**Teaching of Spoken and Written English as Foreign Language in KSA**

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The immediate response of a learner in a class room of English language is to identify the sound pattern of which the learner was not used to at his/her early stage of learning English as foreign language. On the other hand, the immediate concern of the English teacher in a class room situation is to confirm that the learners are acquainted with the delivery of the instructional usage of English language. The index of achievements level is the indicative of interactive nature of the teacher and the taught. College or university fresher may take the instructions in English and its usage with a variety of difficulty levels. In an academic environment like this, there are scores of things which can be listed in case of a class room of native and non-native teachers of English.

School and secondary school passed out students having a lower frequency in the use of English may appear to be strangers in the English class room. The other side of the situation is that fairly good achievers may encounter with teachers’ variable accent at the college or the university level. They may still be surprised to know about the pronunciation of a few words and their spelling system. Phonological issues in terms of articulation and sound patterns are many. The speech mechanism due to inborn tendency in the use of L1 (mother tongue/Arabic) is obviously in conflict with L2 (English) at the imaginary level of the learners. This tendency significantly appears in the learning of skills particularly in their spoken and written English. Perhaps for one reason or the other, this drawback is not rectified and addressed at the early stage of learning. Basic issues related to pronunciation system in terms of effective instructions and the follow up tasks in the class is another decisive factor on the part of the English teacher as far as achieving teaching goals are concerned.

Equally important is the formal and prescribed teaching learning materials under the guided and recommended teaching methodology other than eclectic method. A vague calculation on the plea that the use and success rate of educational technology vis-à-vis the learners’ ability on the usage of educational technology is likely to fetch good results, but still, some finer aspects of teaching English as foreign language needs special attention. It is a fact that educational technology or multimedia is available in different languages. Here, L1/Arabic is not an exception for the L2 learners and the usage of L1 is quite dominating. The effect is that the orthographical issues of L2/ English, especially the spelling system and their sound pattern appears substantially inter conflicting when reading a text in English and simultaneously transliterating the same into L1. As such, the prevailing trend of transliteration of Arabic nomenclature into English in advertisement at public places, the visual impact on the L2 learners is adverse in metropolitan cities (Riyadh, Jeddah, and Dammam) in the kingdom. Moreover, it leads to utter confusion and provides a pastime non-formal added opportunity for the sensitive learners that weaken the purpose of learning English. Public places and advertisements are non-formal source of learning and are found to be very instrumental in the concept formation of good level of language learning. In terms of social interaction, such commercial and attractive public places cannot be over ruled. They are also responsible for accelerating the learning processes.

At micro level, the inborn tendency of learners of English language in the kingdom is primarily transliterating in nature and approach in terms of the physical nature of English and their equivalent Arabic phonemes (sound units). Literally, some of the Arabic phonemes can hardly be transliterated into English. On the other hand, in connected speech, the impact of L1 is quite phenomenal in terms of realization of sounds. The confronting articulation and inaccurate realization of sounds i.e. L1 versus L2 will naturally take place. A few remarkable inter-conflicting L1-L2 consonantal phonemes are noticeable as:

**ظ ع غ خ ق غ ض ظ ح ث**(L1Arabic) . Possible equivalent transliteration of these Arabic phonemes at public places can be seen as ***/q,kك ق /, /gh غ /, /dh ض ظ /, /dth ث/, /h ه ح /, /th ث/, /kh خ /*** and so on ***.*** As a result, the visual impact of these sounds is found to be prominent in the connected speech of Arabic speakers’ English at public places in metro cities of the kingdom. Although, it appears that spending a few years in the English speaking countries and the unavoidable frequent use of English by the L1 speakers get used to the accuracy of such English phonemes, still the orthographical underlying image of English phonemes by and large remain the same in the academic use of English. This is remarkable in written English and the issue of this nature aggravates more in case of written English e.g. ***(s), (c), (g), (k) and (j).*** A general writing tendency by L2 learners or the users of L2, encounter with the spelling system of English. In words like ***go, city, game, jam, cat***; the L2 learners/writers tend to write ***as (jo), (kity), (jame), (gam) and (sat).***Technical reason seems that sound pattern and the articulation of L1 are mostly phonemic whereas L2 is not. Disproportionate use of L1-L2 in connected speech and in writing is another decisive factor for achieving accuracy in the use of L2 from the view point of phonetics of English and speech technicalities in an L1-L2 situation.

