



Investigating the Teaching Practices of Algerian EFL Teachers in Phonetics and Phonology : Focus on Pronunciation Models

التحقيق في الممارسات التدريسية لأساتذة اللغة الإنجليزية كلفة أجنبية في الصوتيات و علم الأصوات : التركيز على نماذج النطق

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Abstract

This research investigates Algerian EFL teachers' use of Received Pronunciation and General American English systems of pronunciation in teaching English phonetics and phonology as model references. The participants in the study were eight teachers of English phonetics and phonology in the academic year 2018-2019. A questionnaire was administered to the sample. The results show that Received Pronunciation is the main model used as a reference in the teachers' teaching practices. The results of the study call for serious re-consideration of the situation in teaching English phonetics and phonology adopting RP models of pronunciation, while ignoring the American English pronunciation system despite its dominance.

Key words : Received Pronunciation, General American, pronunciation, reference model, teaching practices.

الملخص

يدرس هذا البحث استعمال المعلمين الجزائريين للغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية لنظام النطق المتلقى ونظام الإنجليزية الأمريكية العامة كنماذج مرجعية في تدريس علم الصوتيات وعلم الأصوات. وكان المشاركون في الدراسة ثمانية مدرسين لعلم الصوتيات وعلم الأصوات في اللغة الإنجليزية للسنة الدراسية 2018-2019. تم إعطاء استبيان للعينة. وأظهرت النتائج أن النطق المتلقى هو النموذج الرئيسي المستخدم كمرجع في الممارسات التعليمية في علم الصوتيات. تدعو هذه النتائج الى إعادة النظر فيما يتعلق بتدريس نظام النطق المتلقى في علم الصوتيات والأصوات، و تجاهل نظام نطق الإنجليزية الأمريكية على الرغم من هيمنته.

الكلمات المفتاحية : النطق المتلقى، الأمريكية العامة، النطق، النموذج المرجعي، ممارسات التدريس.

1. Introduction

With the status that the English language has gained as an international language, it soon dominated the educational systems all over the world. Teachers in different educational contexts started to use English materials to support English language learning and develop language skills like listening and speaking, grammar, vocabulary, reading and writing and so on. The purpose behind this is to help language learners to learn the language effectively and appropriately for successful communication.

It has always been of central importance to develop language students' speaking skills in order to be able to communicate and interact with English speakers from all over the world. The aspect of 'pronunciation' is one of the central elements of the speaking skills. It is one of the central aspects that should be given due consideration in the teaching of the English language for communication purposes. Attention started,

though, to be directed towards this central dimension of spoken language only recently.

Successful and intelligible communication has become a prerequisite in global communication, and this calls for great efforts to be made in order to develop the pronunciation skills of students of English as a foreign language (EFL students). For that reason, teachers of English phonetics and phonology are always required to equip EFL students with the necessary theoretical knowledge related to systems of English pronunciation. They are also required to provide them with effective practical training to develop their English pronunciation.

2. Teaching English Pronunciation : A Synopsis of the Situation

There is usually a challenge that faces teachers of English phonetics and phonology in English as a foreign language (EFL) contexts. This challenge concerns which of the two English standardized varieties, Received Pronunciation (RP) or General American (GA), to adopt as a model of reference when teaching English phonetics and phonology in the Algerian EFL context. There exists diversity in holding different opinions and having specific preferences and attitudes towards the two systems of English pronunciation on the part of Algerian EFL teachers.

Regardless any situation, the position of English phonetics and phonology teachers should always be to be based on sound and reasonable rationale. This is not, however, usually the case since certain teachers may hold a given opinion on the basis of their preferences or familiarity with a particular English pronunciation system. Some Algerian EFL teachers may express their opinion vis-à-vis the British and the American system of pronunciation by expressing a preference for the former over the latter. In fact, they can even show a strong desire to learn to use and adopt RP system more than its American counterpart.

Investigating Algerian EFL teachers teaching practices and attitudes towards the different standard varieties of English, mainly the British and the American ones, has been receiving continuous interest in different educational contexts. Attitudes towards the English system of pronunciation are constantly attracting attention. Different English accents are perceived differently in each country and in each group of speakers. This is the case in Algeria.

