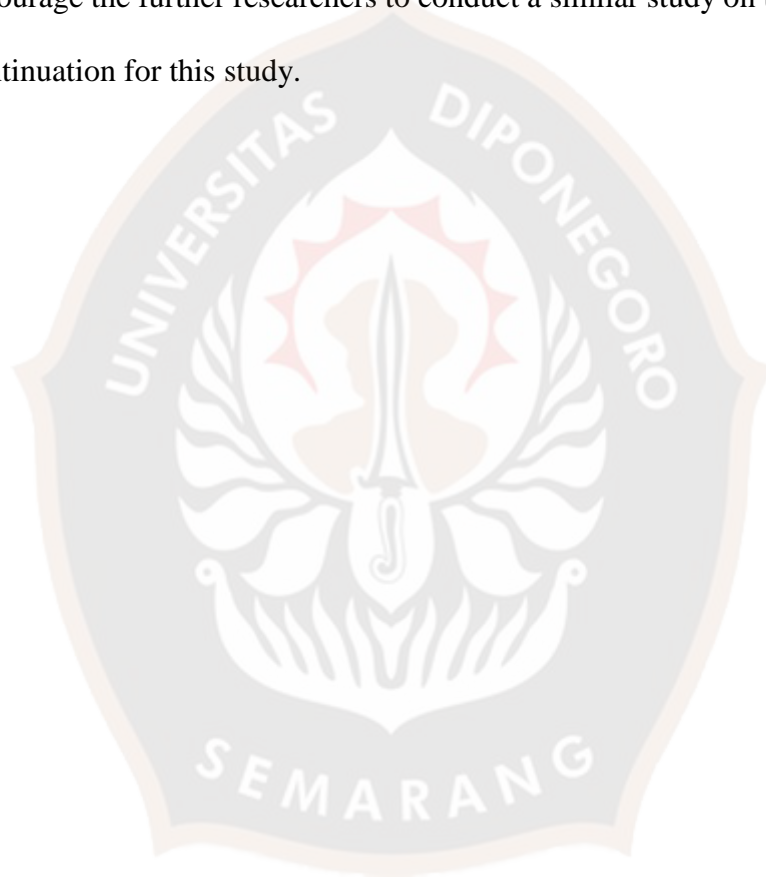
## **1.6 Significance of the Study**

This research is expected to contribute pedagogically, practically and theoretically. Practically, this study is significant for the teachers, students, schools, and also the next researchers. For the teachers, the finding of this study is expected to help them vary their teaching technique, in order to activate their speaking class. By having a fun and interactive teaching technique, it is expected that the students will be able to gain their speaking skills and becoming active and responsive.

For the students, new teaching techniques are expected to be able to attract students to be more active in their speaking class so that in turn, they can improve their speaking skill. Additionally, the result of this study is expected to be able to promote a positive learning habit, such as an active classroom, direct



(face to face) interaction, also courage and confidence in using English. It is finally expected to be able to give a good contribution for the school in improving their teaching and learning process as well as their teaching and learning quality. On the other hand, theoretically, this research is expected to provide knowledge of a new strategy in teaching speaking. At last, it is also expected that this research can encourage the further researchers to conduct a similar study on the same scope as a continuation for this study.



## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE

The researcher presented the relevant literature on this topic. He discussed some factors that influence learning English as general e.g. mother tongue interference, systematic differences between First language L1 and second language L2, inconsistency of some English sounds and the influence of spelling on pronunciation.

The previous works on second language Acquisition (SLA) specially those concerning English pronunciation problems, all agreed “that the errors committed by speakers of other languages is something systematic rather than random. Arabic speakers according to their language background, face some difficulties in their English pronunciation. These difficulties lead to mispronunciation (O’Connor2003:63). We can say that the errors made by the speakers of other language who speak English, are something systematic rather than random. For instance some studies demonstrated that Arab students face problem in pronunciation of sound which the students are not familiar with e.g./v/, /p/, /ð/ and it can be noted that the errors of pronunciation that learners of English from different language backgrounds make are systematic and not accidental. They substitute sounds that they don't have in their native language with other sounds which are close to them. In the place of articulation they replace /p/ with /b/ and /θ/ with /t/.

A conclusion about the reasons of these errors are said to be factors such as linguistic, psychological and socio-cultural factors (Brown, 2000:103). It can be said that the reasons of errors which the learners of the other language commit are from the differences between two languages. These differences include vocabulary, grammar structure, reading etc. And also learner behavior and his culture will influence on his performance. In addition to that, some researchers say that teaching system, strategies and the time of exposure play a significant role in (SLA) (Yule, 2003). On the other hand, researchers of English as a second or a foreign language in Libya according to different topics have put language skills such as grammar, vocabulary and literature in the first place and have rarely dealt with pronunciation. Inside classroom, grammar, vocabulary, and literature are consequently given more time, pronunciation lessons are almost non-existent.

## **2.1. Previous Studies**

Ezzeldin Mahmoud (2011) studied the pronunciation and perception of English sounds and words by university students of English in Sudan, whose native language is Arabic. The study aims to establish the intelligibility of Sudanese-Arabic (SA) accented English for native English (British and American) listeners and Dutch listeners who use English as a lingua franca. The intelligibility of SA-accented English is compared with that of native English. The study also investigates how well the SA students of English identify English sounds and recognize English words in simple sentences spoken by a native English speaker. The perception tests show that the intelligibility of SA-accented English is predominantly compromised by incorrect pronunciation of the English vowels.

This finding was predicted from a contrastive analysis of the Arabic and English sound inventories. The SA learners of English produced the vowels, consonants and consonant clusters of English in controlled materials. Acoustic analyses were carried out in order to establish the differences in pronunciation between SA-accented and native British pronunciation. The comparison revealed substantial discrepancies between the native and non-native varieties, which can be used to explain the degraded intelligibility of SA-accented English. Written questionnaires were administered in which both SA students of English and their instructors were asked to identify strengths and weaknesses in the students' production and perception of English sounds and words, and to speculate on the underlying causes of the difficulties.

The results show that the SA learners as well as their instructors have clear intuitions on where the weaknesses are, and that these intuitions correspond closely to the experimental findings of the perception experiments and the acoustic analyses. This book is relevance to (applied) linguists and language teachers in general and to specialists on the teaching of English pronunciation and listening skills to university students with an Arabic native language background.

Alkhier M .E. (2007) conducted a study about Pronunciation problems master degree. This study investigates the problem in English pronunciation experienced by learners whose first language is Sudanese spoken Arabic in other words to find the problematic sounds and the factors that cause this problem. Then it find some techniques that help the Sudanese student of English improve their pronunciation the subjects for the study were fifty students from University of

Sudan of Science and Technology (SUST) and thirty university teachers of English language from some universities. The findings of the study revealed that Sudanese student of English whose language background is Arabic, had problems with the pronunciation of English vowels that have more than one way of pronunciation in addition to the consonant sound contrasts e.g. /z/ and /ð / ,/s/ and /θ/, /b/ and /p/ /ʃ / and /tʃ/. Based on the findings, the study concluded that factors such as interference, the differences in sound system in the two languages, inconsistency of English sounds and spelling militate against Sudanese student of English competence in pronunciation.

All the previous studies which mentioned above talked about the same difficulties in different Arabic countries but there were bit differences among them in pronouncing the sounds, because of different accent and dialect. In this research, the researcher tried to find out the difficulties of English pronunciation that Libyan post graduate students face in their English speaking.

## **2.2.Underlying Theories**

The aim of this part concerning with the theoretical background of speaking and will be to determine the position of speaking skill among the other skills, and also to analyze the elements that speaking as a skill includes. The following part will present the theory of communicative competence and its relation to speaking skill.

Harmer, (2001) and Gower *et al.*(1995:99-100) note down that, from the communicative point of view, speaking has many different aspects. It includes

two major categories: accuracy, involving the correct use of vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation practiced through controlled activities, and fluency, considered to be ‘the ability to keep going when speaking spontaneously’. This is however, rather a superficial view of this skill.

In my point of view it would be better if we gave more attention to the pronunciation skill and the differences between the two languages in order to facilitate some of the difficulties which encounter the learners in learning new language.

According to Bygate (1987: 3), in order to achieve a communicative goal through speaking, there are two aspects to be considered – knowledge of the language, and skill in using this knowledge. It is not enough to possess a certain amount of knowledge, but a speaker of the language should be able to use this knowledge in different situations. We do not merely know how to assemble sentences in the abstract: we have to produce them and adopt to the circumstances. This means making decisions rapidly, implementing them smoothly, and adjusting our conversation as unexpected problems appear in our path. Being able to decide what to say on the spot, saying it clearly and being flexible during a conversation as different situations come out is the ability to use the knowledge ‘in action’, which creates the second aspect of speaking - the skill.

On the other hand, when a speaker needs to alter, correct or change what he or she has said, they will need to make use of compensation devices. These include tools such as substitution, rephrasing, reformulating, self-correction, false

starts, and repetition and hesitation. Bygate concludes that incorporation of these features, facilitation and compensation, in the teaching-learning process is of a considerable importance, in order to help students' oral production and compensate for the problems they may face

### **2.3. Definitions of Speaking Skills**

In the field of speaking, there are many terms that researchers use for speaking skill. Some of these terms are oral production, oral skill, speaking ability as well as oral ability, and verbal interaction. According to, Ellis, R. (1994:15), "The form and meaning of speaking skill are depending on the context in which it occurs, including the participants on themselves, their collective experience, the physical environment, and the purposes for speaking. It is often spontaneous, open-ended, and evolving. With other words the speaker should know what is the kind of situations he is talking about and what is the suitable of vocabulary should be used. And also can be defined as the ability to express oneself intelligibly, reasonably, accurately and without too much hesitation; otherwise, communication may break down because the listener loses interest or gets impatient. Speaking is the ability to use in essentially normal communication the signaling systems of pronunciation, stress, intonation, grammatical structure and vocabulary of the foreign language at normal rate of delivery for native speakers of the language. Salama (2006) asserts that "Speaking is the productive skill that can be achieved through understanding three major elements which are, sound, grammar, and vocabulary. With other words to form a good speech

speaker should be careful and skillful in pronouncing the words, grammatical structure and how much vocabulary the speaker know.

#### **2.4. Influence of the Mother Language**

The sound system of the mother language has a big influence on English because the learner sometimes tries to carry the different characteristics from the mother tongue and to transfer it to the second language especially if the learner is an adult or if that he started to learn the language after the age of puberty Gimson, (1989:312). With other words, every language in the world has a specific system of sounds, vocabulary, stress, intonation and grammar. The mispronunciation of sounds reflects the system of sounds of the mother language.

Non-native pronunciations of English result from the differences between the mother tongue and English because non-native users of English carry the pronunciation rules from their mother tongue. Speakers also create pronunciations for English sounds not found in the speaker's first language. Ghaleb Rabab'ah in his paper "Communication Problems Facing Arab Learners of English" argues that some students find a difficulty with some consonant sounds because "listening materials are not widely used" by school teachers and students lack the model of the native speaker pronunciation (Rabab'ah, 2003:187). This goes hand in hand with what the researcher has found with his students. Most of the Libyan post graduate students have had no exposure to English from



a native speaker and this could be an important reason for student's weakness in pronunciation.

## **2.5. Communication in a Foreign Language**

Traditionally, primacy has been given to written English over its spoken forms in educational contexts. This bias may stem from a focus on learning grammar, since grammar only explains how to write correctly Martin, H,(2007:164). Effective communication, therefore, depends on one's ability to express oneself in speech clearly, accurately and fluently. Although thoughts could be expressed in writing, it is only through speech that one's thoughts would be put across accurately and effectively to one's audience without any form of ambiguity. This is because in some cases, it might be difficult for a reader to guess and interpret exactly what the writer has in mind. Therefore, a good spoken form of any language is a virtue in communication. Most students are interested in learning to speak a foreign language since they understand the importance of being able to communicate with people from other countries. Learners of English sometimes notice that they speak more correctly than native speakers do, since they have learned to use complete sentences instead of authentic spoken English. A native language that is spoken is often fragmented. Today, it is important that communication helps people participate in the social world around them. It is also central to establishing contact with another speaker. One significant factor is the listener's willingness to understand the information that is being exchanged. Here, both word choice and body language are vital for the communication.

## 2.6. Phonologies of English and Arabic

Speech sounds can be divided into two categories: vowels and consonants. Vowels are sounds during the articulation of which speech sounds are made “without any major obstruction or impediment to airflow” Clark & Yallop. (1995: 13). On the other hand, consonants are sounds that are “made by exploiting the articulatory capabilities of the tongue, teeth, and lips in such a way that airflow through the mouth cavity is radically constricted or even temporarily blocked” Clark & Yallop, (1995:13). The English language has a phonemic inventory of nine vowels and five diphthongs. Below is a list of the vowels of English with an example for each:

### Monophthongs

1. /i/ front high unrounded tense as in bead
2. /ɪ/ front high unrounded lax as in bid
3. /e/ front mid unrounded lax as in bed
4. /æ/ front low unrounded as in bad
5. /ʌ/ central mid unrounded as in bud
6. /u/ back high rounded tense as in bood
7. /ʊ/ back high rounded lax as in good
8. /ɔ/ back mid rounded lax as in ball

9. /ɑ/ back low unrounded as in pod

### Diphthongs

1. /eɪ/ glide from front mid to front high as in say

2. /aɪ/ glide from mid low to front high as in by

3. /ɔɪ/ glide from mid back to front high as in boy

4. /aʊ/ glide from low back to back high as in sow (noun)

5. /oʊ/ glide from upper mid back to back high as in so

On the other hand, the vowel system of Arabic consists of six vowels: three long and three short counterparts. The three long vowels are represented by three letters of the alphabet, while the three short vowels are represented by diacritical marks.

1. /i/ front high unrounded long as represented by the letter ي in قَدِيم /qaḍīm/ (Old)

2. /ɪ/ front high unrounded short as represented by the mark in قَدِم /qaḍīm/ (Arrive)

3. /u/ back high rounded long as represented by the letter و in سَوَق /suq/ (Market)

4. /ʊ/ back high rounded short as represented by the mark in سُق /suq/ (Drive – imperative)

5. /æ/ front low unrounded long as represented by the letter ا in سَامِح /sæmaḥ/ (Forgive)

6. /a/ central low unrounded short as represented by the mark in سَمَح /samaH/  
(Allow)

Five of the six vowels that exist in Arabic, namely /i/, /ɪ/, /u/, /ʊ/, and /æ/, have equivalent counterparts in English. The only vowel in Arabic that does not have an English equivalent is the central low unrounded short vowel /a/.