The speech mechanism for the production of L2 sound by Arabic speakers marks a different slang; as a result, particular English sounds are realized differently: ***pig as big,*** ***parking as barking***. In short, we infer that the phonological aspects of English whether at secondary or college or university level is not taken care of. A habit formation like this at later stage and such speech errors become inevitable .This occurrence in public life is usually taken as speakers’ linguistic flaw or speech deficient in their academics or public life. Most prominent and frequent of them are ***(/p/), (/t/), (/d/), (/th=*** θ ***/), (ch=***/tʃ ***/), (/g/)*** in words initial, medial and final position. When a speaker has obvious pronunciation problems for one reason or the other, it is assumed that the speaker is ignorant or even becomes a butt of phoney remarks particularly in academia. A speaker deficient linguistically should be taken as a tool of learning rather than neglecting or ignoring it.

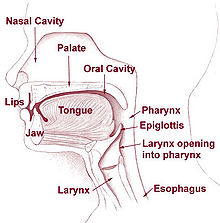
A class of society that claims to be linguistically superior based on educational background takes others linguistic flaw either as a serious mistake or just a fun in connected speech. Socio-psychological factors to the learning of L2 can’t be an exception in a situation like this. Also, in English literature, it is true that writers seldom use misspelling for the speech of characters they are trying to get the readers to respect. While the misspelling may help suggest that a character speaks differently. It implies that the character is stupid or even illiterate.

The wide spread impression in the job market in the kingdom is that some acclaimed premier educational institutions where face- to-face interview is a deciding factor for seeking admissions or an internationally recognised corporate sector with some offers of employment opportunity for which only good accented English knowing candidate can apply mainly for executive posts. A common aspirant who has just finished his/her university or technical education in the kingdom will admit that his/her spoken L2 is competent enough and matches with the standard of L2 of the multinational employers or the departments of the academic institutions. Else, the candidate himself/herself should be able to justify his/her position from the view point of linguistic flaw.

The older the speaker/learner is, the more stigmatised the speech problem is specifically in a situation where pronunciation accuracy has repeatedly been ignored or not taken care of. It is mandatory as learning part for the speakers of L2 to realize that pronunciation is very instrumental and unavoidable in connected speech. More importantly, the other confronting pedagogical issue is that L2 spelling conventions are not consistent enough to be used in a systematic phonetic transcription. This is one of the reasons that the existing teaching-learning system of L2 in the kingdom is not compatible with that amount of competency level as found in other parts of the kingdom particularly the capital city, Riyadh. A fresh graduate might think of the fact that the same letter or letter combination can refer to different sounds as cited above and there are several other examples as in case of consonant-vowel-consonant clusters like ***low vs. cow, bow vs. row***, ***book vs. door,*** and many more. Actually, learners of L2 are preoccupied in terms of their inborn tendency of sound effect with their L1. They pronounce the same word differently and the same is variable in realization from person to person.

Latest research has shown that adults and other children draw conclusions about a person by the way that person speaks. Facing an interview for a job or taking viva test in academic institutions, in both the cases, if the ears are able to hear correct intonation pattern and accent, the success rate is considered to be high. Phonemic awareness, therefore, reduces the phonemic disorder and makes communication one’s hard-won ability to communicate. It is true that any language over a time is not stationary in its phonetic and grammatical organisation. There are a number of factors which influence a particular language phonetically. British Received Pronunciation (RP) vs. American RP is the best example. Also, it seems that International Phonetic Association (IPA) and the phoneticians of L2 language are sometimes in conflict to decide whether such meta-linguistics in terms of the uniformity of L2 language is possible or not. This aspect has been discussed above. In support of this argument, we observe that transliterating method in case of reading the registration plates of the cars in the kingdom is quite prevalent. It can be a possible and valid academic subject matter for research and case analysis for the students of phonology.