What is more attractive is the fact that even EFL students also show a positive attitude or preference towards one English pronunciation system rather than the other ones. They still conceive the British English (RP), for instance, as a superior and ideal variety (The Saundz Research Team, 2015).

EFL learners' attitudes towards the English language have always been of great interest in different EFL contexts. In light of this, both Received Pronunciation and General American English received a great focus in research since they dominate the EFL classroom contexts. They may seem to be in rival to dominate, but, in fact, they just co-exist peacefully. Actually, these two main accents of English are used in many EFL contexts as 'reference accents' or as 'norms or models' of pronunciation (Dziubalska-Kolaczyk & Przedlacka, 2008). In the Algerian context, this can be said to be true for the British variety, or what is usually referred to as Received Pronunciation, since it is usually used as a reference system of pronunciation in teaching English phonetics and phonology both in terms of theory and practice.

Both RP and GA appeal to students most. Despite the fact that students have a tendency towards RP or GA, they find difficulties in developing or acquiring native-like accents. The main reason behind that might be the lack of appropriate exposure to both accents. This might be one of the major factors that create pronunciation problems for learners. Despite the fact that learners acknowledge the importance of

pronunciation in language learning, they still do not know the differences that exist between the different varieties or accents of English.

The central interest in conducting a study on Algerian EFL teachers' attitudes towards RP or GA models of pronunciation in light of their teaching practices is very important. We believe that this study can provide valuable insights and implications for the Algerian English phonetics and phonology teachers in terms of adopting relevant models of reference in teaching English pronunciation systems. The study is also of central importance since it aims to focus on mis-conceptions and beliefs about the existence of 'one ideal English accent model' that teachers or students should conform to in speaking.

Actually, it has long been hold that non-native speakers of English should aim to learn English according to a native model. Questions of whether or not non-native speakers should conform to the norms of native speakers' accents are usually raised. Holliday (2005), for instance, raised the point of 'native fallacy'. This idea may create, or has actually created, a false image of an idealized native speaker and an ideal English accent. Nowadays, in EFL contexts, it is not at all beneficial to talk about a strict model of native English, RP or GA, since the aim to achieve a native accent is claimed to be unachievable or unrealistic.

3. The English Pronunciation System: Inconsistency between the Input and the Output

One of the main challenges for teachers of English as a foreign language is that of teaching the phonetics and phonology and pronunciation system of one particular variety of English, RP in this case, while a good deal of EFL students tend to be exposed more to the American English pronunciation. The inconsistency between the system that is taught and practised in

class, and what EFL students are exposed to and produce in actual speech can be an issue, especially for teachers of English phonetics and phonology in terms of language production (accuracy and consistency) evaluation.

Put differently, as teachers, we usually ask questions similar to : does the teacher accept the American way of pronunciation or the British one, and according to what criteria will she/he evaluate the speech production (theoretical and practical) of Algerian EFL students at the level of pronunciation, i. e. does she/he take aspects of accuracy and consistency into consideration in evaluating speech production. It is also important to know if the existence of speech production inconsistency affects the overall pronunciation performance of the student. This calls for serious attention to be directed towards the main teaching objectives that English phonetics and phonology teachers set for pronunciation. According to Brown (1991), teachers of English pronunciation should be concerned with the ‘what’, then the ‘how’. When taking pronunciation into consideration, much space should be devoted to discussing what the teacher aims at, which model of pronunciation she/he uses, and why, and what features of English pronunciation she/he accepts from her/his students and which will not be accepted and so on.

In line with the previous point of consistency in the use of one system of pronunciation, as teachers of English phonetics and phonology, we are usually faced with a serious teaching/learning delimma in terms of practice in particular. Unlike the teacher of oral expression who is supposed to evaluate students’ speaking, i. e. actual spoken productions, the phonetics and phonology teacher usually evaluates students’ knowledge of the pronunciation system through written exercises (transcriptions, stress marking, and so on), not spoken ones. This is, again, a central issue in teaching English phonetics and phonology in the Algerian context since knowledge of the sound

or pronunciation system is limited to written exercises. The subject is conceived by many as having to do with theoretical knowledge in particular. Practice can be provided, but theory lies at the heart of the course.