On the other hand, the consonantal system of the Arabic language has an inventory of 28 consonants. A closer look at the consonantal systems of English and Arabic shows 13 phonemes exist in Arabic but not in English. Moreover, the allophonic distribution in these two languages is different. For example, the voiced bilabial stop [b] and the voiceless bilabial stop [p] occur in English as allophones of two phonemes, while they are allophones of the same phoneme in Arabic in that [p] occurs before voiceless consonants while [b] occurs elsewhere. Thus, the English and Arabic phonemic systems have many differences. This is very likely to create confusion for English-speaking learners of Arabic

### **2.7. The Sound Systems of both Arabic and English.**

Ladefoged (1967:167) claimed that people perceive sounds based on the way they produce those sounds and that “people cannot hear differences between sounds until after they have learned to make these differences. With other words, the sound systems of both Arabic and English, as well as the writing systems of these two languages differ. Arabic is written from right to left, and Arabic books are held with the spine on the right-hand side. There are 28 letters in the Arabic alphabet, which only represent consonants and long vowels, while

short vowels are indicated with diacritical marks. These marks are not often used in ordinary writing, as native speakers can easily identify the intended words from the context and experience. Because of both oral and written language differences, native speakers of English may confront more difficulty learning Arabic than other, more similar European languages. The Libyan learners as speakers of Arabic tend to replace /v/ by /f/ or /b/ by /p/ because these sounds do not exist in their native language sound system. So their speech organs are not trained to produce such sounds. They pronounce *very* as *ferry* and *van* as *fan*. The learners' difficulties in a L2 could be predicted based on systematic differences of the two languages, and those learners from different first language backgrounds would experience different difficulties when attempting to learn a L2. It was also reported that it is essential to understand which sound in a language are phonemes because they express the differences in meaning and the learner should be able to pronounce them, otherwise he commits errors. In Spanish sound system for instance there is no distinction between /b/ and /v/ which makes it difficult for Spanish learners of English to perceive and pronounce the difference between /b/ and /v/ as in *berry*, *very* Nunan; Carter, (2001:58). The same example is true for Libyan students of English, and it is not a matter of no distinction but in fact there is no /v/ sound in Libyan Spoken Arabic, that is also true of /p/ and /θ/ so the Libyan learners tend to pronounce such sounds by replacing them with the close sounds to them in the place of articulation.

O'Connor, (2003:79) showed that in English language there are twenty – four consonants and twenty vowels. That means there are forty-four phonemes in

English that the learner should be able to produce them while he or she is learning English. Learners of different language backgrounds will of course face some difficulties to pronounce them, because of their language background. For instance; in Arabic language the whole number of the sounds is less than the one in English language, so the total sounds of Arabic language are twenty-eight letters each of them represent only one sound. So there are only twenty-eight movement of the organs of speech, so to produce any sound that means to perform the exact organs movement of the sound. If the learner`s language sound system has not any of the forty-four English sounds,s/he will face a difficulty to produce it e.g. (ð, θ, p, v) sounds which do not exist in Libyan Spoken Arabic sound system, so Libyan students pronounce them incorrectly and the reason for that is the differences between the sound system in the L1 and L2.

## **2.8. General Problems of Arab Learners of English**

Arab learners of English encounter problems in both speaking and writing. This fact has been clearly stated by many researchers, e.g. Abdul Haq (1982:1), Abbad (1988:15) and Wahba (1998:36).The students in Jordan, for example, learn English in their home country where the native language is Arabic. The only way to learn English in Jordan is through formal instruction, i.e. in the classroom where language teachers are native speakers of Arabic. There is little opportunity to learn English through natural interaction in the target language which is only possible when students encounter native speakers of English who come to the country as tourists.

Many studies have been conducted in Jordan to investigate lexical, syntactical and phonological errors made by Jordanian school learners of English e.g., Abdul Haq,(1982).Zughoul and Taminian,(1984:4). Abdul Haq (1982: 1) states that "One of the linguistic areas in which students in the secondary cycle commit errors is in the writing skill". He adds "There are general outcries about the continuous deterioration of the standards of English proficiency of students among school teachers, university instructors and all who are concerned with English language teaching." In support of Abdul Haq's view, Zughoul (1984:4) finds that "Jordanian EFL students commit serious lexical errors while communicating in English". The Ministry of Education in Jordan has specified goals of teaching English at the secondary stage. Among such goals, students should be able to write English passages that are grammatically correct, properly punctuated and effectively organized. They are also expected to understand and communicate using a variety of notions and linguistic functions based on everyday situations. Accordingly, all Jordanian secondary school graduates are expected to develop native-like facility in English, which will enable them to communicate spontaneously, effectively and confidently about a broad range of topics. The results of the studies conducted in Jordan lead to the conclusion that the goals set by the ministry of education are ambitious and have not been achieved. In the Sudan, Kambal (1980) analyzes errors in three types of free compositions written by first- year Sudanese University students. The study gives an account of the major syntactic errors in the verb phrase and the noun phrase made by these students in an attempt to improve the quality of the remedial

English program in the context of the Arabization in the Sudan. Kambal reports on three main types of error in the verb phrase: verb formation, tense, and subject-verb agreement. He discusses errors in tense under five categories: tense sequence, tense substitution, tense marker, deletion, and confusion of perfect tenses. With regard to subject-verb agreement, three types of error were identified. These involve the third-person singular marker used redundantly, and the incorrect form of verb to be. Similarly, Egyptian learners of English face problems, but the majorities of these problems are related to pronunciation. Wahba (1998:36) summarizes these problems: Egyptian students face certain problems related to pronunciation. Some of these problems are related to stress, others are related to intonation. However, most of these problems can be attributed to the differences in pronunciation between English and Arabic. In Yemen, the situation is almost the same as in the other Arab countries. Abbad (1988:15) admits the weakness of Yemeni learners of English, and adds that "in spite of the low proficiency level in English of most applicants, they are accepted into the department." This is what happens in most of the Arab universities. English language departments accept high school graduates without taking into consideration their proficiency level and whether or not they will be able to manage in a program of English studies.

Above all, another important area of difficulty that Arab learners of English have is communication. Arab learners find it difficult to communicate freely in the target language. This may be due to the methods of language teaching. It can be also due to the learning environment which some judge to be unsuitable for



learning a foreign language. This is noticeable in Jordan where the formal language of communication is Arabic.

Every language has a rule for combining sound segments to make meaningful words. Children adopt these sound rules through listening followed by trial and error. Later they develop a linguistic competence through which they recognize and produce meaningful sounds. On the other hand, when students learn a second or foreign language, they face some overlaps because of the very different phoneme systems of both languages. So, when they try to speak a second language, they produce the sounds which are closest to the sounds and also exist in their mother tongue. For example, most Libyan speakers pronounce the words *play* and *cheap* as *blay* and *sheep*. This kind of pronunciation problem creates a big hindrance in the process of communication amongst speakers. Moreover, it spoils the teaching and learning efforts in second language learning settings.

### **2.9. Speech Intelligibility Problems of Libyan EFL learners**

The primary function of language is social contact, which takes place between human beings anywhere they are. A person speaks to influence the actions of his/her fellows, i.e. to involve them into interactions. In all situations of language use, there are two major roles, which are played by the speech participants – speaker and hearer. Normally, these two functional roles are present either actually or implicitly in every speech act when the speech participants achieve successful communication: i.e. when the hearer understands what the speaker says, the speech act is described as intelligible. However, when a speech

participant fails to understand the speaker message, the speech is said to be unintelligible. Failure to understand or produce intelligible speech has recently been classified by linguists as speech intelligibility problems which may result from the hearer or the speaker side or from both due to linguistic factors. Moreover, linguists assume that most speech intelligibility problems occur between L1 and L2 speakers coming from different language environments.

### **2.10. Teaching Pronunciation**

Pronunciation teaching is a prominent factor in foreign language teaching. Since sounds play an important role in communication, foreign language teachers must attribute proper importance to teaching pronunciation in their classes. However, this fact is very much neglected by many foreign language teachers. It is evident that communication is a mutual relationship between the speaker and the hearer. This means that one must comprehend what he hears in the target language and must produce the sounds of the language he is trying to learn accurately. Unless he has sufficient knowledge of the sound patterns of the target language, he can neither encode a message to anybody nor decode the message sent by another person by learning the sounds of the target language within his mother tongue. Hence, pronunciation teaching is of great importance for successful oral communication to take place since it is an important ingredient of the communicative competence. On the other hand, when students learn a second or foreign language, they face some overlaps because of the very different phoneme systems of both languages. So, when they try to speak a second language, they produce the sounds which are closest to the sounds and also exist

in their mother tongue. For example, most Arab speakers pronounce the words play as blay and cheap as sheep. This kind of pronunciation problem creates a big hindrance in the process of communication amongst speakers. Moreover, it spoils the teaching and learning efforts in second language learning settings.

### **2.11. The Effects of Regional English Dialects**

Another factor that may affect the perception of AE speech sounds in the Gulf region by L2 English speakers whose native language is Arabic involves the variety of English dialects that constitute the learning and communication environment. As previously mentioned, the majority of locally-spoken English dialects are primarily of South Asian origin (e.g., Pakistan, India, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Philippines), often spoken by nonnative English speakers, with highly diverse native language backgrounds. Thus, the phonological characteristics of locally-spoken English dialects that are commonly used in education, business, and social settings may also affect the perception of AE speech sounds, even among early bilinguals or native English speakers in the UAE. Previous studies indicate that English dialects can differ in their overall intelligibility for the same listener group and that perception of speech in an unfamiliar dialect or with an unfamiliar foreign accent may decrease intelligibility Clarke,( 2003).

Hypotheses regarding the possible perceptual consequences as a function of the many English dialects spoken by the listeners in the UAE would be beyond the scope of this paper and require a great deal of preliminary research. However,

as many of the English dialects stemming from East Asia are more similar to Standard British English (i.e., Received Pronunciation) than Standard American English, it may be expected that listeners in the UAE may be more familiar with this dialect, as well as other characteristics of their particular English dialect. Thus, for example, perception of AE by individuals whose English is of Philippine origin may be affected by British English vowel mergers, as well as by bilabial stop vs. labiodental fricative confusions that result from the absence of labiodental fricatives in Tagalog (Espinosa, 1997).

## **2.12. Phonetics and Pronunciation**

In order to learn any language, a person must be aware of its different skills; because this helps in understanding the language and mastering phonetics. And also it is great importance for a person who is seeking success in learning English language or any other language. Knowing the production of sounds combines and function etc will help the learner a lot to progress and develop his pronunciation. Michael, Sand Bernard's (2001:35) reported that "people who are going to work with language at advanced level as teachers or researchers need deep understanding provided by the study of grammatical theory and related areas of linguistic". So to understand the principles of the system that organizes the rules of the sounds in spoken English, the learner needs to master phonetics, in order to expect a good English pronunciation. The learner must be able to identify the different English sounds (orthography and phonology) and the small units of sound (vowels and consonants) which are known as (Phonemes). With other words the learner should be able to differentiate between the vowels in *pet* and *bit*

and the consonants at the beginning of the words like *park* and *bark* because this is something confusing, it is very important for the learner to think of English pronunciation in terms of phoneme rather than letters. The learner must know that the words such as *enough* and *inept* begin with the same phoneme /i/, and the word *enough* ends with the same phoneme as in *stuff*. The Learner, who is aware of phonetics transcription, transcribes it and pronounces it correctly. Many of the students suffer from this problem, because of their lack of knowledge of phonetics and phonology” O'Connor, (2003:79) showed that in the learning of pronunciation there are two stages, which the learner must know to be unworried when dealing with English sounds. The first one is that the learner should be able to pronounce different 44 vowels and consonants, so that the words and other longer utterances do not sound the same, such as the word *feel* /fi:l/ is different from *fill* /fil/ and *heat* /hi:t/ is different from *eat* /i:t/ in the second stage, the learner must be able to use as many different sound so as to represent particular phoneme. If the learner has good mastery of phonetics, then he will be able to transcribe words and pronounce them or check their pronunciation on the dictionary.

## CHAPTER III

### RESEARCH METHODS

#### 3.1. Research Design

It is a descriptive research used to investigate about the pronunciation problems faced by Libyan post graduate students at Diponegoro University in speaking English. In analyzing the data, simple statistics are used and the findings described to come out with the proper suggestions.

#### 3.2. Subjects

They are Arab Libyan learners of English as a foreign language who are intermediate level. I focused my search on some of Arab Libyan academic students in Diponegoro University level whose age is between 25-35 years. As they are being taught English naturally in the university by teaching the main four skills which are speaking and writing (productive skills) and reading and listening (receptive skills).

#### 3.3. Instruments

The participants examined through observation. To obtain information about errors, the researcher engaged in direct conversations with the learners inside the classroom during their university day with number of topics, which are of particular interest to the students. While the students were doing this, the researcher took notes about some particular sounds he expected that the students cannot pronounce correctly, or which the learners may replace with

other sounds which may be close to them in the place of production. And also, the researcher applied a questionnaire for the participants to get precise results about the causes of pronunciation problems in Arab Libyan students speaking. The questionnaire provided the researcher with the attitudes of the students towards learning English and their problems in speaking. These attitudes show the cause of the students problems in speaking that they think of as a negative factor affects their pronunciation.

### **3.4. Procedure**

Each participant should speak and write questionnaire individually. The observation and the questionnaire tested the students' competence in speaking (pronunciation) skill. This of course helped the observer to notice which participant commits most pronunciation mistakes, and what kind of errors they commit.

### **3.5. Population of the Study.**

This study applied a reading test and a questionnaire on the Libyan post graduate students who studying in Diponegoro University in Semarang, Indonesia. The participants study in different specialization, but all of them are studying in the master program. All of them study by using English language.

In Indonesia, there are more than one hundred Libyan students, but only those who study in Diponegoro University were the participants of this research. Therefore, it is expected that they have the same level in English language, although they study in different measures. All of the participants are males. This

is because all them are from male gender. Thirty students were the samples of this study.

The study programs of the sample:

Accounting : nine students

Public health : three students

Applied linguistics : three students

Engineering : ten students

Environment : two students

Pathology science : two students

Immunology science : one student

Thirty students were the samples of this study. All of them study in postgraduate program at UNDIP (Diponegoro University).