On the basis of sound segment, whether L1 or L2, how does speech take place? Speech is the physical process of forming the words. Expressive language is what speech creates the output or the product. We use words that other can comprehend and put them together in sentences that have order and flow. Then, isn’t speech that complex if we make a case study of student’s ability to produce speech? By the process of speech production, words are selected to be produced. They can be either L1(Arabic) or L2 users. Each has its own phonetics formulated and finally they are articulated by the motor system in the vocal apparatus. L2 or L1 users in their connected speech tend to involve three major levels of processing.First, the process of conceptualization in which the intention is to create speech and desire to link a concept to a particular spoken word to be expressed.The second stage is formulation in which the linguistic form requires that word’s expression.This process involves phonological encoding which specifies the phonetic form of the intended utterance. The third most important stage is the articulation which involves the retrival of the particular motor phonetics of a word and the motor coordination of appropriate phonation and articulation by the lungs,glottis, larynx,tongue,lips, jaw and other parts of the vocal apparatus as shown in the following figure.



Active L2 learners get the habit of taking a sudden jump from one learning environment to another. This requires a careful training and practice in view of the several other aspects of learning like supra-segmental features of L2 sounds and their production in the event of speech. For instance,English phonemes **/p/,/k/,/t/** have got their allophones as **[ph],[kh],[th] in both the RPs** while Arabic has not because all the sounds are distinctively different and independent. Its phonemic and the orthographical presentation of each sound doesn’t change and are articulated the way they appear to be in the speech event. Reading a story of human interest in English by L1, the following sound units or the phonemes can be realized different from their original one. I found the following results while examining a few students of King Saud University( average users of L2), in the capital city Riyadh:

1. L2 (/θ/ as in ‘thin’ and /ð/ as in ‘this’; spelled with th): /ð/ is substituted for /θ/ and /

/θ/ is substituted for /ð/.

2. RP, word-initial and syllable initial /p/ /t/ /k/ have aspirated and un-aspirated allophones, but the L1 users make these phonemic;

3. Speakers do not make a clear distinction between / e/as in ‘get’ and /eɪ / as in ‘say’; between /i:/ as in ‘seat’ and / I / as in ‘sit’. Similarly, the RP vowels / eəʳ/ as in ‘air’/ and

/ ɪəʳ / as in ‘there’ are realized as /ə/ in their connected speech. And several more in case of single (monopthong) and double (dipthongs) vowels.

RP English is a **stress-timed language**, and word **stress** is an important feature.L2 speakers regularly put the stress accents at the wrong syllables, or accentuate all the syllables of a long English word.

John Laver is of the view that accents always mark the geographical origin of the speaker where some accents mark regional origin very locally and some mark only the fact that the speaker is an American, or is Australian, Canadian, English, Irish, Scots, Welsh and so on. A given speaker may be able to speak with two or more accents, with one accent often being regional than the others. Furthermore, a given speaker may well be able to use more than one dialect. A speaker native to kingdom will normally try to speak either the Standard English dialect with a regional Saudi dialect of English with either the same or a regional Saudi accent, as the social occasions requires. Here, I have taken the descriptive approach rather than prescriptive one. Why? Because a speaker native to Saudi might try to speak Standard English while interacting with a multinational company, but he/she speaks a dialect with a regional accent when they visit their relatives or friends in their home towns of Riyadh.