Things get complicated when it comes to classroom written practice or written exams of phonetics and phonology. In many cases, as teachers of English phonetics and phonology, we usually make a selection of familiar English words, or words with high frequency of occurrence in language production (spoken and written), to be given to first year or second year students to transcribe or mark stress and intonation in connected speech and so on. When transcribing words, for instance, we always stick to the RP system of pronunciation to decide whether to accept a given transcription or not. Any word transcribed correctly according to another standard English accent, GA for instance, is not accepted for the simple reason that students were being taught one particular pronunciation system, and they should not provide something that belongs to another pronunciation system, even if it is standard.

This does not only concern aspects of transcription. It can also involve aspects of connected speech such as rules of stress, intonation and so on. The general idea being that Algerian EFL students should conform to RP rules and norms. What is totally ignored, though, is that our EFL students are most of the time exposed to other systems of pronunciation, like GA. In many cases, they might hear words pronounced in that standard accent that they are most of the time exposed to, and not to RP. In other words, students are asked to transcribe words that they mostly hear in an accent other than RP.

Since the aspect of pronunciation is a central component in the speaking competence of EFL students (Goh & Burns, 2012), it is also of central importance to raise the issue of pronunciation system inconsistency in terms of input (exposure to

the language via teaching and listening/speaking practices) and output (actual spoken language productions). The element of pronunciation does not receive enough attention (Derwing & Rossiter, 2002). This is, particularly, the situation in the EFL classroom vis-à-vis the system of English pronunciation that is taught and emphasized to Algerian EFL students in the subject of English phonetics and phonology, both in the first and the second years of undergraduation.

The reason behind raising the issue of pronunciation consistency to one English reference or model in the Algerian EFL context is to understand the nature of the issue, and to clarify it given the fact that it can have serious consequences in some teaching/learning contexts. Algerian EFL students' pronunciation inconsistency, especially in the subject of English phonetics and phonology, means that the students have a strong tendency to use a mixture of both British and American English systems of pronunciation in their speech. This represents an issue for the teacher of phonetics and phonology before the teacher of oral expression, since action with regard to the particular systems of pronunciation should first be taken at the level of the former, then the latter. Decisions should be concerned with identifying purposes behind teaching the subject. The phonetics and phonology teacher should, for instance, make it clear whether she/he wants students to have strict adherence to RP pronunciation system, or she/he wants students to be able to produce intelligible pronunciation and speech even if they use a mixture of two pronunciation systems. Identifying teaching/learning objectives will facilitate all what follows vis-à-vis teaching, learning and evaluation (Brown, 1991).

Moreover, in the teaching of English phonetics and phonology to Algerian EFL students, some teachers seem to strictly adhere to the RP model or system of pronunciation. They tend to stick to this pronunciation system despite the fact that the English phonetics and phonology curriculum does not seem to impose or enforce certain demands on teachers with

regard to that. In other words, a good deal of Algerian EFL teachers usually have a strong tendency towards teaching the English phonetics and phonology of the so-called RP system of pronunciation despite the fact that this has not been required by the curriculum ; it is still part of the Algerian EFL teacher's choice and freedom to decide. This gives the teacher room to shape her/his own syllabus by covering necessary aspects that are needed for EFL students, first, to develop their understanding of the pronunciation system (s) and, second, to develop their competence in English pronunciation.

The teaching beliefs and practices of Algerian EFL teachers are, perhaps, based on what they have already received as students, and what they have been guided or advised to use in their early years of teaching. Guidance towards the teaching and use of one specific pronunciation system (RP) to the extent of excluding other already existing and standard systems that are widely used by foreign language students (GA, for instance) is a serious mis-conception instilled in the non-specialized or novice teacher of English phonetics and phonology. Put differently, both Received Pronunciation and General American, inter alia, co-exist and impose themselves strongly in EFL learners' actual use of language. What is more interesting is that many of today's EFL learners show a tendency to also learn American English. Exclusion of one system of pronunciation has no sound basis or logic. The decision to adopt one specific pronunciation system is usually based on mis-conceptions, pre-judgments, attitudes and personal preferences.