### **3.6. Tools of Data Collection.**

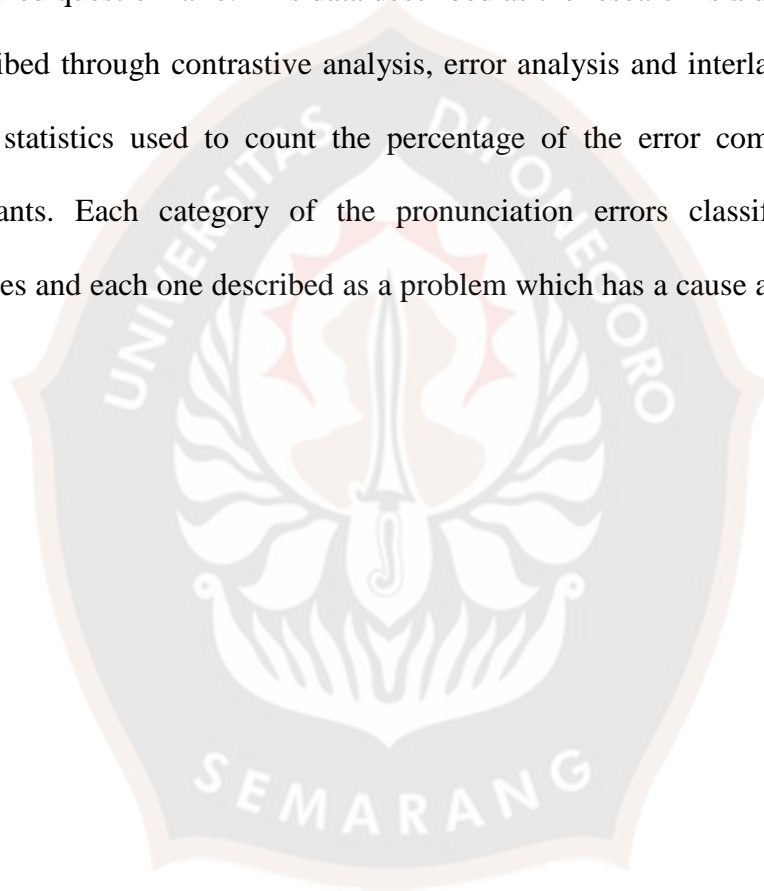
It is known that the tool of any study is the instrument which any researcher uses for collecting the required data for the study. So there are many types of tools used in the field of scientific research. In this research, the researcher depended on the observation to the samples (Libyan students) to collect



the data (pronunciation mistakes). On the other hand, a structured questionnaire was used to collect the information from the samples.

### **3.7. Techniques of Analyzing Data.**

The data were collected through two instruments which are observation and a structured questionnaire. This data described as the research is a descriptive one. It described through contrastive analysis, error analysis and interlanguage errors. Simple statistics used to count the percentage of the error committed by the participants. Each category of the pronunciation errors classified into sub-categories and each one described as a problem which has a cause and needs to be solved.



## CHAPTER IV

### 4. RESULTES AND DISCUSSIN

Learning new language is not easy task, so the learners of foreign language are suffering from many difficulties. These difficulties are due to some factors as the ones mentioned above. This chapter presents the analysis of the data findings. It will also present a broad look at the results of the observation and questionnaire. It also presents the analysis and discussion of the data collected from the Libyan post graduate students in the questionnaire. The performance of the subjects with aspect to each of the target sounds in the words it was statistically stated in the previous chapter. The actual pronunciations of some words in sentences, which were given to the Libyan learners will be descriptively explained. Because most of the students did not study phonetics, the researcher tries to transcribe some of the English sounds which were given in the questionnaire into Arabic sounds.

#### 4.1 Pronunciation Problems Faced by the Arab Libyan Postgraduate Students.

It is believed that one goal of pronunciation training in any course, is intelligible pronunciation not perfect pronunciation. According to the researcher experience in teaching English language and the findings of this research, the researcher found that Libyan post graduate students have difficulty in pronouncing some consonant and vowel English sounds.

#### **4.1.1 Difficulty in Consonant Pronunciation.**

According to the researcher experience in teaching English language and the findings of this research, the researcher found that Libyan post graduate students have difficulty in pronouncing some English sounds such as /p/,/θ/,/ð/,/ʃ/,/v/originally .They mispronounce the above consonants, because some of them do not exist in their L1(Arabic Language). And the others are not used (neglected) in Libyan spoken Arabic. Although these sounds/θ/and/ð/exist in standard Arabic Language, they were replaced with the nearest sounds /t/and/d/ in oral communication. The findings supported the view and went in the same way with the theory that Libyan learners mispronounce the above consonant, because they do not exist in Libyan spoken Arabic L1 language. On other hand these sounds are not present in Libyan spoken Arabic so the learners tend to produce the sounds nearest to them e.g. /d/ for /ð/ and /t/for /θ/ ,/b/ for /p/ this is because their tongue accustomed to pronounce such sounds, or their tongue are not able to achieve the exact movements to utter such sounds, on the other hand their tongues get stiff from pronouncing particular sound of their L2.That's why many speakers of other language mispronounce the sounds that do not exist in their L1(O'Connor,2003:85)

#### **4.1.2 Difficulty in Vowel Pronunciation**

The results of this research showed that Libyan post graduate students mispronounce vowels because each English vowel has more than one way of pronunciation. They confuse the different pronunciations of each of the vowels

(a, e, i, o, u). In a word like „obstacle“ many students pronounce /ei/ or /i/ instead of /a/. Also the pronunciation error by the Libyan post graduate students is noticeable in a word such as „women“, so they fail to pronounce the target sound of the two vowels /i/. Also in words such as *service*, *city*, and *promise*. The students tend to pronounce the short vowel /i/ as the diphthong /ai/ as it is pronounced in „invite“. So many students fail to identify the exact pronunciation of a particular vowel, which has more than one pronunciation in a particular word. If we take the words such as *put*, *cut*, and *suitable*, we find that there is three different pronunciations for the same vowel which is /pʊt/, /kʌt/, and /sju:.tə.bl/. So these different ways of pronunciation of this vowel (**u**) which causes difficulty to many Libyan post graduate students

## **4.2 Factors Influencing Pronunciation learning**

### **4.2.1 Mother Tongue Interference**

In the near past (Brown.2000) found that a second language learner meets some difficulties, because his/her first language L1 affects his/her second language L2 specially in adulthood, and this effect is a result of L1 transfer so it is significant source of making errors for second language learners (Carter and Nunan.2001:58) showed that mother tongue has influence on learning L2 pronunciation. Where L1 and L2 rules are in conflict, errors are expected to be committed by foreign learners. All that can be linked to what is known as the interference between L1 and L2.

Several works have been conducted on the influence of First language L1 in learning English language. So /p/ and /b/ sounds are two different phonemes and each one is distinguished by native speaker. In Arabic language, the situation is different, because there is only the phoneme /b/ so is the reasons why most Libyan speakers mispronounce words with this sound. They confuse between /p/ and /b/ e.g. words like (“park” “bark”), (“pall” “ball”) if we ask student to say these words they pronounce /b/ instead of /p/ and sometimes /p/ is used in the place of /b/ this rarely happens. Many other sounds are influenced by the mother tongue of Libyan learners such as, /θ/, /ð/, /ʃ/ and /v/. The mispronunciation of the previous sounds that mentioned is the result of over practice of the first language. The points mentioned above altogether share concept that learners confuse such sounds and replace each of them with other sounds that are said to be nearest ones to them in their mother tongue.

#### **4.2.2 Inconsistency of English in Pronunciation.**

One of the important problems faced by the Libyan post graduate students in general is that each English vowel and some consonant sounds have more than just one pronunciation. So this causes many difficulties to the learners and leads them to mispronunciation. (Cruttenden, 1994:64) noted that “the main difficulty for all those whose own languages have a less complex vowel system, lies in the establishment of the qualitative opposition. Instead of using exact quality and quantity of a special sound, the learner erroneously changes either the quality or the quantity of the sound, so in certain word, the learner tends to use the variant sound e.g. in words like son /sʌn/ ,come /kʌm/ ,among /ɔməŋ/, monkey /mʌŋki/,

blood /blʌd/, flood /flʌd/, in all these words /o/ and /oo/ stand for the same sound of /ʌ/, but most of the learners, unless they have mastery of the pronunciation of such vowels, they pronounce /ɔ/ or /u:/ in the place of /ʌ/ this is because of their first background about each sound. So they picture this thought in their minds as if each vowel has only one type of pronunciation. And if that is true the learner can easily know and expect how to pronounce each word even if is seeing for the first time, that if each letter represents only one phoneme. But in fact the situation is not like this and that is one of the basic problems of English.

(O Conner, 2003:8) reported that it is not simple to know the exact sounds the letters stand for represent in ascertain word. For instance in the words city /siti/, busy /bizi/, women /wimin/, pretty /priti/, village /vilidʒ/, English /ɪŋɡlɪʃ/ the letters (y, u, o, a, e,) all of them stand for the same vowel /i/. In words like banana /bʌnɑ:nʌ/, bather /beɪðɔ(r)/ the letter (a) stands for five different vowel sounds. The learner, who doesn't have sufficient knowledge of different pronunciation of the vowels above, meets the same difficulty, since he uses different variants of their pronunciation. (Power, 2003:36) found that there are 23 common pronunciation problems, some of them are related to vowels e.g. the student confuse /i/ with /i:/ as in *sit*, *seat*, and /ɑ:/ with /ɔ/ as in *not*, *note*, and /æ/ with /eɪ/ as in *mat*, *mate* and /e/ with /ei/ as in *let*, *late*. Researchers and linguistic always connect such problems with the complexity of the vowels system that exists in English and the inconsistency of its pronunciation.

Cruttenden, (1994:133) noted that the inconsistency of English vowels causes difficulties for other language e.g. if we take for instance “o” sound in

some words like *some, move, home, women*, each word has different pronunciation as /ʌ/, /u:/, /əʊ/, /i/ . So the English learners who don't have the mastery of the pronunciation of such words will face difficulties. On the other hand, words such as *book, butcher, could* and *wolf...* etc. In all these words the letters **oo, u, ou and o**, are all pronounced the same /u:/. So in the first example we have the same letter with different pronunciation of the letter (o). Consider *water, same, fat*, the letter (a) has three different pronunciation as /ɑ:/, /ei/ , /æ/ ,so many of Libyan student tend to pronounce /ei/ instead of /æ/ e.g. /feit/ for /fæt/. Also in word such as in *rich, symbol, English, private* and *woman*, the letters **i, y, e, a ,o** all of them are pronounced as /i/ so we have /riʃ /, /simbl/ , /ɪŋglɪʃ/, /praɪvɪt/ and /wɪmɪn/ .in such word ,errors expected to be committed by the Libyan students unless they are already taught and trained in their different pronunciations. Each letter we use to show pronunciation may stand for different sounds if the learner has no knowledge about this inconsistency, this will lead learners to wrong pronunciation.

#### **4.2.3 The Differences of the Sound System**

Ladefoged (1967:167) claimed that people perceive sounds based on the way they produce those sounds and that “people cannot hear differences between sounds until after they have learned to make these differences. With other words, the sound systems of both Arabic and English, as well as the writing systems of these two languages differ. Arabic is written from right to left, and Arabic books are held with the spine on the right-hand side. There are 28 letters in the Arabic alphabet, which only represent consonants and long vowels, while

short vowels are indicated with diacritical marks. These marks are not often used in ordinary writing, as native speakers can easily identify the intended words from the context and experience.

#### **4.2.4 Age**

Another important factor of pronunciation learning is that of age. Age is linked to a great extent to the ability of detecting a non-native accent. Laura Lee Moore states that the Critical Period Hypothesis plays an important role in the acquisition or learning of a second language because children are better equipped to acquire a language system. Their brains are more capable of absorbing the language without much effort since their brains are organized and more capable to learn a language whereas those of adults are not Moore, (1999:1). This hypothesis states that the child develops the ability of learning the second language rapidly while it becomes so difficult to develop this ability after puberty. This period is "around age 10 or 12". After this age, learners find some challenges in acquiring language particularly the native accent Laura Lee Moore, (1999:1). Singleton and Lengyel elaborate on this point by stating that: During this period the dominant hemisphere becomes more and more specialized for language, and, at puberty, all language functions are concentrated in that part of the brain. This process of interhemispheric specialization, and the concomitant loss of cerebral plasticity, is held responsible for the alleged fact that after the onset of puberty languages have to be taught and learned through a conscious and labored effort and that foreign accents cannot be overcome easily.



### 4.3 Data Analysis

There are many types of tools used in the field of scientific research. In this research, the researcher depended on observation; to collect the data from the sample of the learners. On the other hand, a structured questionnaire was used to collect the information from the sample of the students. Firstly the researcher started to analyse the data which were collected by the observation:

Name of Student : .....			
Position	Words	Correct sound	Wrong sound
<i>Initial</i>	Power, paper, pen , park, problem, peace	/p/	/b/
<i>Middle</i>	Depend , spent, copper, upper ,keeper.	/p/	/b/
<i>Final</i>	Deep, keep, sleep, drop ,	/p/	/b/
Initial	Van , value, velum, version , viva , valuable	/v/	/f/
Middle	Love , levies , eleven ,have, delivery. Five	/v/	/f/
Final	Twelve ,	/v/	/f/
Initial	Cheap, chip, charming, challenge, chair.	/tʃ/	/ʃ/
Middle	Teacher , lecture, adventure	/tʃ/	/ʃ/
Final	Teach, catch ,beach	/tʃ/	/ʃ/
Initial	There ,their, that, these	/ð/	/d/
Middle	Leather, feather, brother.	/ð/	/d/
Initial	Three, theater, thumb .thief.	/θ/	/t/
Final	Breath, path, both.	/θ/	/t/

Initial	Able, arm, apple	/eI/	/a/
Middle	ball, tall	/ɔ:/	/a/
All	Ill, lift, live, line	/aI/	/i/
All	Old, flood, cool,	/ʌ/	/o/
All	Unit, unable, cut, cute	/ju:/	/u/

(Table No 4.1.1)

### 4.3.1 Observation

The results indicate that:

1. /v/ sound was mispronounced as /f/ in all positions.
2. /p/ was mispronounced as /b/ in all positions.
3. /t ʃ/ was mispronounced as /ʃ/ in all positions.
4. /s/ was mispronounced as /z/. Students could not recognize the different sounds of /s/ when it falls in the medial and final positions.
5. /c/ proved to be problematic for students in the medial position. It was mispronounced as /k/.
7. /θ / was mispronounced as /t/ in the initial and final positions.
8. //: was mispronounced as // and as // only in the medial position.
9. was mispronounced as /n/ only in the final position.