The psycho- motive development of speech organs under the influence of variable learning environment is a radical factor to the learning of any language of the world. As far as the findings and discussions in this write-up are concerned, it sounds apt to refer to a newly formed terminology which I have coined and used for the first time is

***Geo-phonetics .*** The art of teaching a language needs several scientific approaches for effective results in the academic institutions where universality of learning a language like English is not an exception. Nevertheless, a language should be learnt and practiced the way it demands. I find worth quoting the saying of Gleason, H.E:

*‘Language has so many inter-relationships with various aspects of human life that it can be studied from numerous points of view. All are valid and useful, as well as interesting in themselves’.*

Outstanding British authors like Daniel Jones (1962) and A.C Gimson (1962, 1989) is the authorities and has been discussed by other phoneticians in details. The development of a dictionary exclusively related to the sound pattern of English words, **The English Pronouncing Dictionary**, is now a Standard pronouncing dictionary. It is internationally recognized because the *teaching* or learning of English as a foreign language is based on the developed form of the symbols of **IPA**. Another excellent and up-to-date pronouncing dictionary which describes **RP** (as well as a number of other accents of English) is Wells (1990). He maintains a historical continuity with Daniel Jones.

It appears that the function of accent is a marker of socio-economic status in view of the Wells’ interpretation of the accent of English. There is a descriptive link between the regional nature of accents and dialects and the socio-economic status of the speakers concerned. It means the less regional variation is involved, the higher the status of the speaker.

**British Council (1999)** claims that a billion people are studying English in the world. The use of English is everywhere for certain purposes. Most people in different part of the world switch from one language to other one or more other languages in their daily lives. Toribio(2001:215) defines a balanced bilingualism as ‘a speaker who has a native like ability in two languages’ and see the standard against which an L2 user is measured as being ‘an idealised bilingual’s native speaker competence’. A descriptive analysis of the phonemes of English as shown in the table and their transliteration in Arabic are frequent in use. Once again, the following list of phonemes describes the physical nature of consonantal Arabic sounds. **Transliteration of equivalent sounds of each phoneme** is quite responsible for the deviation of pronunciation in their connected English speech. It means the physical nature of sounds of L1 and L2 bears several morphological disorders. It means the sounds or syllables in the beginning or the end of a word affects the meaning of words. This phonological phenomenon is natural in the usage of L1-L2 as we notice here

**ك ق /kə/k called ; g: game /gə/ gh**

**ن /ŋə/ n ring ; ch; butcher (no Arabic); ج /ə / or / jə/ j: jam ; د/ə / or /də/ this**

**ت /ə/ t; like "t" but with the tongue tip curled back ; ت /ə/ th aspirated(no Arabic)**

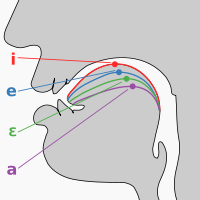
**د /ə/ d; like "d" but with the tongue tip ; ب /pə/ (no Arabic but replaced by /p/) spin ف /fə/ fine;**

**ب /bə b: bone م /mə/ *m;* mine ي /jə/ y: you ر /rə/ trip ل /lə/ l:love**

**و /ə/ v; between "w" and "v" wonder or vendor**

**ش /ə/ sh: ship س ص ث /sə s:same ح ه /ə / or / hə/ h: behind**

One standard principle of Geo-phonetics is that no vowels no consonants even no human sound is possible. This radical issue is applicable to all the languages whether written or unwritten. The classification of vowels based on the height of the tongue as front, back central are physical in realization and biological in nature. This event is common for every human speech (any language or dialect). The classical Arabic has got only three ***plain*** vowels **[ ا ] ,[ و ] , [ ي ]** while English has twenty. All types of vowels can be articulated by every learner of L2, but **only in isolation.** It is the physical height and position of the tongue that participates in the production of vowel sound segment **and not the variety or kind of human language**.



***(physical height of the tongue that produces vowel sound segments***

***regardless of any language or dialect)***

This write- up can go longer and longer in search of very interesting results. Nevertheless, to be précised, the attainment of accuracy and skill development is a continuous learning process. A micro level technicality requires an insight of language teaching like English as foreign language in the kingdom. A systematic filtration of unaddressed issues related to teaching- learning-training may help improve several pedagogical issues in the academic institutions and the industry very substantially. Use of multimedia in teaching is gradually improving and every bit of it can be scientifically exploited where embedded geo-phonetics in the formal system as a scientific approach to the teaching and learning of English may be a great success. Dynamics of pronunciation is a complex one, but not too difficult to deal with.