The importance of the pronunciation system to be adopted in the teaching of English phonetics and phonology, and subsequently in oral expression, lies in the fact that it will be of significant help to the Algerian EFL student to learn clear and correct pronunciation which is a central basis for effective and successful communication (Celce-Murcia, Brinton, Goodwin & Griner, 2010). Again, as it has been highlighted previously, the

issue that teachers of English phonetics and phonology can raise is that of pronunciation system consistency. The existence of any kind of pronunciation inconsistency might be considered as a serious sign of language level inappropriacy vis-à-vis a particular English pronunciation system. Another central point to take into consideration is related to how EFL teachers can meet the needs and interests of Algerian EFL students vis-à-vis systems and practices of pronunciation in the subject of English phonetics and phonology, in particular, and oral expression, in general.

The production of what is referred to as ‘accented speech’ poses further serious challenges and difficulties for Algerian teachers of English as a foreign language. For the phonetics and phonology teacher, the task can be somehow easier compared to that of the oral expression teacher since she/he can focus on teaching one pronunciation system or both pronunciation systems with particular focus being placed on one of them. The task can be complicated for the teacher of oral expression because students’ speech production in terms of pronunciation may not be consistent. Lately, there have been claims and arguments that support the idea of accepting various English varieties (Murphy, 2014). The answer to the question of pronunciation system consistency can be, then, provided by teachers of phonetics and phonology and teachers of oral expression. They should clarify and identify teaching and learning objectives vis-à-vis achieving pronunciation system consistency or communication intelligibility. What has, though, to be considered is that the objectives should be realistic and achievable.

4. The Selection of Appropriate English Pronunciation Model

To select a specific pronunciation model to use in an EFL classroom, there are many factors that should be taken into consideration on the part of the university, institution, team of teachers or the individual teacher. This selection is of central

importance especially that in the last few decades, several pronunciation models have been suggested (Brown, 1989).

If we take a deep look at the text-books of phonetics and phonology, we clearly notice that each book exhibits a selection of a given pronunciation model by its author. As EFL teachers of English phonetics and phonology, we usually find ourselves in need of certain guiding criteria that help us to decide which model of English pronunciation we should opt for. The decision should be an informed one; it should not be arbitrary.

One criteria for pronunciation model selection is the communicative criteria. It refers to the intelligibility of communication when using the pronunciation model. This means that there is mutual understanding that facilitates communication (Jenkins, 2000). Despite seeming at first sight straightforward, the aspect of intelligibility is complex. There are other factors that interfere in making speech intelligible such as whether or not the discussion is between native-native or native-non-native speakers, and the degree of familiarity with accent, and so on (Pihko, 1997).

The communicative criteria are also related to the factor of exposure to a specific model of pronunciation. Exposure can be in-class or out-of-class. This can take the form of the presence of the model in people's real life in terms of the number of people who speak the accent, or in terms of the presence of the accent model in media, such as TV, radio, music, social websites (facebook, twitter, skype) and so on.

Another criteria in the selection of a pronunciation model involves geo-cultural criteria. The latter involve geographical and cultural proximity. EFL students who live in an area closer to Britain, for instance, tend to learn the RP accent, while those who live near to USA, tend to learn GA accent. This is actually what is taking place in Europe, since many European countries

have a preference to select RP, and the countries close to USA(like countries of South America), tend to prefer GA model of pronunciation (Gimson, 1978).

In fact, this is not the case all the time. There are other factors that came into play recently, and which led to other phenomena. Due to the great influence of certain factors like mass-media, popular culture, movies, songs, travelling, tourism, different types of exchanges, especially the political, commercial, academic ones, many European countries are now more open to and familiar with the General American model of pronunciation. This can, then, influence the choice of a given pronunciation model. Actually, we can say that countries of North Africa, including Algeria, can also be influenced by the previous strong factors in pronunciation model selection.

A third criteria in the pronunciation model selection is the linguistic policies, which reflect attitudes of educational authorities vis-à-vis learning the foreign language. In educational contexts where the curriculum is too general to the extent that English pronunciation is not specified, it is important to consider the teaching practices of peers within the same institution (Von Schon, 1987). Teachers' practices should be investigated because we can find important results, since to use von Schon's (1987) words, 'peers' teaching practices can reveal 'great value in consistency'(p. 26). There are situations where students find themselves confused "... if they got American English the first year, British English the second year, and Indian English the third year" (von Schon, 1987, p. 26). This is why it is of due importance to have clear specifications with regard to the English model (s) of pronunciation that the institution (s) should follow.