Observation was the first tool, which was used in this research. To obtain information about errors, the researcher engaged in direct conversations with the learners inside the classroom during their university day. Based on the researcher experience in teaching English Language as foreign, he prepared a list of words that he predicted that all students would have difficulty to pronounce them. He tried to put all the sounds in different position of the words (initial, middle and final). In order to get accurate results, he put these words in complete sentences. After that, he asked them to read all words and then the sentences loudly. While the students were doing this, the researcher was taking notes about some particular sounds he expected that the students cannot pronounce correctly, or which the learners may replace with other sounds which may be close to them in the place of production.

At the end of the process of the observation it was found that many of the Libyan learners face such problems for instance most of them pronounce /b/ instead of /p/ for example in words such as “park”, “happy”, also they pronounce /t/ instead of /θ/ in words such as “thank”, “both” etc. Some notes were written about the Libyan learners pronunciation of some English vowels for instance they pronounce /ai/ instead of /i/ in words such as “infinite”, “service”, and some of them pronounce /ei/ instead of /ɜ: / in words such as “also” and “fall” Errors of pronunciation in the same sounds were tested using observation of a chosen number of sentences .

### 4.3.2. Questionnaire:

The questionnaire contained (14) items reflects the opinions and ideas of the students about the pronunciation of some Libyan learners of English. In the questionnaire each learner was asked to choose one answer according to the Tri Regression Measurement, which contains five levels (*strongly agree – agree-not sure – disagree- strongly disagree*). The researcher use the questionnaire in order to get accurate results. Each item of the questionnaire will be separately analysed.

NO	Items	SA	A	N	DA	SDA
1	I always pronounce /f/ instead of /v/ in words like have ,verb and twelve.	8	20	-	-	2
2	I always pronounce / b / instead of /p / in words like park, pen and hospital.	18	10	1	-	1
3	I always pronounce /t/ instead of / θ / (ث) in words like “thank” “month” “mathematics”	13	13	2	-	2
4	I always pronounce (/ش) / instead of /t / (تش) in words like cheese “much” ‘furniture’	8	15	2	3	2
5	I sometimes pronounce / dʒ / instead of /g/ in words like “engagement”.	5	15	3	5	2
6	I always pronounce / d / instead of / ð/ in words like “then” “weather”	18	21	-	1	-
7	Sometimes I pronounce /gh/ as / g / instead of / f / in words such like “cough” “rough”	13	12	3	-	2
8	I sometimes pronounce / s/ instead of / k/ in words like <i>concern</i> .	8	12	5	3	2

9	I always pronounce / e/ instead of / ɪ / in words like “experience” women”	11	12	4	-	3
10	I always replace / θ / with / T/, / ð / by / D/, / p / by /b / , / t ʃ / by / ʃ / because / θ /, / ð /, / p /, / t ʃ / do not exist in Libyan spoken Arabic	20	6	2	2	-
11	I always replace the sound /g/ by /dʒ/ as engagement because this is inconsistent letter.	5	15	3	5	2
12	The pronunciation errors among Libyan post graduate students are due to the sound system differences between Arabic language and English language.	18	10	1	1	-
13	Looking up in the dictionary help students improve their English pronunciation	19	6	3	1	1
14	Listening to the English words and sound in audio aids e.g. :( CD, tape, TV, sound dictionary etc) help me to speak with better pronunciation	20	8	1	-	1

#### 4.3.3 Validity of the questionnaire

To ensure the questionnaire meets its face value, it was submitted to three Libyan lechers” at the Almergib University of Science and Arts, faculty of Education, Mr. Abdu Alsalam Belhaj, Mr. Ramadan Alshlbaq, Mr.Fouad Al bkaai, staff members at the department of English language. They expressed their opinions and advised me to make some addition, omissions, and some modifications concerning the scale the items and the statements.The questionnaire is composed of fourteen statements.

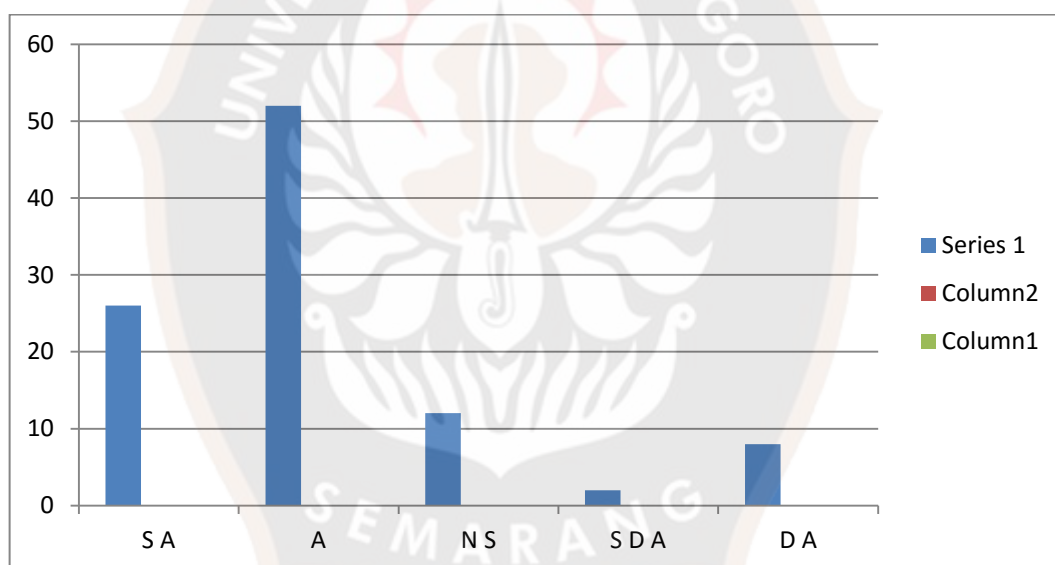
#### 4.3.4 Questionnaire Analysis

In this step the researcher will start to analyse the statements of the questionnaire, the results will be described according to the arrangements of the questionnaire as percentage in tables.

1- Libyan post graduate students pronounce /f / instead of / v / in words like *have*, *Van* and *marvel*.

Strongly agree	Agree	Not sure	Disagree	Strongly disagree
26%	52%	12%	2%	8%

Table No (4-1)

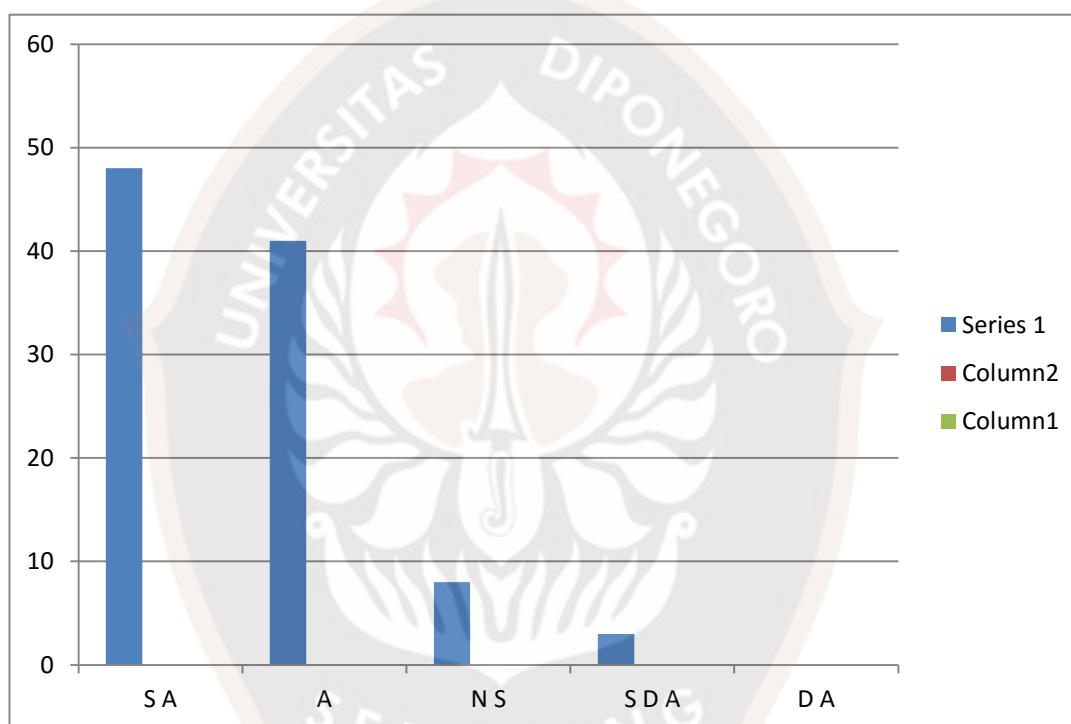


The calculated value of student answer of the first items of English consonant which do not exist in Libyan spoken Arabic.while Libyan learners encounter problems with pronunciation of this consonant/v/like in the following words *marvel have van*.According to the result above that strongly agree 26% and agree 52% at the end the items are confirmed. The result is that (78%) have a problem in pronunciation /v/.

2- Libyan post graduate students pronounce / b / instead of /p / in words like “pen” “map ” ,,happy“.

Strongly agree	Agree	Not sure	Disagree	Strongly disagree
48%	41%	8%	3%	0%

Table No (4-2)

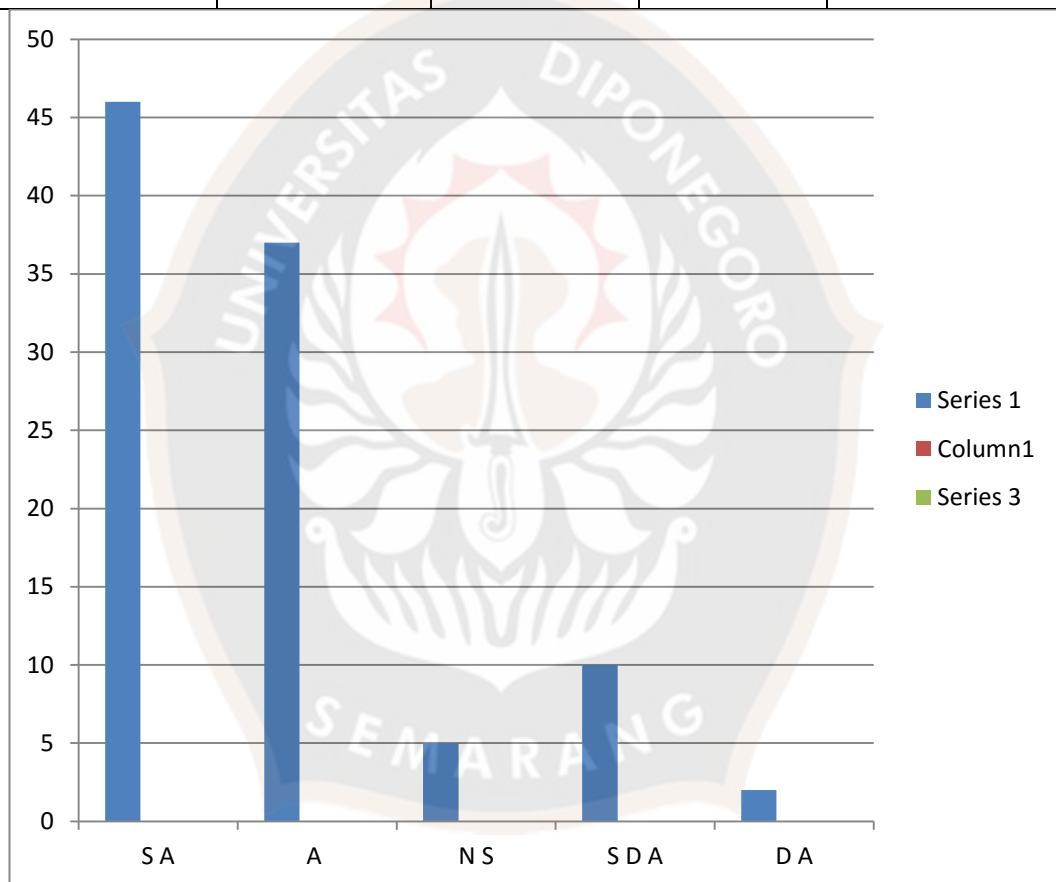


The calculated value of student’s answer of the first items English consonant which does not exist in Libyan spoken Arabic while Libyan learners encounter problems with pronunciation of these consonant/p/ replaced it by /b/.According to the result above that strongly agree 48% agree 41% at the end the items are confirmed. The result is that (89%) have a problem in translation /p/.

3- I always pronounce /t/ instead of /θ/ in words like “think” three  
 ,,“mathematics”“.

Table No (4-3)

Strongly agree	Agree	Not sure	Disagree	Strongly disagree
46%	37%	5%	10%	2%



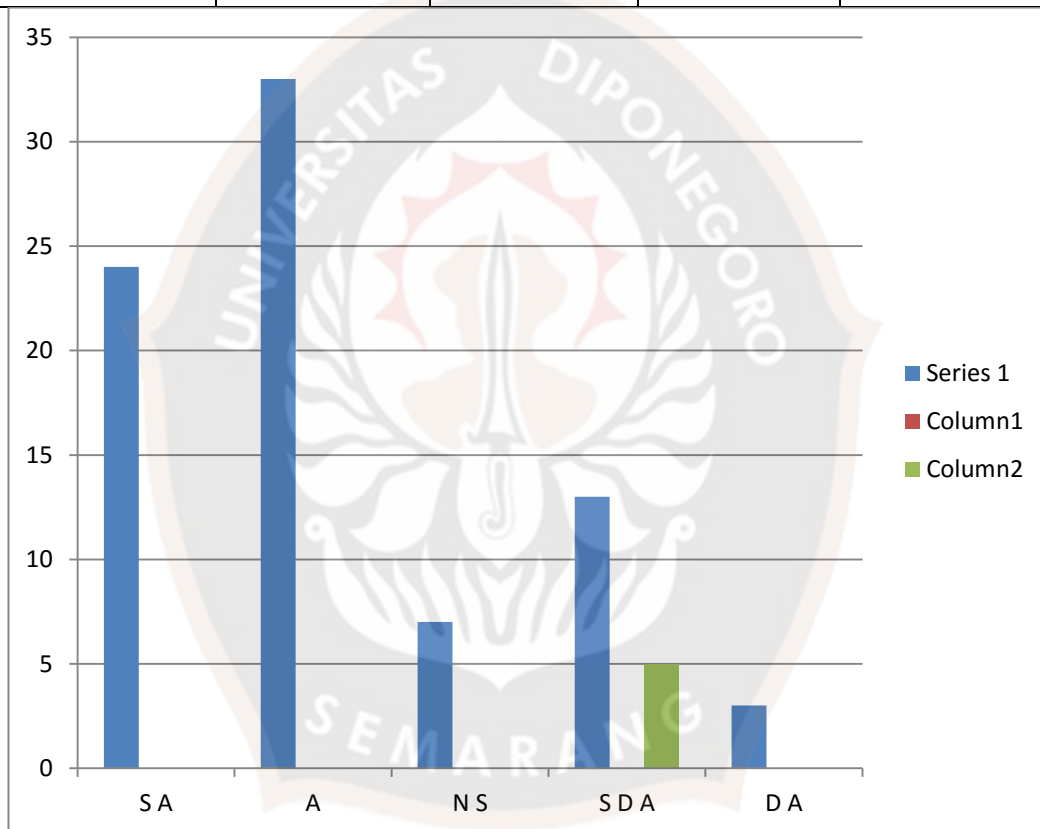
The most incorrectly sound is dental – fricative /θ/ in the sample the student field to utter the target sound correctly they replaced it with /s/. According to the result above that strongly agree 46% agree 37% at the end the items are confirmed. The result is that (83%) have a problem in translation / θ /.



4- I always pronounce /ʃ/ instead of /tʃ/ in words like “cheap” ‘furniture’.

Table No (4-4)

Strongly agree	Agree	Not sure	Disagree	Strongly disagree
44%	33%	7%	13%	3%



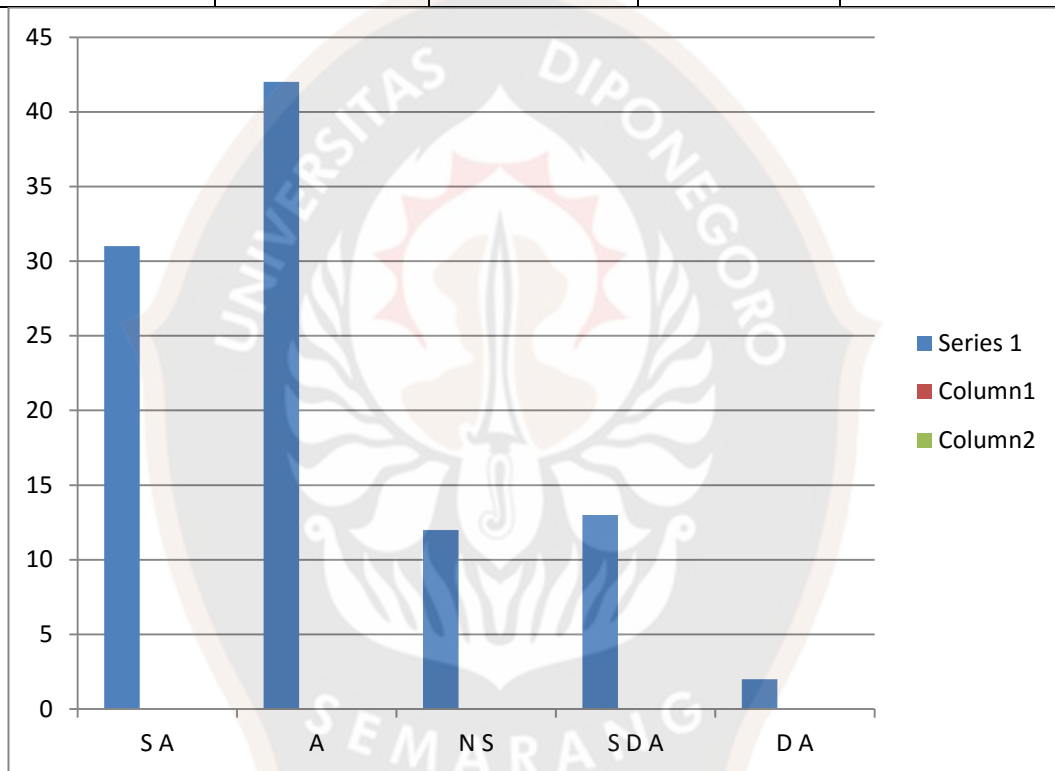
The most difficult consonant, according to the table post- alveolar affective /tʃ/ it is miss pronounced some of the student replaced it with /ʃ/. In words like much““ „furniture““

According to the result above that strongly agree 24% agree 33% at the end the items are confirmed. The result is that (57%) have a problem in translation /ʃ/.

5- I always pronounce / d / instead of /g/ in words like, *engagement*'.

Table No (4-5)

Strongly agree	Agree	Not sure	Disagree	Strongly disagree
31%	42%	12%	13%	2%



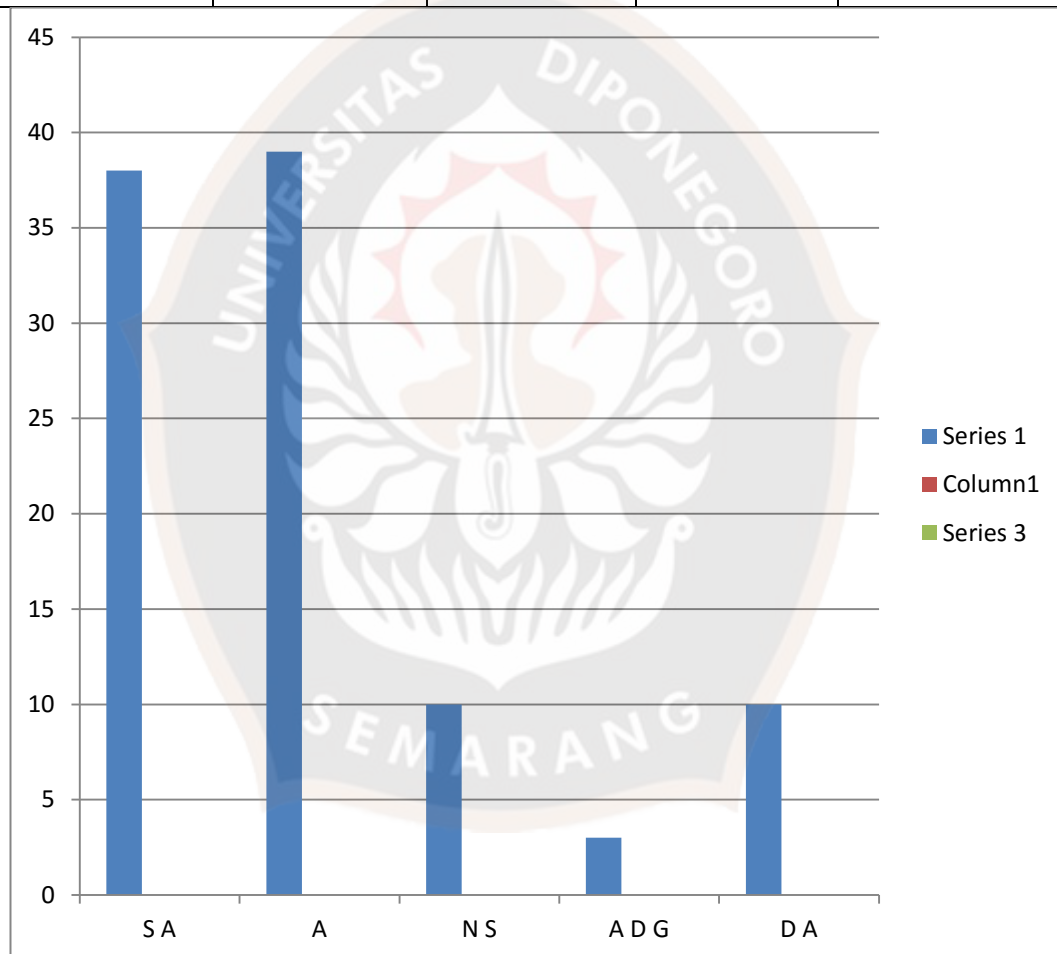
Libyan learners of English pronounced /dʒ/ instead of /g/ in words like „engagement“ because this sound has more than one pronunciation.

According to the result above that strongly agree 31% agree 42% at the end the items are confirmed. The result do not means all of sample agree some learners disagree 13% and some learners not sure 12%. The result is that (73%) have a problem in translation / g /.

6- I always pronounce /d/ instead of /ð/ in words like *then* and *weather*.

Table No (4-6)

Strongly agree	Agree	Not sure	Disagree	Strongly disagree
38%	39%	10%	3%	10%



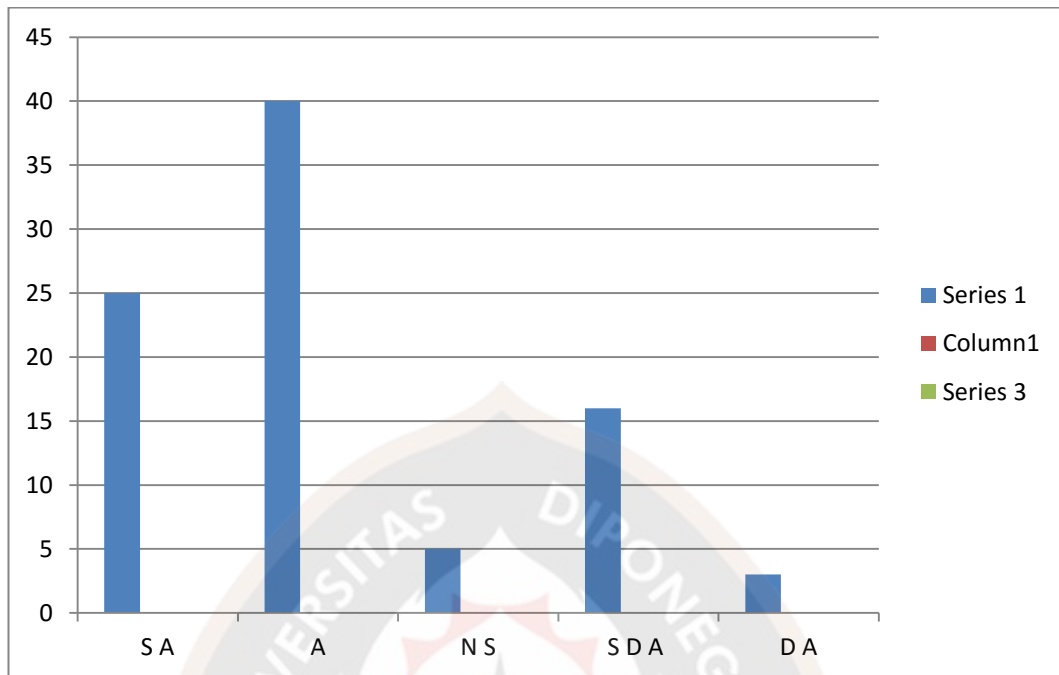
Most difficult sounds in the pronunciation for the Libyan learners according to table is voiced dental –fricative / ð/ which most of the learners pronounced it incorrectly as you can see in the table most of them replaced by / d / .

According to the result above that strongly agree 38% agree 39% at the end the items are confirmed. The result do not means all of sample agree some learners disagree 3% strongly disagree 10% and some learners not sure 10%. The result is that (77%) have a problem in translation / ð /.

7. I always pronounce the sound /gh/ as / ɔ: / instead of / f / in words such like “cough” „,rough““. The “gh” is not a letter or consonant which has special reprehensive phoneme that student can recognized and master. So here we aimed totest pronunciation in particular words like „cough“ „,rough in this word as we know the sound / f / and the error is committed is not case of interference such sounds as /θ/ and /t/ or / ð/ and /d/ the pronunciation of /f/ in this case is not related to the impact of the L1 Libyan learners the pronunciation because /f/ exist in Libyan spoken Arabic so we may related such errors to the influence of spelling on pronunciation we concerned “gh” as consistent to see if Libyan learners pronounced the sound correctly.

Strongly agree	Agree	Not sure	Disagree	Strongly disagree
25%	40%	5%	16%	3%

(Table 4-7)

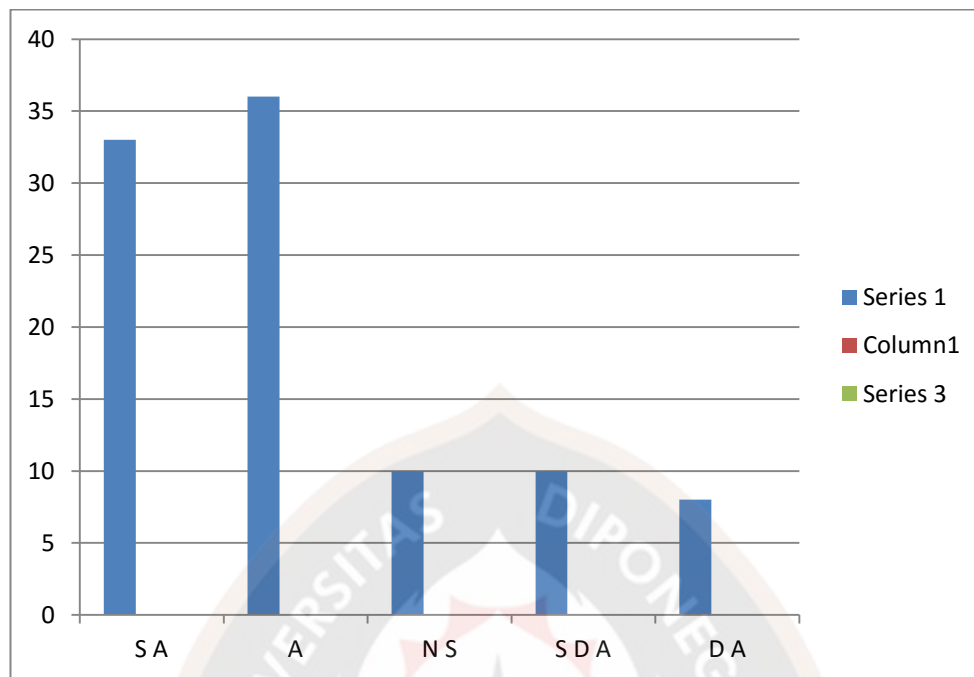


According to the result above that strongly agree 25% agree 40% at the end the items are confirmed. The result do not means all of sample agree some learners disagree 16% strongly disagree 3% and some learners not sure 5%. The result is that (56%) have a problem in translation / ɔ: /.

8- I sometimes pronounce / k/ instead of / s/ in words like 'concern'.