A fourth criteria has to do with pedagogical factors. The latter refer to the availability of teaching/learning materials when using a specific English pronunciation model. There is, however,

a constant paradoxy vis-à-vis views that support the use of RP. The paradoxy lies in the fact that many EFL teachers support the use of RP and use it as a model of teaching English phonetics and phonology as well as pronunciation, while they themselves do not speak the accent (Macauley, 1988). This may lead to dissatisfaction amongst EFL teachers since they will either force themselves to produce RP English or they may ask their students to produce speech in a way that they do not produce themselves.

EFL teachers may also choose a specific pronunciation model because materials of teaching are available in that accent. This involves the use of CDs, tapes, videos, movies, songs, text-books and so on. The latter are considered as strong pedagogical criterion in pronunciation model selection. Put differently, lack of teaching/learning materials in a given English accent forces the teacher to choose another English accent. This might be the reason behind many Algerian EFL teachers' choice to teach RP accent in the subject of English phonetics and phonology since many books are provided according to the RP model.

Teaching English phonetics and phonology is very important in EFL contexts. The aim behind teaching the subject is to equip Algerian EFL students with the required theoretical and practical knowledge to develop and improve their English pronunciation. Different EFL contexts exhibit different teaching objectives and different classroom practices in the subject of English phonetics and phonology. In some contexts, received pronunciation is the model that is used as a reference model of English pronunciation, and in other contexts, General American English is the model of pronunciation that is used as a reference model in teaching. The adoption of one particular model of English pronunciation is made in light of specific criteria of selection that may vary from one EFL context to another. There are, however, certain EFL contexts where one model (RP) is entirely adopted and emphasized in teaching English phonetics

and phonology to the extent of excluding other more dominant models of English pronunciation (GA).

5. Research Methodology

Models in teaching English pronunciation are among the issues that are usually raised in teaching English phonetics and phonology, especially in EFL contexts. The aim of this research paper is to investigate the use of two dominant English accent models that are widely used in the teaching of English phonetics and phonology and pronunciation, namely Received Pronunciation and General American English. The research examines 08 Algerian EFL teachers of English phonetics and phonology practices vis-à-vis both pronunciation models.

The present study seeks to answer the following research question :

- Which model of pronunciation, RP or GA, is used by Algerian EFL teachers as a reference model in English phonetics and phonology teaching practices?

The participants in the present study were 08 Algerian EFL teachers of English phonetics and phonology in the first semester of the academic year 2018-2019. One participant was male and seven participants were females. The eight teachers hold the Magister degree (PhD candidates). None of the teachers involved in the study is specialized in English phonetics and phonology or speaking. They all belong to the Applied Linguistics field, which makes phonetics and phonology a part of the general linguistic field.

To obtain information about the model of English pronunciation that is used as a reference in the teaching of English phonetics and phonology, a questionnaire was administered to eight teacher respondents. The questionnaire

consisted of 11 questions. The purpose of the teachers' questionnaire was to get respondents' reports about their phonetics and phonology (pronunciation) teaching practices vis-à-vis RP and GA models of English pronunciation. The main focus was to investigate the pronunciation system that is used with students in English phonetics and phonology.

6. Data Analysis and Discussion of the Results

Question Item 01 : Teachers' Gender

Out of the eight teachers involved in the present research, one teacher is male and seven teachers are females. The results show female dominance in the field of teaching, in general, in the Algerian educational context.

Question Item 02 : What subject do you teach ?

The eight teacher respondents said that they teach the subject of English phonetics and phonology. This is of central importance to the research investigation since we seek to get information related mainly to the teaching practices of English phonetics and phonology. In light of this, teachers' replies are more informative.

Question Item 03 : At what level do you teach the subject ?

When asked about the level of teaching English phonetics and phonology, five teachers said that they teach, or have taught, the subject to first year students, while three teachers said that they teach, have taught, it to second year students. Having teachers who have been teaching both first and second year students is also important since the teaching focus of first year program and that of the second year is not the same, despite being complementary. This can give interesting insights vis-à-vis the English pronunciation model used at both levels

and whether teachers follow the same reference in teaching English phonetics and phonology or not.

Question Item 04 : Which English accent do you use in class ?

The teacher respondents were provided with a list of choices to choose from when answering the question related to the accent that they use with their students in-class. The choices given involved RP, GA, a mixture of both, Algerian English, or any other English accent. The eight teachers opted for the choice of a 'mixture of both'. This means that all teachers use a mixture between Received Pronunciation and General American English when explaining lessons, delivering courses and discussing with students.

Question Item 05 : What English accent do you prefer to use in class ?

The choices that have been provided for this question to select from involved : Received Pronunciation, General American English, Both or other. The eight respondents stated that they prefer to use both RP and GA English pronunciation in their class-room teaching.

Question Item 06 : Which pronunciation model do you use as reference in teaching English phonetics and phonology ?

Two options about the pronunciation model that teachers use as reference in their teaching of the subject of English phonetics and phonology were provided for teachers to choose from. The first option is Received Pronunciation model and the second choice is General American English model. The eight teachers said that they use the Received Pronunciation English model in teaching English phonetics and phonology to first and second year Algerian EFL students.

Question Item 07 : On what basis do you decide to choose a specific pronunciation model in the teaching of English phonetics and phonology (symbols, listening and so on) ?

This question is of central importance to the research. The aim behind asking it is to get informed about the reasons that push a teacher to choose a specific model of pronunciation as a reference in their English phonetics and phonology teaching. The choices or criteria that have been provided to teachers of English phonetics and phonology include : **a)** communicative criteria, **b)** geo-cultural criteria, **c)** linguistic policies of institutions, **d)** and pedagogical criteria. The teacher respondents provided multiple reasons or criteria for their choice of a specific pronunciation model to be used as reference in teaching English phonetics and phonology.

The eight teacher respondents said that three main criteria are taken into consideration when deciding to choose as specific pronunciation model in teaching English phonetics and phonology (pronunciation) to Algerian EFL students. They involve :

- Pedagogical criteria
- Linguistic policies of institutions
- Communicative criteria

The three criteria that have been selected by the sample of the study are of major importance in any EFL educational context. Regardless of their ordering, they seem to play a central role in the teaching of any English subject including that of English phonetics and phonology (pronunciation). The availability of the teaching materials to be used in teaching a given subject makes the teaching/learning process straightforward. The teacher's efforts will, then, be placed on finding better ways to teach the English subject.

It is also important for educational institutions to make their educational policies clear so that the teaching teams who belong to them will have a guiding map to follow. This will eliminate any inconsistency in the teaching practices of the teachers at the different undergraduate levels. If the educational institution states, for instance, that the pronunciation system that should be followed and taught is that of British English, the teachers will be required to stick to the institutions' statement or requirement.

As far as the communicative criteria are concerned, the teacher or the subject team can decide whether to choose one particular pronunciation system or another, or even two systems, in light of the objectives that they set for the subject and for learning. There is a central point to consider with regard to that. In certain cases, there might be no coordination or collaboration between the teachers of different levels when teaching a given subject. The absence of continuous discussion and collaboration between teachers of English phonetics and phonology in the first year and those of the second year, for instance, may have negative results of different kinds. Collaboration with teachers of oral expression can also be of great importance since the aim is to form good speakers of English.

The remaining criteria (geo-cultural) was not mentioned by the teachers. This may reflect the fact that geo-cultural criteria have no, or less, importance or influence when taking decisions about English accent models in the Algerian EFL context.

Question Item 08 : What accent do your students use in their speech ?

The informants were asked to give their opinion about the accent that is mostly used by their students in their speech. The choices that they were provided with involved : a) Received Pronunciation, b) General American English, and c) a mixture of

both. The eight teachers stated that their EFL students tend more to use both Received pronunciation and general American English in their speech. This means that students do not speak purely one English accent at the expense of another English accent. This also implies the fact that students are exposed to both English accents in their life, both in the EFL classroom and in their everyday life through movies, songs, social websites, series, news, documentaries and so on. This kind of mixed exposure results in students producing language specific to both received pronunciation and general American English accent models. Exposure to different accents of English results in a speech that contains language peculiarities that belong to those accents.

Question 09 : What accent do you want your students to have ?

It is of central importance to know what is the objective that Algerian EFL teachers of English phonetics and phonology set when they teach English phonetics and phonology as well as pronunciation to EFL students. In light of that, the teachers were asked to say what accent they want their students to have or achieve. The choices that they were provided with include : a) native-like accent, b) highly intelligible non-native accent, and c) other. The eight teacher stated that they aim to help students become competent speakers even if with a highly intelligible non-native accent. From the teachers' reply to the question, we notice that the main aim behind teaching English phonetics and phonology is to develop Algerian EFL students' pronunciation skills in terms of being communicatively intelligible. That is to say they can understand and can be, in turn, understood by other speakers of English. The general aim is being able to communicate without any communication gap, breakdown or mis-understanding.

Question Item 10 : Do you think that students recognize the difference between RP and GA ?

According to the replies of the teachers, Algerian EFL students do not know or recognize the differences between received pronunciation and general American English. Six teachers said that students lack this knowledge because they have not been taught the two English accents or because there were no conscious raising lessons or activities that draw their attention to the fact that there might be other English accents to be used as models of reference against which EFL students learning can be evaluated. The two other teachers said that students may recognize that there are differences between English accents, but they do so based on observation, and not because they have been taught different English accents. The differences between the dominant English accents like RP and GA have never been highlighted.

Question Item 11 : According to you, which of the two English accents is more preferred by students ?

The eight teachers said that, mostly, Algerian EFL students do not have enough knowledge about the differences between the two English accents (British English and American English). In their speech, and even in their writing, they use a mixture of the two systems because they are exposed to both, and they have not been taught the differences between the two English pronunciation systems. Five teachers stated that students seem to be more interested in speaking good and clear English, without acknowledging the fact that they want to achieve a native-like accent. If this is to imply something, it is the fact that Algerian EFL students seek to speak clear and intelligible English in the first place. This also might imply a very interesting fact, which is that in their early years of studies, Algerian EFL students seek to master the language and to be able to communicate successfully. In advanced levels, these EFL students might seek

to have an accent closer either to RP or GA, for instance. In other words, clear and successful communication lies at the heart of language learning.

Conclusion

The aim of the present research was to investigate Algerian EFL teachers of English phonetics and phonology (pronunciation) teaching practices vis-à-vis the English pronunciation model that they adopt in their teaching as a reference model. Their teaching practices involve both the theoretical knowledge that they provide in the subject of English phonetics and phonology at the level of first and second years in undergraduation, and the practical training, activities and materials that they give to students for transcription, listening and pronunciation practice purposes. The results of the study show that teaching English phonetics and phonology to Algerian EFL students is based mainly on the received pronunciation model both theoretically and practically. This implies an ignorance of other dominant models of English pronunciation, especially the general American English model.

Despite starting to notice and understand the differences that exist between RP and GA in advanced levels of learning, Algerian EFL students' theoretical and practical knowledge with regard to these two major English accents is still superficial. Students may notice differences in pronunciation, for instance, but their observation is that of a lay person who cannot understand and explain things in an informed manner. This point is of central importance given the fact that the students that are being formed, especially at Teachers' Training Colleges like that of ENS-Assia Djebar-de Constantine, in Algeria may become teachers of English in middle and high school. They need a sound and profound knowledge of both RP and GA in order to be able to teach the English language system adequately at all educational levels.

This research paper aimed at highlighting the fact that focus is completely placed on the model of received pronunciation in teaching English phonetics and phonology (pronunciation) in the Algerian educational context at the level of first and second years of undergraduation. It also aimed at highlighting the fact that, despite being also dominant in spoken language use, General American English is totally ignored both in terms of theory and in terms of practice in the teaching of English phonetics and phonology. This study represents, then, a call for Algerian teachers of English phonetics and phonology to reconsider their teaching practices, and move towards also covering aspects of American English in the subject of English phonetics and phonology.

7. References

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