Strongly agree	Agree	Not sure	Disagree	Strongly disagree
33%	36%	10%	10%	8%

Table No (4-8)



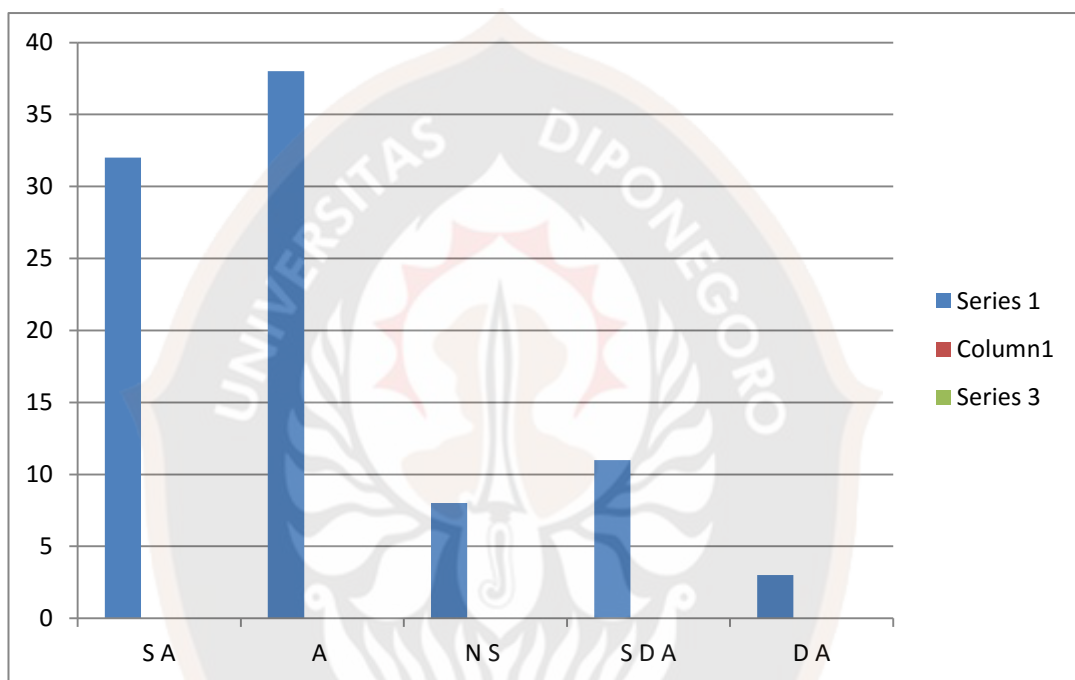
The consonant C in which we are dealing with inconsistency of some English consonant as we see from table above the subject pronounced with the target sound /k/ correctly in the word “concern” number of subject have a problem with the pronunciation of the soft C /s/ and hard “C” /k/.

According to the result above that strongly agree 27% agree 36% at the end the items are confirmed. The result dose not means that all of sample agree some learners disagree 19% strongly disagree 8% and some learners not sure 10%. The result is that (63%) have a problem in translation /s/.

9- I sometimes pronounce / e/ instead of / i / in Words like “*experience and women*”.

Strongly agree	Agree	Not sure	Disagree	Strongly disagree
32%	38%	8%	11%	3%

Table No (4-9)



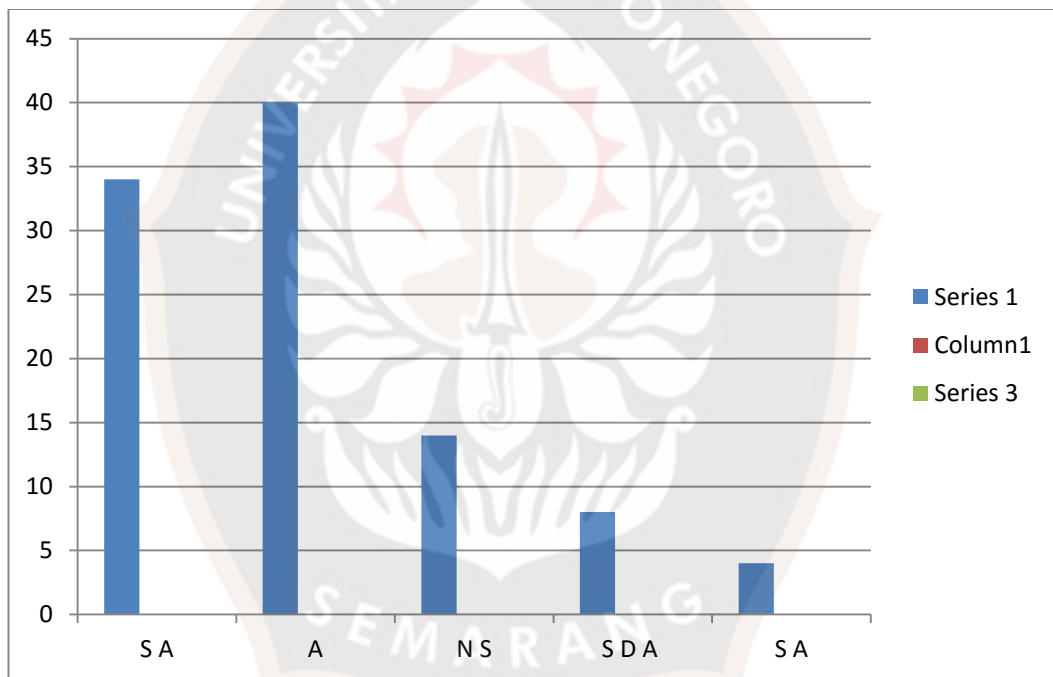
The most Libyan learners pronounced /ai/ instead of /i/ in words like “service” /e/ instead of /i/ in word such as “experience” and “women”.

According to the result above that strongly agree 26% agree 38% at the end the items are confirmed. The result do not means all of sample agree some learners disagree 11% strongly disagree 3% and some learners not sure 22%. The result is that (64%) have a problem in translation /i/.

10- Libyan learners of English replace /θ/ by /t/, /ð/ by /d/, /p/ by/b/, /tʃ/ by /ʃ/ because /θ/, /ð/, /p/, /tʃ/ do not exist in Libyan spoken Arabic.

Strongly agree	Agree	Not sure	Disagree	Strongly disagree
34%	40%	14%	8%	4%

Table No (4-10)



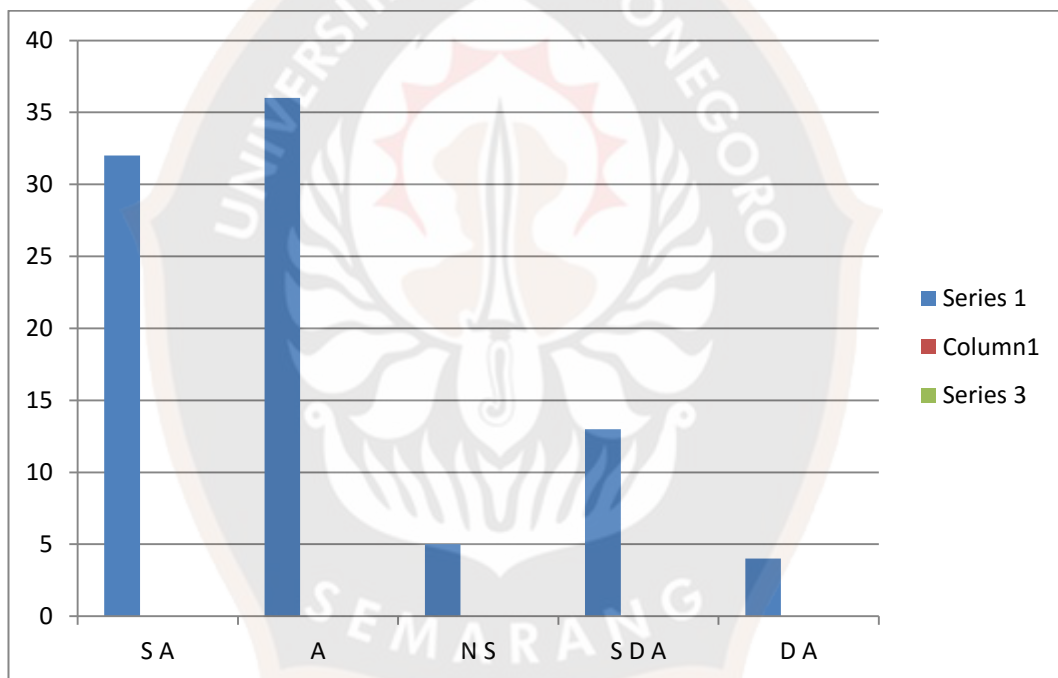
These items putted to insure the above result it is reliable. According to the result above that strongly agree 34% agree 40% at the end the items are confirmed. The result do not means all of sample agree some learners disagree 8% strongly disagree 4% and some learners not sure 14%.



11-I sometimes pronounce /dz/ instead of /g/ in some words such as “engagement”

Strongly agree	Agree	Note sure	Disagree	Strongly disagree
32%	36%	5%	13%	4%

Table No (4-11)

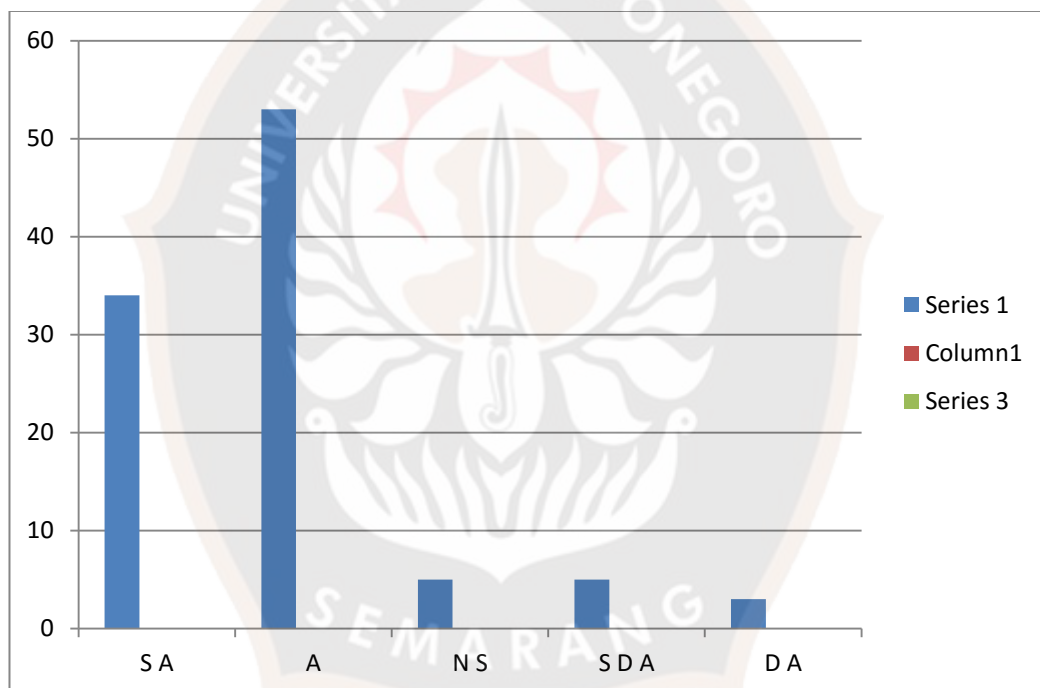


According to the result above that strongly agree 32% agree 36% at the end the items are confirmed. The result do not means that all sample agree. Because some learners disagree 13% strongly disagree 4% and some learners not sure 35%. The result is that (68%) have a problem in translation /dz/.

12. The pronunciation errors among Libyan post graduate students are due to the sound system differences between Arabic language and English language.

Strongly agree	Agree	Not sure	Disagree	Strongly disagree
34%	53%	5%	5%	3%

Table No (4-12)



Students support and believe that the pronunciation errors are due to the differences between Arabic and English.

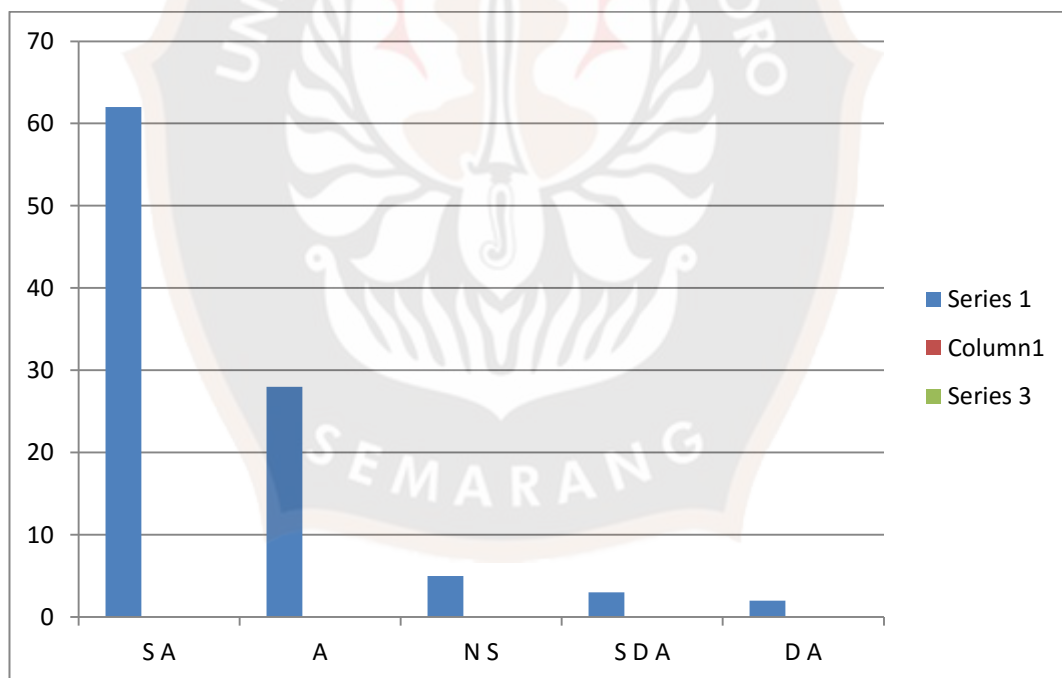
According to the result above that strongly agree 34% agree 53% at the end the items are confirmed. The result do not means that all of samples agree some learners disagree 5% strongly disagree 3% and some learners not sure 5%.

According to the result we can see the statement is confirmed. The result is that (87%) have a problem of sound system difference between Arabic and English.

13.looking up in the dictionary help students improve their English pronunciation.

(Table No 4 – 13)

Strongly agree	Agree	Not sure	Disagree	Strongly disagree
62%	28%	5%	3%	2%



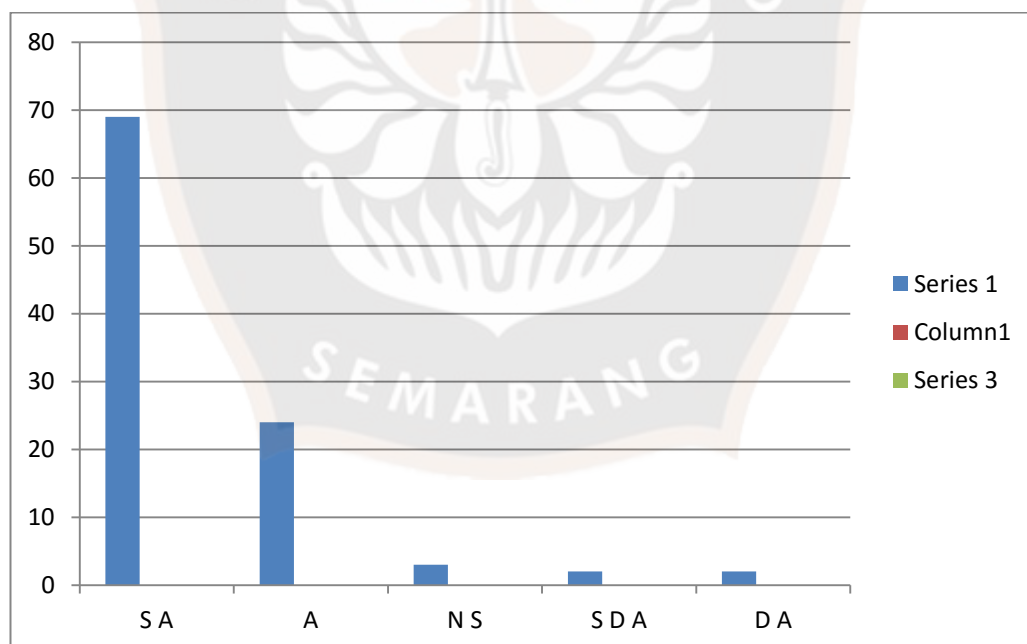
The students agree that looking up words in dictionary helps them to improve their pronunciation.

According to the result above that strongly agree 62%, agree 28% at the end the items are confirmed. The result do not means all of sample agrees some learners disagree 3%, strongly disagree 2% and some learners not sure 5%.

14- Looking up in the dictionary help students improve their English pronunciation

Strongly agree	Agree	Not sure	Disagree	Strongly disagree
69%	24%	3%	2%	2%

Table No (4-14)



The most students agree that listening to English sounds on audio aids improve their pronunciation. According to the result above that strongly agree 69% ,agree 24% at the end the items are confirmed. The result do not means all of sample

agree some learners disagree 2% ,strongly disagree 2% and some learners not sure 3%.

The phonological differences that exist between English and Libyan Arabic. It seeks evidence of phonemic contrasts between these languages discussing the potential of how these contrasts affect the learning of the target language. It is assumed that there are differences in the inventory of each of these languages that compromise the learner's perception and production of English speech sounds.

It is worth noting that the feedback of the students questionnaires reflect the same judgment. That all the English vowels are more difficult to understand than the consonants. On the other hand, the results of both the students and the language teachers suggest that the English single and cluster consonants are comparatively better perceived and produced by the Libyan learners than the vowels. This is probably because the learners are more familiar with consonant sounds than vowels.

#### **4.4 Findings and Discussion**

Teaching for many years, the researcher has noticed that students' struggle with different aspects of English. These include: grammar, vocabulary, listening, writing and pronunciation. The mostfrustrating aspect for teachers and students has always been pronunciation. Throughout their school years students are made to focus on other skills such as reading and writing, with grammar being theprominent element of study. This has led to students' indifference to pronunciation and hence theyencounter many difficulties when they enter

university and find that much of the language of instruction is in English. They also are surprised that they are obliged to make presentations in English which require that they speak in an intelligible manner to get their message through.

This research attempted to identify the exact sounds that cause pronunciation problems to the Libyan post graduate students when they pronounce English sounds and words. And also to find the main causes behind this in addition to suitable ways that help Libyan learners improve their English pronunciation. So at the beginning of this research the researcher assumed that the pronunciation errors among most of the Libyan post graduate students are due to a number of factors such as **mother tongue interference** (MTI), inconsistency of many English sounds, the influence of spelling on the pronunciation, the sound system differences between Arabic and English.

The findings of the research found out that mother tongue interference, inconsistency, spelling, age and sound system /differences between L1 and L2 affect pronunciation and lead the learners of other languages to mispronunciation. The results are confirmed with the findings of the previous works O'Connor, 2003; Yule, 2003; Ted Ownen, 2003), Brown, (2000), Alkhuli, (1983), Moosa, (1972). By referring to the results of the main tool of this study (observation), I found that many of Libyan post graduate students face difficulty in pronouncing some of English sounds.

There are five English consonants which are not present in Libyan spoken Arabic (LSA). Libyan post graduate students have problems with the

pronunciation of these consonants (/p/, /b/, /f/, /v/, /t/, /θ/, /d/, /ð/. The results show that (8%) of Libyan post graduate students pronounced the voiceless bilabial plosive /p/ correctly, while (82%) of the subjects failed to pronounce it correctly. They pronounced the voiced bilabial plosive /b/ instead of /p/. One possible explanation is that most of the Libyan learners, mispronounce this sound because it is not exist in their standard language (Libyan spoken Arabic), so the students tend to replace /p/ with /b/ as the closer sound in the place of production; so in many words such as *map*, *pupil* they pronounce them as /mab/, /bubil/. Another which we assumed that of Libyan post graduate students mispronounce when they are speaking or reading English is the labiodentals /v/ so we expected that replace this sound with /f/ in words like *have*, *van*, *marvel*. The findings of the previous studies support the view that such sound is difficult or students of other languages mispronounce it, because they don't have it in their mother tongue (Yule, 2003; O'Connor, 2003; 2005). The results support the view because in the reading, we have only (2%) subjects out of (100) who were able to produce the sound /v/ correctly in the above words, while (26%) of the subjects failed to pronounce it correctly they replaced it with /f/.

By referring to results of the questionnaire, we found that (82%) of learners agree that Libyan learners replace /v/ sound with /f/. It was also assumed that they replace /v/ with /f/. The findings of the study confirmed the view, pronounce /θ/ incorrectly. Also the result of the questionnaire showed that (76%) of the students support the view that Libyan post graduate students replace /θ/ with /t/ and only five of the students were not sure and two subjects strongly disagree. Other

difficult sounds for the Libyan post graduate students are /θ/ and /t/. So in words like *much*, *furniture* the students replace /tʃ/ with /f/. In the words *weather*, *then*, *this*, the sound / ð/ is pronounced as /d/ by most of the Libyan learners.

The findings of the study support the problem statements; also there was a significant support that mother tongue affects pronunciation. These results are consistent with previous researches Akande, (2005), Ladefoged, (2001), O'Connor, (2003). Referring to the result many Libyan learners have problem in the pronunciation of / ð/ in words such as *weather*, *then*, *this*, and in the pronunciation of /f / sound so in words such as *much*, *furniture* most of the learners tend to pronounce /f / instead of /tʃ/. According to the results of questionnaire we got (44%) (33%) of the subjects with incorrect pronunciation for the sounds /f / and /tʃ/. This indicates that there is a real problem facing the Libyan learners in these two separate sounds. The same is true for the real problem sounds / ð/ and /t/. The final results show that (46) subjects which represents (46%) pronounced the sound incorrectly, while (10) subjects of the sample pronounced the target sound correctly, so most of the Libyan post graduate students replaced /d/ with /ð/ .

The results of the questionnaire also show that many students support the view that Libyan post graduate students have problem in the pronunciation of ( /b/ /p/ /ð/ /θ/ / f / tʃ/) (see table no.(4-10), also the reading test results support the view that Libyan post graduate students mispronounce these consonants. We there for conclude that many of the students mispronounce them or tend replace them with sounds that are close to them in the place of production. This happens



among the learners according to their background O'Connor, (2003), (Ted Power, 2005). According to our findings, it can be said that Arab learners in general have problems with sounds. This is supported that Libyan learners in particular have further problems.

This study was initiated by the observation of some learners who mispronounce some English words e. g /b/ and /p/ ,/ t/ and /θ/ Although some scholars e. g (Ted Power, 2007) argued that such problems it may not sometimes lead to a misunderstanding because, he continued to say “if someone said to me tomorrow I am going to London to visit Pig Pen would know from the context he meant “Big Ben” He further argued that Arabic consonants are more than :English ones, so Arab students are expected to be quite good in four English consonants. The researcher however believes that such problems still considered as big ones for a person who wants to speak with correct or intelligible pronunciation, and for someone whose career in the future is related to the field of English language.

It was noticed that many Libyan students have problems with the pronunciation of mono diphthongs that have more than one way of pronunciation, Ted power considers the mispronunciation of vowels are of minor importance if compared with the long vowels, diphthongs, stress and intonation .However the researcher believes that it is a serious error to mispronounce /servis/ as /servais/ or/meiklas /mk/ Confusing /t/ with / θ/, /d/ with / ð /, /b/ with/p/,/f/with /v/ and /ʃ/with/ tʃ/ usually lead some Libyan learners to a mispronunciation and they may lead the listener to a misunderstanding. The mispronunciation of the Libyan learners is due to lack of the problematic phonemes in Arabic. The

phoneme contrasts affect many common English words, so poor production of these sounds will be very noticeable.

Based on the results of this study it can be concluded that many Libyan learners have problems in the pronunciation of the voiceless bilabial /p/ and the voiced bilabial /b/. They substitute /p/ with /b/ in words such as „pen“, „map“, „happy“ and rarely replace /b/ with /p/. Other consonant sound contrasts which Libyan learners mispronounce are the dental fricative /θ/ and the alveolar fricative /t/, so in words such as „think“, „math“, „mathematics“ the Libyan learners replace /θ/ with /t/. They also have problem with the voiced dental fricatives /ð/ and /d/, so many of the Libyan learners pronounce /d/ in the place of /ð/ for instance in words like „then“, „weather“ more consonant contrast sounds like /f/ and /v/, /ʃ/ and /tʃ/ are mispronounced by most of the Libyan learners, e.g. in words like „van“, „seven“, „have“ they pronounce /f/ instead of /v/. Also the substitution of /ʃ/ and /tʃ/ is noticeable in the pronunciations of many words such as *much, furniture, teacher*. Other of mispronunciation of English sounds by the Libyan learners is the soft „C“ /s/ and hard „C“ /k/. In some words like „concern“ some Libyan learners pronounce /k/ instead of /s/. Also soft „g“ /dʒ/ and hard „g“ /g/ are problematic for the learners, so they sometimes pronounce /g/ instead of /dʒ/ as in „engagement“.

Pronunciation problems such as the ones mentioned above are linked to factors such as interference of the mother tongue on the second language. And also to the differences and the sound systems between Arabic (generally) and Libyan Spoken Arabic (particularly) are behind many pronunciation errors. Also the

spelling of some English words leads many Libyan learners to wrongly guess the pronunciation just by looking at the word and its letters and produce incorrect pronunciation. Finally, the inconsistency of some English consonants makes the learners unable to decide what the exact sound they should pronounce it, in addition to that there are some sounds represent a combination of more than one letter e, g „gh“ which is sometimes pronounced /f/ like the word *rough* and other times silent like the word *although*. The sound“ ch“ which is pronounced / k / and / tʃ/. The notes mentioned are considered to be the most recognized reasons for such pronunciation problems.

On the other hand, Libyan post graduate students mispronounce vowels because each English vowel has more than one way of pronunciation. They confuse the different pronunciations of each of the vowels (a, e, i, o, u). In a word like „obstacle“ many students pronounce /ei/ or /i / instead of /a/. Also the pronunciation error by the Libyan post graduate students is noticeable in a word such as „women“, so they fail to pronounce the target sound of the two vowels / i/. Also in words such as „service“, „city“, „promise“ the students tend to pronounce the short vowel /i/ as the diphthong /ai/ as it is pronounced in „invite“.

So many students fail to identify the exact pronunciation of a particular vowel, which has more than one pronunciation in a particular word. If we take the words such as „put“, „cut“, „suitable“, we find that there is three different pronunciations for the same vowel which is /pʊt/, /kʌt/, and /sju:.tə.bl/. So these different ways of pronunciation of this vowel causes difficulty to many Libyan post graduate students. The same problem is faced by the Libyan learners in the

pronunciation of the vowel sound in the words „*come*“, „*women*“, „*home*“ which is /kim/, /women/, //həʊm/ also we have three different pronunciations for the same vowel. On the other hand there are some English words which are spelt differently ,but pronounced the same e. g in „*city*“, „*private*“ „*English*“, „*women*“, „*busy*“ we have five different vowels (y, a, e, o, u) all of them are pronounced the same as /i/. This inconsistency in the English sounds leads many Libyan learners to a mispronunciation If each English vowel or consonant has just one way of pronunciation, then the learners will be able to produce the precise pronunciation.

Finally, we can conclude that such pronunciation errors are related to factors such as the inconsistency of many English sounds on the one hand on the other hand the sound system differences, which have phonological basis (depend, on variation in speech organ positions or breath control).

## CHAPTER V

### 5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION.

#### 5.1. Conclusion

Based on the results of this study it can be concluded that many Libyan learners have problems in the pronunciation of the voiceless bilabial /p/ and the voiced bilabial /b/. They substitute /p/ with /b/ in words like „pen“ „map“, „happy“ and rarely replace /b/ with /p/. Other consonant sound contrasts which Libyan learners mispronounce are the dental fricative /θ/ with the voiceless alveolar stop /t/, so in words such as „think“, „math“, „mathematics“ the Libyan learners replace /θ/ with /t/. They also have problem with the voiced dental fricatives /ð/ replaced with the sound /d/, so many of the Libyan learners pronounce /d/ instead of /ð/ for instance in words like „then“, „weather“. And also the more consonant contrast sounds like /f/ and /v/, /ʃ/ and /tʃ/ are mispronounced by most of the Libyan learners, e.g in words like „van“, „seven“, „have“ they pronounce /f/ instead of /v/. Also the substitution of /ʃ/ instead of /tʃ/ is noticeable in the pronunciations of many words such as *cheap, furniture* and *teacher*. Other of mispronunciation of English sounds by the Libyan learners is the soft „C“ /s/ and hard „C“ /k/. In some words like „concern“ some Libyan learners pronounce /k/ instead of /s/. Also soft „g“ /dʒ/ and hard „g“ /g/ are problematic for the learners, so they sometimes pronounce /g/ instead of /dʒ/ as in *engagement*.

Pronunciation problems such as the ones mentioned above are linked to factors such as interference of the mother tongue on the second language. And also to the differences and the sound systems between Arabic (generally) and Libyan Spoken Arabic (particularly) are behind many pronunciation errors. Also the spelling of some English words leads many Libyan learners to wrongly guess the pronunciation just by looking at the word and its letters and produce incorrect pronunciation. Finally, the inconsistency of some English consonants makes the learners unable to decide what the exact sound they should pronounce it, in addition to that there are some sounds represent a combination of more than one letter e, g „gh“ which is sometimes pronounced /f/ like the word rough and other times silent like the word although. The sound“ ch“ which is pronounced / k / and / tʃ/. The notes mentioned are considered to be the most recognized reasons for such pronunciation problems.

On the other hand, Libyan post graduate students mispronounce vowels because each English vowel has more than one way of pronunciation. They confuse the different pronunciations of each of the vowels (a, e, i, o, u). In a word like „obstacle“ many students pronounce /ei/ or /i/ instead of /a/. Also the pronunciation error by the Libyan post graduate students is noticeable in a word such as „women“, so they fail to pronounce the target sound of the two vowels /i/. Also in words such as „service, city, and promise. The students tend to pronounce the short vowel /i/ as the diphthong /ai/ as it is pronounced in „invite“. So many students fail to identify the exact pronunciation of a particular vowel, which has more than one pronunciation in a particular word. If we take the words such as

*put, cut, and suitable*, we find that there is three different pronunciations for the same vowel which is /pʊt/, /kʌt/, and /sju:.tə.bl/. So these different ways of pronunciation of this vowel (**u**) which causes difficulty to many Libyan post graduate students. The same problem is faced by the Libyan learners in the pronunciation of the vowel sound in the words *come, women, and home* which is /kʌm/, /"wʊm.ən/, /həʊm/ also we have three different pronunciations for the same vowel. On the other hand there are some English words which are spelt differently ,but pronounced the same e. g in „city“, „private“ „English“, „women“, „busy“ we have five different vowels (y, a, e, o, u) all of them are pronounced the same as /i/. This inconsistency in the English sounds leads many Libyan learners to a mispronunciation. If each English vowel or consonant has just one way of pronunciation, then the learners will be able to produce the precise pronunciation. Finally, we can conclude that such pronunciation errors are related to factors such as the inconsistency of many English sounds on the one hand on the other hand the sound system differences, which have phonological basis (depend on variation in speech organ positions or breath control).

## **5.2. Suggestions and Methods to Improve Pronunciation**

The teacher must take into consideration the time given to the learning of a second language. Enough time should be dedicated to practice the spoken language. Gimson states that there are certain obstacles that face teachers while teaching pronunciation because phonetic and phonological characteristics of the second language are present from the first lesson even if the second language learner is not familiar with them Gimson, (1989: 312). He elaborates more on this

point by mentioning that “grammatical forms can be taught in a specific order and vocabulary can be taught on a basis of frequency occurrence” (Gimson, 1989, p.312). Gimson also draws attention to the difference between native speakers and foreign learners of English. He believes that the native speaker uses English in a habitual way that he acquires from his parents or family members close to him in an early stage of life (Gimson,1989, p.313). What characterizes the speech of the native speaker is the phonetic and phonological properties that he learns in a natural way when he tries to express himself in different situations like expressing happiness, sadness, anger, disturbance or other forms of expression (Gimson, 1989, p.313).He also states that the native speaker of English has a certain capability in understanding other forms of English even if they reveal diversity in phonetic and phonological structures and this is what he calls “receptive efficiency” brought out through radio and television .

The difference between native speakers and foreigners becomes clear when the foreigner tries to learn English in an “artificial fashion” because in this case, the foreigner cannot obtain the “receptive competence” that the native speaker has Gimson, (1989:314). There are two important sides of language for the foreigner: the receptive side and the productive side. This means that for any second language learner, at the beginning of learning pronunciation, it is enough to be proficient in the production of one type of English pronunciation, but when the student masters English, reception of more than one type of English is important by being exposed to radio, television programmes, films and sports games or commentaries Gimson, (1989:314). That is why he advises students to



restrict themselves to one type of spoken English at the beginning of learning pronunciation. Later on, when the learner learns more about the English language and when he builds up self-confidence, he can expose himself to other types or forms. Teaching should concentrate on sound features not found in the mother language. This enforces the learner's knowledge of English as a second language. The teacher plays an important role in teaching pronunciation because he presents stimuli to the learner. The teacher must bear in mind some important factors. For example:

1. The age of the learner. Is the language learner young or old? Gimson, (1989:314)
2. The reason for learning the language Gimson, (1989:314). Does the learner intend to learn to communicate or for educational reasons?
3. The number of students in the classroom lesson.

### **5.3. Recommendations**

Based on all that has been mentioned before, the researchers suggest the following to improve students' pronunciation:

1. Schools teachers should be made aware of the differences between the English and Arabic phonemic sound systems and phonemic realizations and recognize the importance of teaching pronunciation to their students.
2. Students should be encouraged to read aloud to identify the difficult sounds. Corrections need to be made in an encouraging manner, illustrating the importance of recognizing the difference between the problematic sounds.

3. Teachers should put particular emphasis on sound recognition from a young age to enhance the learners' ability to learn the second language.
4. Students should be encouraged to learn the phonetic symbols and phonetic transcription and should be encouraged to use the dictionary at an early stage to learn correct pronunciation of words.
5. Special concern should be given to listening and auditory skills because they enable the student to become familiar with new words and it becomes like ear training.
6. Special concern should be given to speaking in classrooms. Students should be encouraged to speak in order to improve their pronunciation.
7. Students' communication skills need to be enhanced using different forms of verbal expression to improve the utterance of sounds in different positions in words.
8. Minimal pairs are an integral part of developing intelligible pronunciation as they allow for the separation of a single sound at a time. ESL teachers should focus on explaining the meaning of minimal pairs and on providing many examples to help students differentiate the problematic sounds.
9. Exposure to English is another factor that should be encouraged. Films, music and radio are all means that would help students listen to native speakers using language in a natural setting.

10. The internet can provide a wealth of listening materials starting with online dictionaries, pronunciation tests and authentic listening materials from native speakers. Students should be encouraged to use the Internet outside the classroom to listen to different teaching lessons.

11. Learners need to attempt and distance themselves from their mother tongue and consciously work at learning the structure, sound system and grammar of the second language.



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APPENDIX I :

Student name:-.....

Faculty:-.....

Position	Words	Correct sound	Wrong sound
<i>Initial</i>	Power, paper, pen , park, problem, peace	/p/	/b/
<i>Middle</i>	Depend , spent, copper, upper ,keeper.	/p/	/b/
<i>Final</i>	Deep, keep, sleep, drop ,	/p/	/b/
Initial	Van , value, velum, version , viva , valuable	/v/	/f/
Middle	Love , levies , eleven ,have, delivery. Five	/v/	/f/
Final	Twelve ,	/v/	/f/
Initial	Cheap , chip, charming , challenge, chair.	/tʃ/	/ʃ/
Middle	Teacher , lecture, adventure	/tʃ/	/ʃ/
Final	Teach, catch ,beach	/tʃ/	/ʃ/
Initial	There ,their, that, these	/ð/	/d/
Middle	Leather, feather, brother.	/ð/	/d/
Initial	Three, theater, thumb .thief.	/θ/	/t/
Final	Breath, path, both .	/θ/	/t/

**Words**

**sentence**

**/p/**

**Paper ,**

I have three papers

**Problem**

All students face many problems in learning English language..

**copper**

I give him a few coppers

**deep**

the hole is so deep

**/v/**

**Value**

The photos are of immense historical value.

**Average  
past year.**

Prices have risen by an average of 4% over the

**Twelve**

I have twelve subjects.

**Involve**

The second accident involved two cars and a lorry.

**/t/**

**Cheap**

this chair is very cheap

**Lecture**

I have two lectures today.

**Lunch**

What is for lunch?

**/g/**

**Geography**

I like geography subject.

**Suggest**

I suggested the Italian restaurant near the station

**Biology**

I studied biology last year.

/ ð /

**This** this is my book.

**Weather** Today is nice weather

**Brother** they are brothers.

/ θ /

**Three** there are three cats under the tree.

**Tooth** I have a tooth out.

**Both** both my parents are teachers.

/ a /

**Able** I'm sorry that I wasn't able to phone you yesterday

**Lamp** a street lamp.

**Ball** give me the ball.

**Cat** they have a cute cat.

/ e /

**Esteem** There has been a drop in public esteem for teachers

**Less** We must try to spend less money.

**Late** It was late at night.

/ i /

**Ill** I felt ill so I went home

**Lift** Could you help me lift this table, please?

**Live** I've got two tickets to see them live.

**Line** Sign your name on the dotted line

/ o /

**Old** I was shocked by how old he looked.

**Flood** The whole town flooded when the river burst its banks.

**Cool** cool water

/u/

**Ultimate** The ultimate decision about who to employ lies with Ali.

**Union** union is powerful

**Cut** Cut the meat up into small pieces

**Cute** He's got a really cute baby brother.



## APPENDIX II:

### *Questionnaire*

**Student name:-**.....

**Faculty:-**.....

**Dear colleague** - student, all thank you for doing this questionnaire for me it will help a great deal with my study to identify the exact reasons behind pronunciation errors among Libyan post graduate students, also to find suitable ways that help improving their pronunciation.

These items will only be used in my thesis, please respond to them without the effect of any other factors. **Put a tick (√) in the box that shows your choice:**

1-I always pronounce /f/ instead of /v/ in words like “have” ”verb“ “twelve”.

A-Strongly agree  B-Agree  C-Not sure  D-Disagree  E-Strongly disagree

2-libyan students of Deponegoro University pronounce / b / instead of /p / in words like “park” “pen ” “hospital”.

A-Strongly agree  B-Agree  C-Not sure  D-Disagree  E-Strongly disagree

3- Libyan students of Deponegoro University pronounce / t / instead of / θ / in words like “thank” “month” “mathematics”.

A-Strongly agree  B-Agree  C-Not sure  D-Disagree  E-Strongly disagree

4- Libyan students of Deponegoro University pronounce (ش) /ʃ/ instead of / t ʃ / (تش) in words like cheese “much” “furniture”.

A-Strongly agree  B-Agree  C-Not sure  D-Disagree  E-Strongly disagree

5- I always pronounce / dʒ / instead of /g/ in words like “engagement”.

A-Strongly agree  B-Agree  C-Not sure  D-Disagree  E-Strongly disagree

6- I always pronounce / d / instead of / ð / in words like “then” “weather”.

A-Strongly agree  B-Agree  C-Not sure  D-Disagree  E-Strongly disagree

7- Libyan students of Deponegoro University pronounce /gh/ as / g / instead of / f / in words such like “cough” “rough”.

A-Strongly agree  B-Agree  C-Not sure  D-Disagree  E-Strongly disagree

8- I always pronounce / s/ instead of / k/ in some words like “ concern”.

A-Strongly agree  B-Agree  C-Not sure  D-Disagree  E-Strongly disagree

9- Libyan students of Diponegoro University pronounce / e/ instead of / ɪ / in words like “experience” women”.

A-Strongly agree  B-Agree  C-Not sure  D-Disagree  E-Strongly disagree

10-libyan students of Diponegoro University replace / θ / by / T / , / ð / by / D/ ,/ p / by /b / , / t ʃ / by / ʃ / because / θ /, / ð /, / p /, / t ʃ / do not exist in Libyan spoken Arabic.

A-Strongly agree  B-Agree  C-Not sure  D-Disagree  E-Strongly disagree

11- Libyan students of Diponegoro University replace / g / by / d ʒ / as engagement because this is inconsistent.

A-Strongly agree  B-Agree  C-Not sure  D-Disagree  E-Strongly disagree

12-The pronunciation errors among Libyan students of Diponegoro University are due to the sound system differences between Arabic language and English language.

A-Strongly agree  B-Agree  C-Not sure  D-Disagree  E-Strongly disagree

13- Libyan students of Diponegoro University mispronounce some English sounds because they predict the pronunciation from the spelling.

A-Strongly agree  B-Agree  C-Not sure  D-Disagree  E-Strongly disagree

14-Looking up in the dictionary help the Libyan students of Diponegoro University improve their English pronunciation.

A-Strongly agree  B-Agree  C-Not sure  D-Disagree  E-Strongly disagree

15-Listening to the English words and sound in audio aids e.g. :( CD, tape, TV, sound dictionary etc) help Libyan students of Diponegoro University to speak with better pronunciation.

A-Strongly agree  B-Agree  C-Not sure  D-Disagree  E-Strongly disagree

*Thank you all*

NO	Items	SA	A	N	DA	SDA
1	I always pronounce /f/ instead of /v/ in words like have ,verb and twelve.	8	20	-	-	2
2	I always pronounce / b / instead of /p / in words like park, pen and hospital.	18	10	1	-	1
3	I always pronounce /t/ instead of / θ / (ث) in words like “thank” “month” “mathematics”	13	13	2	-	2
4	I always pronounce (ش) /ʃ/ instead of /tʃ/(تش) in words like cheese “much” “furniture”	8	15	2	3	2
5	I sometimes pronounce / dʒ / instead of /g/ in words like “engagement”.	5	15	3	5	2
6	I always pronounce / d / instead of / ð/ in words like “then” “weather”	18	21	-	1	-
7	Sometimes I pronounce /gh/ as / g / instead of / f / in words such like “cough” “rough”	13	12	3	-	2
8	I sometimes pronounce / s/ instead of / k/ in words like <i>concern</i> .	8	12	5	3	2
9	I always pronounce / e/ instead of / ɪ / in words like “experience” women”	11	12	4	-	3
10	I always replace / θ / with / T/, / ð / θ / D/, / p / by /b / , / t ʃ / by / ʃ / because / θ /, / ð /, / p /, / t ʃ / do not exist in Libyan spoken Arabic	20	6	2	2	-
11	I always replace the sound /g/ by /dʒ/ as engagement because this is inconsistent letter.	5	15	3	5	2
12	The pronunciation errors among Libyan post graduate students are due to the sound system differences between Arabic language and English language.	18	10	1	1	-

13	Looking up in the dictionary help students improve their English pronunciation	19	6	3	1	1
14	Listening to the English words and sound in audio aids e.g. :( CD, tape, TV, sound dictionary etc) help me to speak with better pronunciation	20	8	1	-	1





### Appendix III:

