

AN ANALYSIS OF ENGLISH
PRONUNCIATION LEARNING STRATEGIES
AMONG ARAB EFL LEARNERS IN
UNIVERSITI MALAYSIA PAHANG (UMP)

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FATIMA ALI SALAH LARDHI

Thesis submitted in fulfillment of the requirements
for the award of the degree of
Master of Science

UMP
Centre for Modern Languages and Human Sciences

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MAY 2019

DEDICATION

To my parents, Ali Salah Lardhi and Shaikha Al-Haddar,

for my unfailing encouragement to do my best in my study

and for instilling in me the value of education

I also dedicate this to my beloved husband, Ghassan who has always believed in me

And supported me.

Finally, special dedication to my sweet kids Ghadir and Nasser



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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to express my sincere appreciation to my supervisor, Dr. Noor Raha Mohd Radzuan for her constant guidance and encouragement, without which this work would not have been possible. For her unwavering support, I am truly grateful. She walked beside me with her patience, motivation, guidance and knowledge for past three years with my all-time research and writing of this thesis. I am truly grateful for her valuable comments on my mistakes and shortcomings that enlightened me to come on the right track and make this research possible.

My sincere appreciation also goes to my parents for their constant encouragement, sacrifice and love. Besides, I am also thankful to my beloved husband who gave me strength when I needed the most and for his great support. I cannot find appropriate words to express my appreciation for his love. Moreover, I would like to thank my brothers Hussein, Hassan and my lovely sister Huda for their love and support.

I would also like to express my profound gratitude to Dr. Omar Bamahsoon, the founder and chairman of BFOS and the BFOS members for sponsoring me during my study journey.

In addition, I would like to thank my study mate Abdelmadjid Benraghda a PhD student in the English language, for his assistance during my research at UMP. Next, I appreciate the assistance from Mohammed Alshrafi, a PhD student in computer science who helped me in analysing data using SPSS. Moreover, I would like to thank Dr. Mohammed Alsaqaf for being my rater in the pronunciation test and for evaluating my research instruments.

I would like to extend my thanks to the committee members for their valuable comments and suggestions on my research project.

Last but not least, I would like to thank my real friends Esraa and Lina for their love, support and encouragement. I also would like to thank my friends in Malaysia, Asmaa, Nessrin and Samar for their love and support.

ABSTRACT

The main aim of this study was to analyse the Pronunciation Learning Strategies (PLS) applied by Arab EFL learners at Universiti Malaysia Pahang (UMP). It also examined the relationship between the use of pronunciation learning strategies and the pronunciation test. Moreover, the study highlighted the factors that led to having mispronunciation in English language. A quantitative research approach was employed using a questionnaire and a pronunciation test. The questionnaire was distributed to 104 Arab EFL learners while the pronunciation test was conducted with 15 Arab EFL learners. The findings of the questionnaire revealed that the participants made a great use of indirect strategy named Metacognitive Strategy. Furthermore, the pronunciation test indicated that Arab EFL learners struggled in pronouncing five English consonant sounds (/p/, /v/, /ʒ/, /ʃ/ and /ŋ/). As a result, it was reported that there was a positive but weak relationship between the utilization of the PLS and the Arab EFL learners' scores in the pronunciation test. Besides, the findings from the open-ended questions demonstrated that there were five factors which hindered the learners from having correct English pronunciation namely: lack of formal instruction, lack of practice, learners' age, lack of exposure and lack of motivation and interest. This study is significant as it has shed some light on the use of PLS to enhance the learners' abilities to pronounce well. Based on the findings, the study provides pedagogical implications for language instructors and students as well.

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ABSTRAK

Tujuan utama kajian ini adalah untuk menganalisis Strategi Pembelajaran Sebutan (SPS) yang diterapkan oleh pelajar-pelajar Arab EFL di Universiti Malaysia Pahang (UMP). Ia juga mengkaji hubungan antara penggunaan strategi pembelajaran sebutan dan ujian sebutan. Tambahan lagi, kajian ini menggariskan faktor-faktor yang mengakibatkan kesilapan dalam bahasa Inggeris. Pendekatan penyelidikan kuantitatif digunakan secara soal selidik dan ujian sebutan. Soal selidik diedarkan kepada 104 pelajar Arab EFL manakala ujian sebutan dilakukan dengan 15 pelajar EFL Arab. Hasil soal selidik menunjukkan bahawa para peserta menggunakan strategi tidak langsung yang bernama Strategi Metakognitif. Selain itu, keputusan yang diperoleh daripada ujian sebutan menunjukkan bahawa pelajar EFL Arab bergelut dengan menyatakan lima konsonan bahasa Inggeris (/ p /, / v /, / ʒ /, / ʃ / dan / ŋ /). Akibatnya, penemuan menyatakan bahawa terdapat hubungan positif tetapi lemah antara penggunaan SPS dan skor pelajar Arab EFL dalam ujian sebutan. Di samping itu, penemuan dari soalan terbuka menyatakan terdapat lima faktor yang menghalang pelajar daripada mempunyai sebutan bahasa Inggeris yang betul kurang ya pembelajaran secara formal, kurang amalan, umur pelajar, kurang pendedahan dan kurang motivasi serta minat. Kajian ini adalah penting kerana ia menjelaskan kekuatan penggunaan SPS dalam meningkatkan keupayaan pelajar untuk menyebut dengan baik. Berdasarkan penemuan ini, kajian ini juga memberikan implikasi pedagogi untuk guru dan pelajar.

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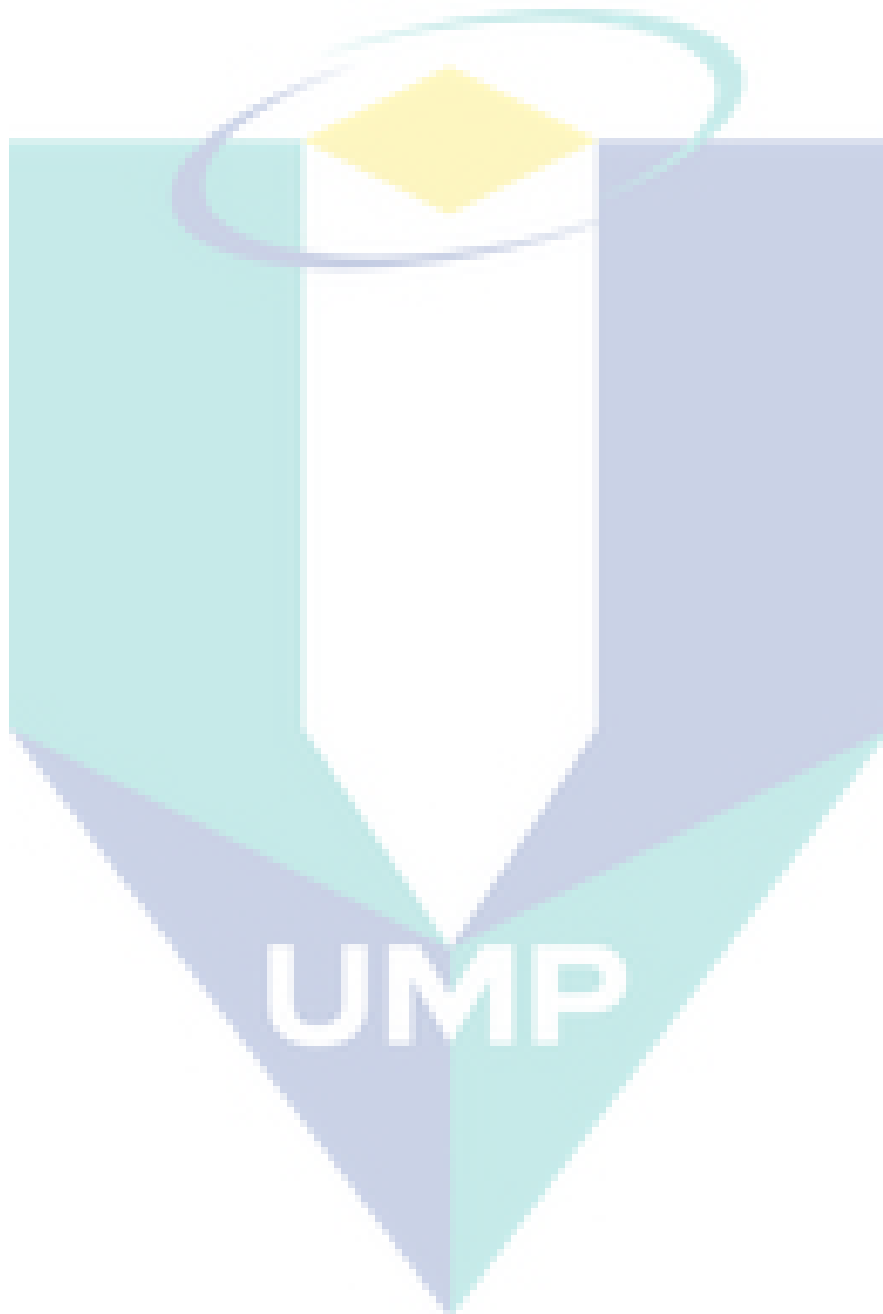
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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS



CLT	Communicative Language Teaching
EFL	English as Foreign Language
ESL	English as Second Language
FL	Foreign Language
GPU	Good Pronunciation Users
L1	First Language
L2	Second Language
LSs	Learning Strategies
PIE	Preparatory Intensive English
PLS	Pronunciation Learning Strategies
SLA	Second Language Acquisition
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
SSEs	Sudanese Students of English
SUST	Sudan University of Science and Technology
UMP	Universiti Malaysia Pahang

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Overview

Nowadays, English has become an international language, very important and a compulsory subject at schools due to the development of science and technology which has generated a great demand of intercommunicating. In order to meet this demand, teaching English has become a compulsory subject at schools for many years (Ahmed, 2017).

“English plays a very significant role as a global language as it has become the international language for communication, and it has been used widely in many different countries in the world. There is a great demand for English as it is seen as a key language to serve as a medium of international communication. It is considerably used in education, politics, tourism, science, commerce entertainment, mass media and international relations” (Ahmed & Abuelhassa, 2016). Sung (2014) posited that English has now become a global language; it is increasingly used by speakers from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds for intercultural communication.

To learn any language, four skills are involved: listening, speaking, reading and writing (Carter & Nunan, 2001). Of all four key language skills, speaking skill is considered to be the most important in learning a second or foreign language (Khamkhien, 2010). The ability to speak fluently and competently in a target language has been regarded as important for learners of English as a second language (ESL) or English as a foreign language (EFL) in achieving success in both their academic as well as their professional lives. The speaking skill or the oral performance in the field of education and language learning is one of the productive skills to be developed by the FL learners to achieve communicative purposes (Omari, 2015). However, many

researchers indicated that speaking skill is neglected by teachers who practice traditional teaching methods which focus on reading and writing only (Alam & Bashir Uddin, 2013; Hodson, 2006; Richards & Rodgers, 2001). Speaking English language is an important factor in learning and using English correctly (Gussenhoven & Jacobs, 1998).

Furthermore, Hairuzila Idrus and Rohani Salleh (2008) pointed out that communicating orally in a manner which is clear, fluent and to the point, and which holds the audience attention, both in groups and one-to-one situations (p. 62). Crosling and Ward (2002) viewed oral communication as an essential and influential skill in the workplace as it is in daily life. They further claimed that “the success of oral communication depends on the parties sharing background knowledge and assumptions and miscommunication can result if there is a mismatch” (p.45). Therefore, speaking English language is a very important skill in learning ESL/ EFL (Khamkhien, 2010; Wei, 2006).

According to Ahmed and Abuelhassa (2016), pronunciation is one of the most important factors concerning with language learning. Furthermore, the most important part of learning a second language rests on pronunciation (Pennington, 1996); therefore speaking is the main element in acquiring and using a language (Dan, 2006). Individuals always learn to speak earlier than learning to read and write. One of the general goals in the second language (L2) learning, maybe the most important one, is to speak the target language accurately and fluently like native speakers. When we talk to other people in English, the first thing they notice, which can create a good impression of the speakers’ language ability, is their pronunciation. The poor and unintelligible pronunciation will cause misunderstanding for both speakers and listeners. In addition, it is clear that limited pronunciation skills will make learners lose their self-confidence and result in negative influence for learners to estimate their credibility and abilities (Morley, 1998).

1.2 The Importance of English Pronunciation

Pronunciation is considered to be a fundamental element in a second language acquisition (Eckstein, 2007). It has become an essential part for language learners (Rossiter, Derwing, Manimtim & Thomson, 2010; Celce-Murcia, Brinton & Goodwin,

1996). Gong (2002) cited in Ahmed and Abuelhassa (2016) further considered pronunciation skill as one of the fundamental skills and the basis of oral communication skill among English learners at different levels.

Since English has become a global language, a great number of its speakers start realizing that the importance of English grammar and vocabulary is getting overshadowed by the desire to sound intelligible. Thus, the importance to learn English pronunciation for EFL learners is significant due to some reasons. One of the basic reasons is related to the significant role of pronunciation in supporting students' speaking performance both in the classroom and in a real life situation. The success of oral communication using English language is determined by some language aspects, for instance, vocabulary, pronunciation and grammar. From those three components, pronunciation is considered giving the biggest influence in succeeding the process of communication. Regardless, how well the sentences are constructed and how appropriate the diction is chosen with the context of the talk, if they are mispronounced words, the process of delivering the message is not running well (Rosyid, 2017).

Wei (2006) reported that: Pronunciation is an integrated and integral part of language learning. It consists of elements much wider than sounds of consonants and vowels. It includes the elements of rhythm and intonation, which support the communicative process. That is to say, anyone who wants to gain communicative competence has to study pronunciation. Moreover, Nation and Newton (2008) indicated that having a good pronunciation of a language is essential for effective communication, particularly intelligibility. On the other hand, incorrect pronunciation can hinder knowledge construction (Nation & Newton, 2008). Thus, students are required to have correct pronunciation besides having good knowledge of vocabulary and eligible grammar and the four language skills (Ahmed 2017).

However, the issue of mispronunciation among Arab learners has been discussed by many researchers such as (Ahmad, 2011; Almahroqi, 2012 & Zarka, 2013), in their studies. They discovered that Arab students make errors when pronouncing certain English consonants such as /p/, /z/ /tʃ/, /v/ and /ŋ/. For instance, most Arab speakers pronounce the words play /pleI/ and cheap /ʃi:p/ as blay /bleI/ and

sheep /ʃi:p/, respectively. Due to this kind of mispronunciation, a great obstacle in communication might appear among the speakers (Ahmad, 2011).

Recently, Learning Strategies have become an accepted part of second language teaching especially in a Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) context when applied to the four major skills of second language acquisition (SLA): reading, writing, listening, and speaking (Eckstein, 2007). Similarly, Chang (2011) pointed out that Learning Strategies (LLs) have received a great interest from both researchers and learners in the domain of English as a Second Language (ESL) and English as a Foreign Language (EFL). Akyol (2013) posited that there have been a number of studies that have dealt with learning strategies in relation to the pronunciation of a second/foreign language. Hence, it is very significant for the learners to use English learning strategies in order to improve the language skills especially for those who intend to study English at university level (Phothongsunan, 2006). Pawalk (2010) defined the meaning of pronunciation learning strategies as “deliberate actions and thoughts that are consciously employed, often in a logical sequence, for learning and gaining greater control over the use of various aspects of pronunciation” (Pawalk, 2010, p.131). In other words, to consider the learners’ actions, educators must be aware when choosing the appropriate Pronunciation Learning Strategies (PLS) to suit the learning process of English pronunciation. Thus, this study aims to identify the preferred pronunciation learning strategies used by Arab EFL learners to improve their English pronunciation.

1.3 Research Background

Pronunciation has become a crucial part for learning English language (Celce-Murcia, Brinton & Goodwin, 1996; Rossiter, Derwing, Manimtim & Thomson, 2010). Thus, it is very important to have accurate pronunciation of a target language for effective oral communication and build up self- confidence for those who try to speak in front of others (Lardhi, Radzuan & Benraghda, 2017). However, when students try to learn a second or a foreign language, they face some difficulties because of the different phoneme systems of the two (2) languages. As a result, when they attempt to speak a new language, they replace the sounds with other sounds that exist in their mother tongue. Thus, it is difficult for EFL learners to adopt the sound system of English language because of the interference of the mother tongue (Arabic language) (Zhang, 2009).

Moreover, pronunciation can be troublesome for non-natives who are trying to learn English language. English is not a phonetic language; a word may be spelled out in one way and uttered in a different way. Therefore, it is vital to learn the pronunciation by practicing and listening to English phrases. Good pronunciation is not only learned through hearing the words of another language but it is acquired through speaking practice as well (Jamil, 2015).

Fang and Lin (2012) indicated that the pronunciation of English language is considered as a very difficult skill for many adult learners. Yet, few studies have investigated the pronunciation learning strategies to develop better pronunciation (Eckstein, 2007; Osborne, 2003; Pawlak, 2006, 2008; Peterson, 2000; Rokoszewska, 2012; Szyszka, 2015;). Pawlak (2011) claimed that successful learners of a good language use an open range of strategies to learn a new language. As a consequence, they are talented enough to choose appropriate strategy for any circumstances or a given task.

Moreover, Szyszka (2015) investigated the pronunciation learning strategies used by 61 students who have a good English pronunciation. The study reported that good pronunciation users (GPU) made a great use of cognitive strategies which supported in Rokoszewska's (2012) findings. Rokoszewska (2012) examined the first year English department students' utilization of Pronunciation learning strategies in Poland. It was found that students made a great use of indirect strategies than the direct strategies. The researcher pointed out that the students relied on cognitive strategies which were under the direct group while metacognitive ranked the highest in the group of indirect strategies.

It seems that up to date, there have been a few studies on the use of pronunciation learning strategies to improve the target language pronunciation especially among Arab learners who study English as a foreign language. Hence, this study will be conducted to examine the pronunciation learning strategies implemented by Arab EFL students to learn English pronunciation, and to identify the relationship between the uses of PLS and the pronunciation scores of English consonant sounds. This study also aims to determine the reasons that may have contributed to the mispronunciation among the Arab EFL learners.

1.4 Problem Statement

Speaking a Foreign Language (FL) is a very complex skill, including vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, fluency and the ability to structure talk or even non-verbal abilities. One of the foreign language elements is pronunciation which is considered as one of the most difficult skills to acquire, particularly if the learner seeks to obtain native-like pronunciation (Pawlak, 2015). Since English pronunciation is a hard skill to learn, Arab students who have studied English for many years still encounter difficulties in some aspects of pronunciation (Baloch, 2013, Tengler, Aburizaiza & Bakarally, 2013;).

A study by Ahmad and Nazim (2014) revealed that the majority of Arab EFL learners face difficulties in pronouncing English sounds or words perfectly. It was reported that Arab students make errors while pronouncing some consonant sounds like /p/, /d/, /v/, /tʃ/, /z/, /ŋ/. Such an example of research has consistently shown the importance of increasing learners' pronunciation skills. Similarly, Hassan (2012) conducted a study on the problems that Sudanese students face on English pronunciation. He indicated that if the students are unable to pronounce words correctly, consequently, it leads to misunderstanding. Accordingly, Gilakjani (2012) asserted that learners with a good English pronunciation seem to be understood regardless of making mistakes in other English elements while learners with poor pronunciation are difficult to be understood even if they have an excellent grammatical base.

Thirty years ago, language learning strategies have been employed in teaching method of English as a Second Language (ESL) to assist learners to improve their English skills such as: reading, writing, listening and speaking (Eckstein, 2007). Yet, limited research studies have investigated the use of pronunciation learning strategies among ESL/ EFL learners (Eckstein, 2007). However, Eckstein (2007) tried to help bridge the existing gap between strategic learning research and pronunciation learning in a CLT context by investigating the pronunciation learning strategies used by adult ESL learners at Brigham Young University to improve their pronunciation performance. Similarly, Lee and Heinz (2016) investigated the language learning strategies employed by twenty advanced L2 speakers of English language at the Graduate School of Interpretation and Translation in H University in Korea. Moreover, Mirza (2015)

explored the effect of applying pronunciation learning strategies in learning English language among Lebanese ESL and EFL students.

To date, there are limited studies that have investigated the relationship between the use of pronunciation learning strategies and the pronunciation scores among Arab EFL learners. Therefore, this study endeavours to bridge the gap by exploring the utilization of pronunciation learning strategies among Arab EFL learners. Presently, the gap becomes very large for many reasons. First, as in lately only few language learning strategies have been conducted which related to pronunciation learning, thus, much research is required to find out the existence of pronunciation learning strategies (Peterson, 2000). Second, there are a few studies that have examined the correlation between abilities of the students to use Pronunciation Learning Strategies and actual pronunciation skills. Finally, so far limited studies have investigated if pronunciation learning strategies can influence the production of English consonants among Arab EFL learners.

This study attempts to shed some light on the problems which Arab EFL learners face particularly consonant sounds that are unfamiliar in Arabic language. In addition, the aim of the study is also to find out the pronunciation learning strategies (PLS) used by Arab EFL learners and the factors that have contributed to their learning of English pronunciation. The goal for study is to determine if there is a positive relationship between the uses of pronunciation learning strategies and pronunciation scores.

1.5 Research Objective

The research objectives of this study are:

1. To examine the Pronunciation Learning Strategies (PLS) applied by Arab EFL learners.
2. To identify the correlation between Pronunciation Learning Strategy (PLS) use and pronunciation scores.
3. To determine the factors that influence the learning of English pronunciation among Arab EFL learners.

1.6 Research Questions

The research questions for this study are:

1. What are the Pronunciation Learning Strategies (PLS) applied by Arab EFL learners?
2. Is there a correlation between Pronunciation Learning Strategies (PLS) use and pronunciation scores?
3. What do participants perceive to be the factors that influence the learning of English pronunciation among Arab EFL learners?

1.7 Scope of the Study

This research study was conducted in Universiti Malaysia Pahang (UMP). This study comprised the first level of Preparatory Intensive English course (PIE) students. Students who participated in this study were only Arab EFL learners who came from different Arab countries. PIE is an English programme offered by Centre for Modern Language and Human Sciences (CMLHS) which cover the four language skills; reading, writing, listening and speaking.

It has to be pointed out that this study does not analyse the mispronunciation of all consonant sounds among Arab EFL learners, it focuses only on five problematic consonant sounds to be pronounced by the participants. Moreover, this study identifies the most preferable PLS deployed by the participants. This study also focuses on the relationship between the use of PLS among Arab EFL learners and their pronunciation performance of the five target consonant sounds. Analysis of the factors contributed to the Arab EFL learners' mispronunciation was conducted based on the learners' responses to the open ended question.

1.8 Significance of the study

There is an increasing body of research in recent years concerning the issue of pronunciation learning strategies because of the role PLS plays and the influence it has on EFL/ESL learners' pronunciation achievement. Previous research employed Pronunciation Learning Strategies to improve the learners' productions of English sounds. Yet, there are limited studies in number on the use of PLS among Arab EFL

learners to enhance their pronunciation performance. Mirza (2015) asserted that applying certain Pronunciation Learning Strategies is very effective in improving learners' pronunciation ability. Learners' use of PLS could decrease their pronunciation mistakes and improve the pronunciation skills. Hence, this study aims to identify the uses of Pronunciation Learning Strategies (PLS) deployed by Arab EFL learners and how they can help them to overcome their difficulties in pronunciation.

Moreover, past studies have described problems that learners have with English pronunciation, but have tended not to deal with students' strategies for coping with these problems. Accordingly, it is important to find effective learning strategies and solutions to overcome these problems because mispronunciation is an important issue facing many English learners in many Arab countries. If this kind of problem can be overcome, it would help Arab EFL learners to pronounce words in a correct way so that in the future they can communicate with better competence and avoid misunderstandings with other English speakers.

In addition, the study may benefit Arab EFL students in their different levels of school, if the students apply the strategies when learning new English pronunciation. It is hoped that teachers would gain some insights into the importance of applying PLS in their actual teaching to overcome the learners' difficulty in producing English sounds. It is also hoped that teachers could teach the most effective strategies for students as well as to know the most effective strategies that would help the students overcome their incorrect pronunciation and improve their pronunciation skills.

1.9 Limitation of the study

The findings of the study will be limited to Arab EFL learners who enrolled in the Preparatory Intensive English course (PIE) in Universiti Malaysia Pahang (UMP). Therefore, the study does not investigate the frequent use of PLS among all UMP students or other students in other universities. Moreover, this study is restricted to five English consonant sounds which are /p/, /v/, /ʒ/, /tʃ/ and /ŋ /, so it only investigates the relationship between the use of PLS and the participants' scores in the pronunciation test on the five consonants. In addition, the study explores the factors that have contributed to having incorrect pronunciation among Arab EFL learners. Hence, the participants will share their perceived hindrances they have experienced while learning

English pronunciation. Thus, the influencing factors that will be highlighted in this study are restricted to Arab EFL learners' perceptions who participated in this study.

1.10 Definition of Terms

1.10.1 Pronunciation

Jamil (2015) defined pronunciation as the correct way of saying a word. It also refers to a graphic representation, using phonetic symbols of the way a word is spoken. Pronunciation, in this study, refers to the ways in which certain phonemes of a word are pronounced which are the consonants of /p/, /v/, /ʒ/, /ʃ/ and /ŋ/.

1.10.2 Arab EFL Learners

In this study Arab EFL learners are a group of Arab students who came to study English as a foreign language and joined Preparatory Intensive English (PIE) course at UMP.

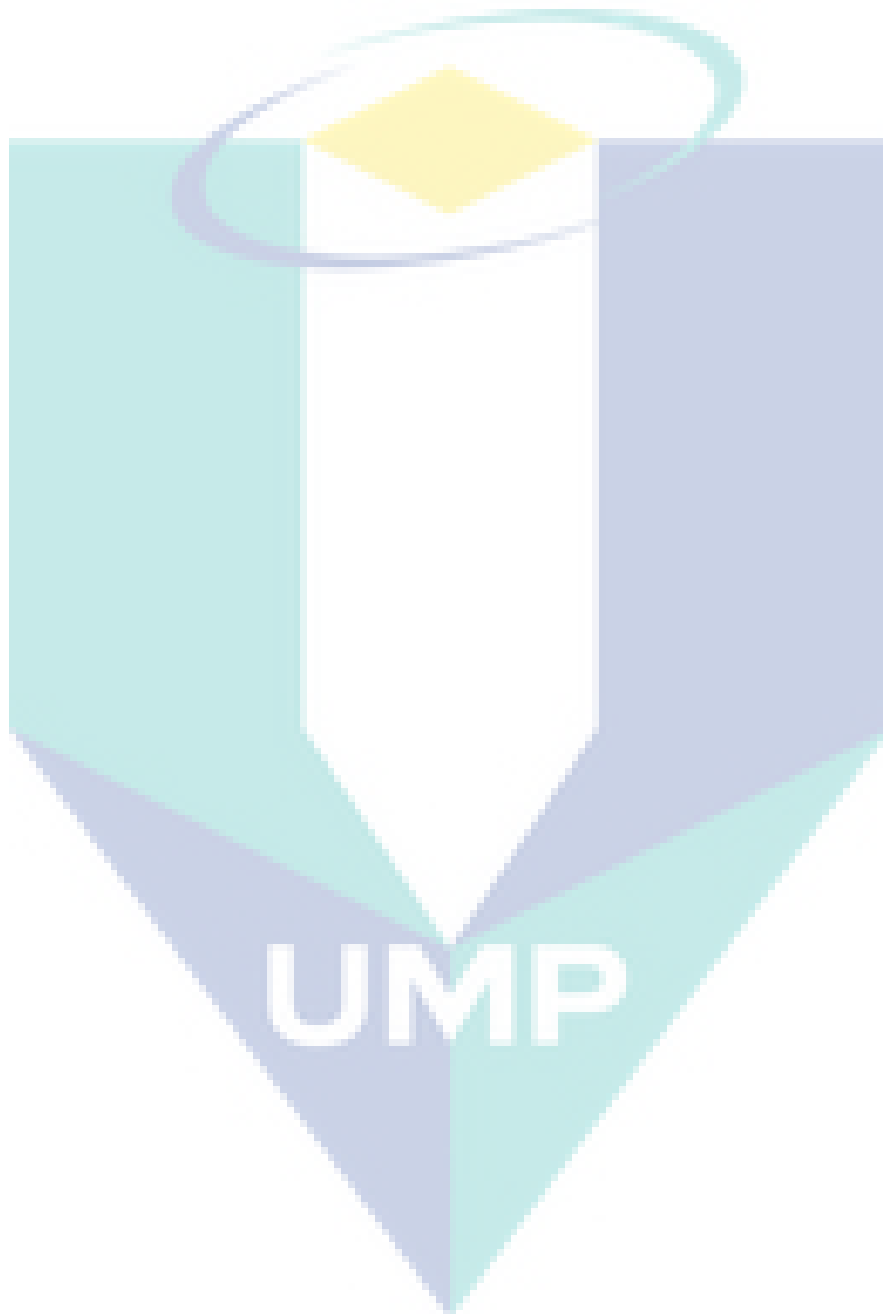
1.10.3 Pronunciation Learning Strategies (PLS)

Oxford (1990) defined language learning strategies as specific actions taken by the learner to make learning (pronunciation) easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-directed, more effective and more transferable to new situations. In this study, pronunciation learning strategies classified to six strategies which are: memory strategies, cognitive strategies, compensation strategies, metacognitive strategies, affective strategies and social strategies.

1.11 Organization of the Chapters

This thesis is written in six chapters. The first chapter discusses briefly the research background, the importance of English pronunciation, the problem statement, the research objectives, the research questions, the significance of the study, and the limitations of this study. The second chapter summarizes theories supporting this study and the relevant literature. It also discusses the pronunciation learning strategies (PLS) and their relation to pronunciation performance in ESL and EFL. Moreover, the conceptual framework is also included. Chapter three describes the research methodology and details out the research design of the study and data analysis methods.

Chapter four reports the main findings of the study based on the research questions. The fifth chapter discusses the findings in relation to past research. Chapter six concludes the thesis by highlighting the pedagogical implications to the teaching field and lists out the recommendations according to the findings.



CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents several previous research findings which were conducted on Pronunciation Learning Strategies (PLS) in particular and the scope of learning and teaching a foreign language in general. It begins with a general overview of the importance of English pronunciation, the importance of teaching English pronunciation, comparison between English and Arabic consonants, a general look at Language Learning Strategies, previous studies on PLS and their classifications. Furthermore, the present chapter discusses the effect of applying PLS on improving pronunciation and factors that affect pronunciation learning. Besides, it includes previous studies on the frequent use of PLS and the relationship between applying PLS and pronunciation scores. Moreover, it presents the theoretical, conceptual framework of the study, some studies on English pronunciation among Arab EFL learners and the challenges they face in pronunciation.

2.2 The Importance of English Pronunciation

Zeilinski (2009) indicated that learners with good pronunciation can be understood even if the learners commit mistakes in another area of the target language, yet with unintelligible pronunciation they are hardly understood despite having grammar base and rich vocabulary.

Speakers are judged based on their ability to pronounce accurately. If a speaker has a poor pronunciation, this might generally affect his/her own language negatively. Poor pronunciation is difficult to listen thus, listeners need a greater effort and much concentration to guess what the speaker is trying to convey. As a consequence, bad

pronunciation causes misunderstanding and communication breakdown (Gilakjani, 2012a).

On the other hand, if a speaker has adequate pronunciation, he/she might have a positive impact on his/her language ability despite his/her grammatical mistakes. Besides, with intelligible pronunciation a person can speak confidently (Gilakjani, 2012b).

Moreover, Gelvanovsky (2002) pointed out that pronunciation plays a vital role in effective communication besides its social value which is related to prestige.

2.3 The Importance of Teaching English Pronunciation

English pronunciation is one of the important parts of foreign language teaching and learning because it impacts learners' communicative competence and performance (Gilakjani, 2016). According to Harmer (2001), many English teachers ignore English pronunciation instructions in classrooms. The issue has been raised to find out reasons for this negligence. Many educators asserted that they do not need to learn English pronunciation skills and they think that learning English pronunciation will waste their time. Besides, they stated that only communication in English is enough and when they can be understood while pronunciation is not important (Harmer, 2001).

In a study conducted by Harmer (2001) indicated that the main aim of teaching and learning any foreign language is to enable learners to communicate well in the target language. Thus, communication is very important as it means to understand and be understood. However, many learners think that they have the ability to communicate easily just because they can talk to their teachers and their friends in English, nevertheless making mistakes.

There are many reasons that cause the students to commit mistakes. First, teachers can understand their students' pronunciation better than anyone because their ears are used to hear "bad English". Second, all students speak in their mother tongues which have the same pronunciation patterns and make mistakes while speaking a foreign language, consequently, it is easy for them to understand each other's pronunciation. Third, the classroom is not a good environment for the students to learn

good pronunciation as they all share the same pronunciation and do not have the opportunity to talk to native speakers (Harmer, 2001).

Harmer (2001) emphasized that pronunciation instruction is very important, as the students can learn different sounds, sound features and improve their speaking skills as well.

Similarly, Butler-Pascoe and Wiburg (2003), indicated that the goals of teaching pronunciation are to develop English and make it easy to understand so that the listener cannot get confused, develop English that meets a learner's needs in communication competence, help learners feel confident while speaking in English, develop a positive self-awareness, and lastly develop speech consciousness, personal speech monitoring skills and pronunciation strategies that assist learners to develop inside and outside the classroom.

The main goal of pronunciation instruction is not to teach the learners a native-like pronunciation, but intelligible pronunciation should be the main concern of their communication (Gilakjani, 2011a; 2016). On the other hand, if learners want to change the way of pronouncing English words, they have to change the way they think about the sounds of those words. That means they have to be aware of individual sounds and other pronunciation parts such as syllables, stress patterns, and rhythms.

According to James (2010), the aim of learning pronunciation for some learners is the native-like accent. This can probably be a primary objective but it cannot be the ideal goal of teachers who intend to improve their learners' pronunciation.

2.4 Difference between English and Arabic Consonants

English and Arabic are two different languages that share some common features and exhibit a lot of differences as well. These differences are the main source of difficulty in the learning of English as a foreign language for most Arab learners. It is observed that one of the major problems in learning a foreign language is the interference due to the differences between the native language and the second language. When a child acquires his native language, he develops his native language behaviour which gradually becomes internalized. On the other hand, in learning a

foreign language, the learner is much influenced by his native language behaviour. This explained that no difficulty is anticipated where the structure of the two languages is the same. While when the structure of the second language differs from the native language, it can be predicted to find difficulty in learning and error in performance (Salim and Al-Badawi, 2017).

English language consists of twenty four consonant sounds (Carney, 1994; Wells, 2008). On the other hand, the Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) system contains twenty eight consonants (Cruttenden, 2008). Arab EFL learners encounter some difficulties in pronouncing certain English sounds especially the sounds that are not available or have no equivalent in their mother tongue. In line with Shehata (2015), the researcher pointed out that comparing the consonantal systems of English and MSA reveals a numbers of differences between the two languages. For example, English consists of 24 consonantal phonemes: six stops (/p/, /b/, /t/, /d/, /k/ and /g/), nine fricatives (/f/, /v/, /θ/, /ð/, /s/, /z/, /ʃ/, /ʒ/, and /h/), two affricates (/tʃ/ and /dʒ/), three nasals (/m/, /n/, and /ŋ/), two liquids (/l/ and /r/) and two semi vowels (/w/ and /j/). On the contrary, Arabic has 28 consonants that include eight stops (/b/, /t/, /d/, /tʰ/, /dʰ/, /k/, /q/, and /ʔ/), 13 fricatives (/f/, /θ/, /ð/, /ðˤ/, /s/, /sˤ/, /z/, /ʃ/, /x/, /χ/, /ħ/, /ʕ/, and /h/), one affricate /dʒ/, two nasals (/m/ and /n/), one lateral (/l/), one trill (/r/), and two semi-vowels (/w/ and /j/) Watson, (2002, as cited in Shehata, 2015)).Moreover In Arabic language there are 9 consonants that have no equivalents in English (i.e., /tʰ/, /dʰ/, /ðˤ/, /sˤ/, /χ/, /ʕ/ /q/, /ħ/, and /ʕ/). Besides, there are “some English consonants that do not exist in the Arabic sound system like /p/, /v/, /tʃ/, /dʒ/, /ʃ/and /ŋ/.

Due to the differences of two phonemic systems of MSA and English, Zarka (2013) identified the pronunciation errors of Arabic Learners of English language. The findings showed that Arabs pronounced /v/ as /f/ as in: “It is a fery nice fillage” insted of “It is a very nice village” because Arabic does not exhibit the phoneme /v/. Furthermore, Arabs compensate /p/ with the voiceless /b/. Moreover, although /t/ and /k/ are consonants, which seem to be similar to those Arabic consonants /t/ or /k/, they are not identical. They are different in manner and in place of articulation” ((Majeed, 1999) in Hago & Khan (2015) .Apart from this, Hago and Khan (2015) gave an example for this case. They explained that “English /t/ is an alveolar and aspirated in word initial position followed by a vowel like tea /ti:/ whereas the Arabic /t/ is dental and non-aspirated in the same word position like in /ti:n/ (fig)”. Another example they gave

related to the phoneme /r/ despite its existence in both languages: while Arabic /r/ is an alveolar trill, the English /r/ is a frictionless retroflex continuant). In addition, the researchers clarified that although /n/ and /ŋ/ exist in Arabic, /ŋ/ never occurs at the end of a word in Arabic, thus, Arabic speakers have a tendency to add /k/ to the end of words that end in /ŋ/, such as [baɪŋk] for 'buying' or [sɪŋk] for 'sing' (Hago & Khan ,2015).

Moreover, Jabali and Abuzaid (2017) highlighted the pronunciation errors made by Palestinians 20 undergraduate students from the English Department at An-Najah National University. The findings revealed that the most problematic sounds to pronounce correctly are /p/, /tʃ/, /dʒ/, /ʃ/, and /ŋ/. The researchers reported that Palestinians mispronounced some English sounds because learners were influenced by their own mother tongue, Arabic language. Therefore, they produced English sounds in an Arabic way; they chose the closest counterpart in their native language to produce each of the problematic sounds which are /p/, /tʃ/, /dʒ/, /ʃ/ and /ŋ/. Jabali and Abuzaid (2017) explained that the main reasons behind the mispronunciation were attributed to the fact that the difficult sounds do not exist in the language and English pronunciation is not practiced well by Arab Palestinian speakers.

In this study, the researcher compared the two phonetic systems, namely, Arabic sound system and English sound system. Both systems share eighteen common consonants. In spite of the similarities between the consonantal systems of the two languages, there are some differences too as illustrated in Table 2.1

Table 2.1 Comparison between English and Arabic consonant sounds

Different Consonant Sounds in English Language	Sounds in Arabic Language	Common Sounds in Both Languages
/g/, /ʃ/, /dʒ/, /p/, /v/, /ŋ/	ء /ʔ/, ح /h/, خ /k/, ص /s/, ض /d/, ط /t/, ز /z/, ع /ʕ/, ق /q/	/b/, /d/, /ð/, /f/, /h/, /j/, /k/, /l/, /m/, /n/, /r/, /s/, /ʃ/, /t/, /θ/, /w/, /z/, /ʒ/

2.5 Language Learning Strategies (LLS)

Language Learning Strategies (LLS) are not a new discovery, they have been used by successful learners of languages since early days. There are a lot of definitions but the most appropriate, from our point of view, is the definition given by Oxford who says that learning strategies are "operations employed by the learner to aid the acquisition, storage, retrieval, and use of information". Oxford also wrote that learning strategies include "specific actions taken by the learner to make learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-directed, more effective, and more transferrable to new situations" (Oxford, 1990). When the learner consciously chooses strategies that fit his or her learning style and the L2 task at hand, these strategies become a useful toolkit for active, conscious, and purposeful self regulation of learning (Oxford, 2003).

In the last three decades, Language Learning Strategies (LLS) have been widely used to improve the learners' English skills in ESL classrooms (Eckstein, 2017). Students need to be able to use LLS to know not only *what* to study but to *how* to study as well. Oxford (2003) indicated that Language learning strategies is one of the main factors that help determine how and how well students learn a second or foreign language.

Language teachers play a very important role to help students taking control of language study and making language learning more efficient and autonomous. As a result, students who are using certain strategies possess larger motivation for studies and higher level of their self-confidence (Timirbaeva, 2013).

Recently, research into LLS has attracted the attention of many researchers and educators, who are gradually shifting their focus from teachers and teaching to learners and learning. In this regard, Chang (2011) reported that learning strategies (LS) have received increasing attention from both researchers and educators in the fields of English as a Second Language (ESL) and English as Foreign Language (EFL) in relation to how languages are learned differently by individual learners. According to Chamot (2001), "applied research on LS has two main goals: the first one is to identify and compare the learning strategies used by more and less successful language learners, and the second goal is to provide instruction to help less successful learners become more proficient in their language study" (pp.25-26). Furthermore, O'Malley and

Chamot, 1990 (as cited in Alhaysony, 2017), considered strategies as tools for active, self-directed involvement that are necessary for the development of SL/FL communicative ability. Moreover, Alhaysony (2017) explained the importance of LLS is that when training learners to use LLS can help them to become successful language learners. Besides, LLS enable learners to become autonomous, lifelong learners and independent.

Based on the conducted studies so far, it can be concluded that one of the effective ways of improving students' learning skills is through making them familiar with Learning Strategies and how to apply them efficiently (Oxford, 1996). The main findings of Eslami-Rasekh and Ranjbari's (2003) study was that teaching students language learning strategies can help them improve their learning output because those strategies can increase learners' awareness of how to learn efficiently. Another study has been conducted by Taghinezhad, Tabaeifard, and Bazyar (2015) that investigated the impact of teaching listening comprehension strategies on the improvement of listening comprehension ability of Iranian EFL learners and found that teaching listening comprehension strategies can play a major role in the improvement of listening comprehension ability. Furthermore, Taghinezhad, Dehbozorgi and Esmaili (2015) conducted a study investigating the influence of teaching meta-cognitive reading strategies on the reading self-efficacy beliefs of Iranian EFL learners. The study revealed that learners who received instruction using meta-cognitive reading strategies had higher self-efficacy beliefs comparing with those who did not receive such instruction. However, there was no statistically significant difference between males and females regarding their self-efficacy beliefs

2.6 Pronunciation Learning Strategies (PLS)

The Pronunciation Learning Strategies field is the domain that links pronunciation learning and instruction to language learning strategies. Cohen, Weaver, and Tao-Yuan-Li (1995) highlighted the importance of teaching and learning the language learning strategies within the ESL curriculum. Moreover, the researchers suggested that language instructors should raise the learners' awareness of the importance of applying language learning strategies to enhance their English pronunciation proficiency.

Although few studies have been conducted to determine pronunciation learning strategies, four early studies have recognized this gap in research through the past thirty years of learning strategy popularity (Derwing & Rossiter, 2002; Osburne, 2003; Peterson, 2000; Vitanova & Miller, 2002).

Eckstein (2007) posited that first study of pronunciation learning strategies was conducted by Peterson (2000). The researcher identified twelve strategies through the uses of diaries and interviews by 11 participants with different proficiency levels. Peterson's study (2000) was the only one to date that attempted to focus on discovering and classifying pronunciation learning strategies. Peterson's study (2000) was different from other studies that followed hers. The researcher's main concern was to focus on native English speakers learning Spanish in a foreign language context rather than non-native English speakers learning that language in an ESL context.

A pilot study by Miller and Vitanova (2002) revealed the perceptions of students' pronunciation on the instruction they received. Although the article mentioned that three pronunciation classes participated in the study, the actual number of participants was never given. The participants were ESL graduate students who were being taught many pronunciation strategies they could use on their own without any assistance of a teacher.

Students from the three pronunciation classes were asked different open-ended questions about improvement of their pronunciation. The study focused on the elements of pronunciation instruction the students felt were most helpful, it identified some learner-centered pronunciation strategies that students found useful. These were identified as metacognitive strategies that included self-correction of poor pronunciation, and active listening to native pronunciation (Vitanova & Miller, 2002). The students expressed their willingness to develop their pronunciation beyond classroom context. However, students could not set any relationship between strategy use and proficiency level. It was revealed that students recognized the value of implementing pronunciation strategies outside of the classroom but it failed to identify more than two strategies students could employ to develop their pronunciation, furthermore it failed to determine if the students were actually using any strategies outside the classroom.

Similarly, Vitanova and Miller's (2002) study corroborated with Derwing and Rossiter (2002). Derwing and Rossiter (2002) conducted a much more detailed study to find out specific pronunciation strategies used by ESL learners. The participants in their study were 100 ESL adults at a college level. The result of their study revealed that the proficiency level of the students ranged from low-intermediate to high-intermediate and over half (55%) of the participants encountered pronunciation problems. Students orally responded in structured interviews to questions about their pronunciation skills.

Seven new sets of pronunciation strategies were added to Oxford's classification in this study, which were increased in volume; slow rate; write, spell; paraphrase; self-repetition; clear speech; and an "other" category (Derwing & Rossiter, 2002).

The most popular strategy was paraphrasing. Concerning the result of Derwing and Rossiter's study, the findings showed that 60% of the students felt that their pronunciation changed when they became excited or nervous. Moreover, this study reported that only 10% of the participants claimed prosody as a pronunciation problem that led to failure in communication. Derwing and Rossiter's (2002) study stated that students who had pronunciation problems in their communication were either not receiving an appropriate instruction, or the instructions they received were ineffective.

The last study that highlighted the pronunciation learning strategies has been conducted by Osborne (2003). The researcher examined the use of pronunciation learning strategies of higher level ESL learners. The participants in his study were 50 volunteers from different language backgrounds. A qualitative research had been conducted using a monitored interview. The researcher asked the student to record a language learning autobiography for ten minutes. Then, the students' recording played back and they were asked to repeat a line he or she heard in the autobiography. The purpose of repeating the line was to produce better pronunciation and inquire regarding what the student did to improve his or her pronunciation help to sound more like the speaker in the recorded autobiography in order to acquire English sounds. In addition, the student's performance would give insight into language use.

Osburne (2003) limited the sort of strategies that the participants could mention. Instead of asking the students to identify which pronunciation strategies they relied on the students had to mention what helped them on specific repetition acts. After collecting strategies from the 50 participants, eight categories of strategies were identified for pronunciation improvement.

Osburne (2003) reported the same findings as in Derwing and Rossitier (2002). It was found that students paid very little attention to prosody when attempting to improve their pronunciation. 26% of the participants claimed that they tried to improve their pronunciation by concentrating on individual words. These findings were similar to Derwing and Rossitier's study in which the researcher showed paraphrase as the most influential tool.

2.7 Classification of Pronunciation Learning Strategies

Oxford's categorization scheme has been described as the most comprehensible classification of Learning Strategies to date (Ellis, 1994). Most of Language Learning Strategies which applied in several studies are based on Oxford's (1990) classification of Language Learning Strategies. Based on earlier research into Learning Strategies, Oxford, (1990) (cited in Paredes, 2010) developed a new Language Learning Strategy system based on earlier research into learning strategies aiming at helping learners develop proper pronunciation of L2. She classified Language Learning Strategies (LLS) into two groups, the first group of strategies is called direct as the learners use the target language directly when they are engaging in the use of the strategies included in this group. The other group is called indirect because they do not involve direct use of the target language. These two major strategy categories are further divided into six sub-categories which are Memory, Cognitive, Compensation (direct strategies), Metacognitive, Affective and Social strategies (indirect strategies) (Oxford, 1990).

Table 2.2 Classification of pronunciation learning strategies

Direct Strategies	Indirect Strategies
Memory Strategies	Metacognitive Strategies
Cognitive Strategies	Affective Strategies
Compensation Strategies	Social Strategies

Direct strategies require mental processing of the target language. There are three main groups of direct strategies as follows:

Memory Strategies - Sometimes called mnemonics, these involve mental processes used in arranging information in order, making associations, and reviewing. Memory Strategies help learners to link one L2 item or concept with another but do not necessarily involve deep understanding (Oxford, 2003, p.13). Various memory-related strategies enable learners to learn and retrieve information in an orderly string (e.g., acronyms), while other techniques create learning and retrieval via sounds (e.g., rhyming), images (e.g., a mental picture of the word itself or the meaning of the word), a combination of sounds and images (e.g., the keyword method), body movement (e.g., total physical response), mechanical means (e.g., flashcards), or location (e.g., on a page or blackboard) (Oxford, 2003)

Cognitive Strategies - These involve processing the target language so that meaning becomes clear through processes such as reasoning and analyzing. Cognitive strategies helps the learner to use the language material in direct ways through note-taking, outlining synthesizing, reorganizing information to develop stronger schemas, summarizing, practicing structures and sounds formally and practicing in naturalistic settings (Oxford, 2003).

Compensation Strategies - These enable learners to make up for gaps in their knowledge and skills, for example, guessing meanings and using gestures. Compensation strategies enable learners to use the language either in speaking or writing despite knowledge gaps. These strategies are divided into two sets which are guessing intelligently and overcoming limitations in speaking and writing (Zare, 2012).

Indirect strategies, on the other hand, support and manage language learning often without involving the target language directly. There are three groups of indirect strategies:

Metacognitive Strategies - These enable learners to plan, coordinate, evaluate, and direct their own learning as well as to monitor errors. Learners seek out or create opportunities to practice the new language in naturalistic situations (e.g. seeking pronunciation opportunities) (Paredes, 2010).

Affective Strategies - These help learners gain control over their emotions, attitudes and motivation through anxiety reduction, self-encouragement, and self-reward. Moreover, Affective Strategies are concerned with the learner's emotional requirements such as confidence and perseverance needed for learners to involve themselves actively in language learning, for example, lowering anxiety levels by laughing at their own mistakes (Vlckova, et al, 2013).

Social Strategies - These are ways of involving other people in enhancing learning through questions, cooperation and increased cultural awareness. Social strategies provide increased interaction and more empathetic understanding since they occur among and between people (Canale, 1983 as cited in Paredes, 2010). An example of a social strategy is cooperating with peers or advanced users of the target language.

2.8 Improving Pronunciation through Applying PLS

The need to improve the learners' pronunciation performance has become the interest of many recent researchers to increase the learners' awareness by making them aware to choose the best learning strategies for them (Ungureanu & Georgeacu, 2012).

In addition, the use of language learning strategies is beneficial for all learners to ease their task in learning the target language and to enhance the language learning process (Oxford, 2003). Moreover, the use of the language learning strategies helps EFL learners to overcome some factors that affect the foreign language (FL) learning process like age, anxiety, attitude, aptitude, personality, and motivation (Oxford, 2003).

Muhammad and Othman (2018) defined PLS as one of the main factors that helps to determine how and how well students learn a second or foreign language

pronunciation. For this reason, a number of recent researchers have shed light on pronunciation instruction to achieve correct issues that affect the intelligibility of the learners' speech (Muhammad & Othman, 2018).

Furthermore, Hismanoglu (2012) in his paper explained the reason why he focused on pronunciation learning strategies. The researcher illustrated that pronunciation learning strategies used by EFL learners have long been ignored by language teachers working in English Language Teaching (ELT) departments in many countries. Besides, in pronunciation lessons, language teachers provide their students with phonetic and phonological knowledge regarding the English language, however, they do not ask learners to reflect on their personal pronunciation learning techniques and nor do they ask them to report the strategies that they use, this oversight leads to communication problems when interacting with (non)native speakers of English beyond the classroom context. Similarly, Chamot & Rubin (1994, as cited in Hismanoglu, 2012) stated that, what determines good language learners is the ability that learners have of improving a set of personal learning strategies, not the number of learning strategies a learner employs. In this regard, a learner who is likely to be a good pronunciation learner is based on the ability to successfully improve and implement theoretically informed pronunciation learning strategies. One way is to record the speech and then play back to listen carefully to the pronunciation. This method will help the learner pick up the pronunciation errors which enable the learner to correct them.

In addition, Baker and Haslam (2012) conducted a study on the effect of language learning aptitude, strategy use and context on second language pronunciation among two groups of EFL participants who enrolled in two intensive English-language schools in Beijing, China and ESL participants from an intensive language institute at a major US university. Their main findings indicated that if a learner employs all types of pronunciation strategies, it would help to improve his/her pronunciation. Moreover, their study found that time spent teaching pronunciation strategies is important, regardless of learning context (ESL or EFL). Therefore, Baker's and Haslam's study explained how pronunciation strategy use may affect pronunciation performance.

2.9 Research on the Frequent Use of PLS

Since the field of pronunciation and the influence of applying certain Pronunciation Learning Strategies became the main concern for many researchers, several studies were undertaken to investigate the EFL and ESL learners' preferences for strategy use (Pawlak & Szyszka, 2018).

Rokoszewska (2012), conducted a study to investigate the influence of Pronunciation Learning Strategies (PLS) on mastering English vowels. The researcher conducted a questionnaire containing 5-point Likert-scale items, adopted from Calka (2011). The findings of PLS questionnaire revealed that the first-year students of the English department in Poland rarely used the PLS. The findings illustrated that Polish students made a great use of the Cognitive Strategies in the direct group and Metacognitive Strategies from the indirect ones. Besides, the findings of the study indicated that majority of the students did not learn pronunciation in a formal way, nor did they receive any strategy training which indicated that they became more dependent on their teacher and they might not be aware of the fact that formal classroom practice was not sufficient to succeed in learning not only pronunciation but any other aspect of the target language as well.

In a study carried out by Tam (2013) among a group of university students from the Hong Kong Polytechnic University, the researcher reported that the students relied more on Cognitive and Compensation Strategies. However, the results of Tam's study were different from Sawitri's study (2012). The study was conducted among 99 postgraduate Indonesian students who were taking speaking class for International English Language Testing Systems (IELTS). The findings revealed that 87.22% of the participants relied on socioaffective strategies to learn speaking skills for IELTS. It was found that those who used socioaffective strategies obtained good scores in the speaking skills in IELTS especially those who used cooperation and clarification tactics in learning English pronunciation.

Szyszka (2014) conducted a qualitative study to investigate the pronunciation learning strategy chains among a group of teacher trainees who employed PLS in order to improve their intelligibility. The elicited findings from the semi-structured interviews and diaries identified a common pattern of strategy chains: a cognitive PLS followed by

a memory PLS. In that case, Szyszka (2015) investigated Pronunciation Learning Strategies (PLS) deployed by those with good English pronunciation. The study revealed that good pronunciation users (GPU) mostly rely on Cognitive Strategies. It was found that the most frequently used tactic was to focus on listening not only to native speakers who were good language role models, but also to authentic songs and movies. Furthermore, the participants mentioned that imitation and repetition were the two tactics deployed by GPU. Most GPU declared that mimicking native speaking interlocutors, actors/actresses and pop singers was their preferred way of improving articulation. The study indicated that GPU made a great use of PLS as they declared that instruction and awareness-raising are important in pronunciation learning. Moreover, GPU mostly agreed that strategies of learning pronunciation contributed to English pronunciation learning success (Szyszka, 2015).

Akyol (2013) identified the Pronunciation Learning Strategies applied by 82 students of English Language Teaching Department at a university in Turkey. The researcher adopted a questionnaire containing 5- point Likert-scale items from Berkil (2008). The findings revealed that memory, affective and social strategies were used most frequently by Turkish learners, while the compensation, metacognitive and cognitive PLS were employed less often. It was reported that participants made a frequent use of some tactics such as making up songs or rhymes in order to remember the pronunciation of words, making associations between English and Turkish pronunciation, recording their own voices, and reading reference materials about pronunciation.

Similarly, Hakan, Aydin, and Bulent (2015) surveyed 120 Turkish undergraduates studying in English Preparation Year at School of Foreign Languages, Yildiz Technical University. The researchers found that the male participants mostly used the Affective Strategies. Furthermore, the second preferred strategy used by their participants was the Memory Strategies. Erbay, Kayaoglu and Önay's study (2016) differed from Aydin, and Bulent's study (2015) in which the findings revealed that there was a little reliance on affective strategies.

Çalka (2011) carried out a study to identify the PLS deployed by advanced learners of English and proposed a detailed classification on PLS. The researcher made an attempt to design a new taxonomy based on Oxford's (1990) and Peterson's

classifications. (2000). Calka (2011) reported different findings that the participants used strategies belonging to all groups of PLS but they did not apply a wide range of tactics.

2.10 Research on the Relationship between Applying PLS and Pronunciation Performance

Berkil (2008) explored the relationship between the Pronunciation Learning Strategies use and pronunciation ability. The data of the study were obtained through a Strategy Inventory for Learning Pronunciation (SILP), passage reading and free-response task. It was found that there was no significant correlation between overall PLS use and pronunciation ability. Moreover, the findings revealed there is a significant relationship between pronunciation learning strategy use and gender which showed that strategy use was a complex issue, related not only to second language proficiency but other factors as well. Besides, the researcher reported that there were only three strategy items that showed significant variation by proficiency level: purposeful listening, watching/listening to tapes, television, movies or music and using phonetic symbols or own codes. It was suggested that conducting a strategy training/ instruction study would provide a better understanding of the nature of the relationship between pronunciation learning strategy use and pronunciation ability. Furthermore, the study suggested the use of all strategy items may contribute to more proficient level.

Similarly, Pawlak (2018) conducted a study about the use of pronunciation learning strategies in form-focused and meaning-focused activities by administering questionnaires to 30 students. The study found that there was no evidence for the influence of proficiency level. It was found that females use more PLS than males in their tasks, they were more concern with accuracy and try tied to avoid making errors. It was reported that female participants were more likely to pay attention to form and engage in practice. Statistically females perform better than males in language learning. The results of this study have shown there is validity behind the statistical claim. Nowadays, it is quite common for students to study a foreign language. Female students can be very competitive and highly motivated to do well in almost every academic field.

In contrast to findings of Berkil (2015) and Pawlak (2018), Rokoszewska (2012) investigated the influence of Pronunciation Learning Strategies on mastering English

vowels among Polish learners. The key findings revealed that there was a positive relationship between the use of the PLS and the students' pronunciation attainment. Besides that, the result of Rokoszewska's (2012) study found that there were other factors that hampered the participants from mastering English language pronunciation such as anxiety, lack of motivation and the limited attention and goals setting towards learning English pronunciation. Based on the findings of the study, students should receive strategy-based instruction from their instructors as the findings indicated that there was a significant relationship between the use of Pronunciation Learning Strategies and the production of English monophthongs and diphthongs (Rokoszewska, 2012).

Additionally, Campos (2015) investigated the relationship between Pronunciation Learning Strategies and pronunciation performance of students in Chile. It was posited that there was a positive correlation between the use of Pronunciation Learning Strategies and pronunciation intelligibility levels.

2.11 Theories Related to the Study

three theories have been applied in the study. These are Krashen's Second Language Acquisition (SLA), Input Hypothesis and Kolb's Learning Construct.

2.11.1 The Second Language Acquisition (SLA)

The Second Language Acquisition Theory (SLA) was developed by Krashen. It consists of five hypotheses pertaining to second language acquisition. The hypotheses are the acquisition-learning hypothesis, the input hypothesis, the monitor hypothesis, the effective filter hypothesis, and the natural hypothesis (Krashen, 1982). In this study, the acquisition-learning hypothesis and input hypothesis were used to support findings of the study.

The acquisition-learning hypothesis as it was posited by Krashen (2003) that there are two independent ways of developing competence in a second language: 1) 'the acquired system' and 2) 'the learned system'.

2.11.1.1 Acquired system

The acquiring system or acquisition is considered as the first way of developing competence in a second language. The acquiring system is the product of a subconscious process and the learner is unaware of the process taking place. This is very similar to the process children undergo when they acquire the first language. It requires meaningful interaction in the target language, natural communication in which speakers are focused not in the form of their utterance but in the communicative act.

2.11.1.2 Learned system

The learned system is the second way of developing competence in a Second Language. This assumption states that language learning is a conscious process; when students learn they know that they are learning the language. Basically, it is building knowledge about language intentionally. Conscious learning refers also to learning vocabulary, rules and other information about the language.

2.11.2 Input Hypothesis

This hypothesis was Krashen's explanation of how second language acquisition takes place. Krashen (1985) stated that language is acquired by understanding input that contains linguistic structures that are just beyond the learner's current level of competence ($i+1$). So, the input hypothesis is only concerned with acquisition not learning. According to this hypothesis, learner can improve when he/she receives second language input that is one step beyond his/her current stage of linguistics competence. Although speech is not taught directly, it emerges on its own. For example, if a learner at a stage 'i', then acquisition takes place when he/she is exposed to comprehensible input that belongs to level ' $i+1$ '. If input is understood and there is enough of it, $i+1$ is automatically provided (Krashen, 1985). Exemplary teachers should hold high expectations for their students, but these expectations should not be out of reach. As per Krashen (1981, p.62) "People acquire second languages when they obtain comprehensible input and when their affective filters are low enough to allow the input into the language acquisition device;" this is learning taking place.

2.11.3 Kolb's Learning Construct

Kolb's (1984) learning cycle construct currently enjoys much acclaim for its ability to explain learning in multiple fields (Dörnyei & Skehan, 2003). The construct focuses on four progressive areas of learning. First, the learner must begin with concrete experience, move to a reflection on observation, then proceed to abstract conceptualization based on that reflection, and, finally, the learner acts on this new conceptualization, which starts the process up again. This process can be exemplified in learning the pronunciation of a new English sound. For instance, a student might come across the word *bought* and focus on the vowel sound. This initial exposure qualifies as concrete experience and might encourage the student to consider how the target pronunciation of the vowel differs from any initial or lingering expectations of the sound's pronunciation. This act relates to a reflection on observation, which is followed by abstract conceptualization where the student might analogize the pronunciation of the vowel in *bought* to all other words with the same medial vowel sound or spelling. This assumption is tested when the student begins to speak with formulaic vowel sounds and either encounters effective communication or puzzled looks from interlocutors. In either case, the student uses the reaction of others, or possibly a correction, as a source of concrete experience that starts the cycle over again. While Kolb's (1984) theory of learning is influential in many areas of education and Psychology, it entered SLA through its ability to explain learning styles. Dörnyei and Skehan (2003) are language researchers who have briefly applied Kolb's theory to the processes of language acquisition. They posited that concrete experience in Kolb's theory relates to the construct of input in SLA. Input here is any stimulus whereby learners encounter language. These researchers further relate the reflection on experience stage to SLA's construct of noticing, or the attenuation—both intentionally and unintentionally—to the rules and patterns of language. Dörnyei and Skehan (2003) fail to apply Kolb's stages directly to pronunciation acquisition.

In terms of pronunciation acquisition, Dörnyei and Skehan's (2003) observations are helpful but lacking since they do not account for pronunciation acquisition. Table 2.3 below illustrates how Kolb's (1984) theories can be specifically related to pronunciation acquisition theory. Definitions of terms in the pronunciation acquisition construct are given following the Table.

Table 2.3 Kolb's (1984) Construct and Pronunciation Acquisition Theory

Kolb's (1984) Learning Cycle Construct	Pronunciation Acquisition Construct
Concrete Experience	Input / Practice
Reflection on Observation	Feedback / Noticing
Abstract Conceptualization	Hypothesis forming
Action Based on New Conceptualization	Hypothesis testing

In Table 2.3 concrete experience was related to the pronunciation stages of input and practice. Pronunciation input can be considered any stimulus whereby learners encounter sounds, such as the radio, conversations, or visual diagrams of phonemes. Practice is the act of producing sounds either in isolation or in communicative contexts. Both input and practice offer the learner some concrete experience with a target pronunciation of a sound.

Reflection on observation was related to both pronunciation noticing and feedback of pronunciation. Noticing is the attenuation—both intentionally and unintentionally—to pronunciation rules and patterns. Pronunciation feedback is a function of an interlocutor's ability to understand and cognitively process the pronunciation of a speaker. It is a gauge whereby a speaker determines the accuracy or acceptability of a particular utterance.

Abstract conceptualization was related to the hypothesis forming stage of pronunciation acquisition. Hypothesis formation is the mental process that attempts to bridge the gap between actual pronunciation and target pronunciation based on feedback from others or learner-noticed discrepancies.

Finally, action based on new conceptualization was related to the hypothesis testing stage of pronunciation acquisition where hypothesis testing includes implementing changes in pronunciation according to new hypotheses. An example of

hypothesis testing might be pronouncing a word with a slightly different vowel sound after communication breakdown in hopes of reestablishing communication.

Since this organization looks at the actual process of second language pronunciation acquisition and coordinates that process with pronunciation learning strategies, it would be feasible for both instructors and autonomous language learners to assess where an L2 learner required improvement. A learner who is unable to produce the English phonemes /i/ and /I/ differently can be benefited from pronunciation learning strategies organized by acquisition theory. For example, when a learner attempts to use these two sounds interchangeably (practice), the learner will receive feedback in the form of correction, stalled communication, or, worst of all, communication breakdown. With any of these responses, the learner can attempt to notice a new difference between the sounds and create a new mental conceptualization of how the sound should be produced (hypothesis forming). Finally, the learner must take the time and build up the confidence to attempt a new version of the sound difference according to his or her hypothesis of the difference (hypothesis testing). In each of these areas, learners can be benefited by knowing strategies for accomplishing the task at hand. Learners who seem to break down in one of these areas can likewise be benefited from pronunciation learning strategies by adopting new strategies to cope with such breakdown.

Table 2.4 illustrates a synthesized taxonomy of pronunciation strategies that employs a theoretical framework more in line with current pronunciation acquisition theory. Some strategies may be listed in two different categories. The reason for this overlap is that some strategies span several steps of the pronunciation acquisition construct. For example, *intent listening* is listed in both the input and noticing sections because a learner encounters sounds when listening intently (input) and is able to notice important pronunciation distinctions at the same time (noticing).

Table 2.4 Connection between Kolb's (1984) construct, SLA, and Pronunciation learning strategies

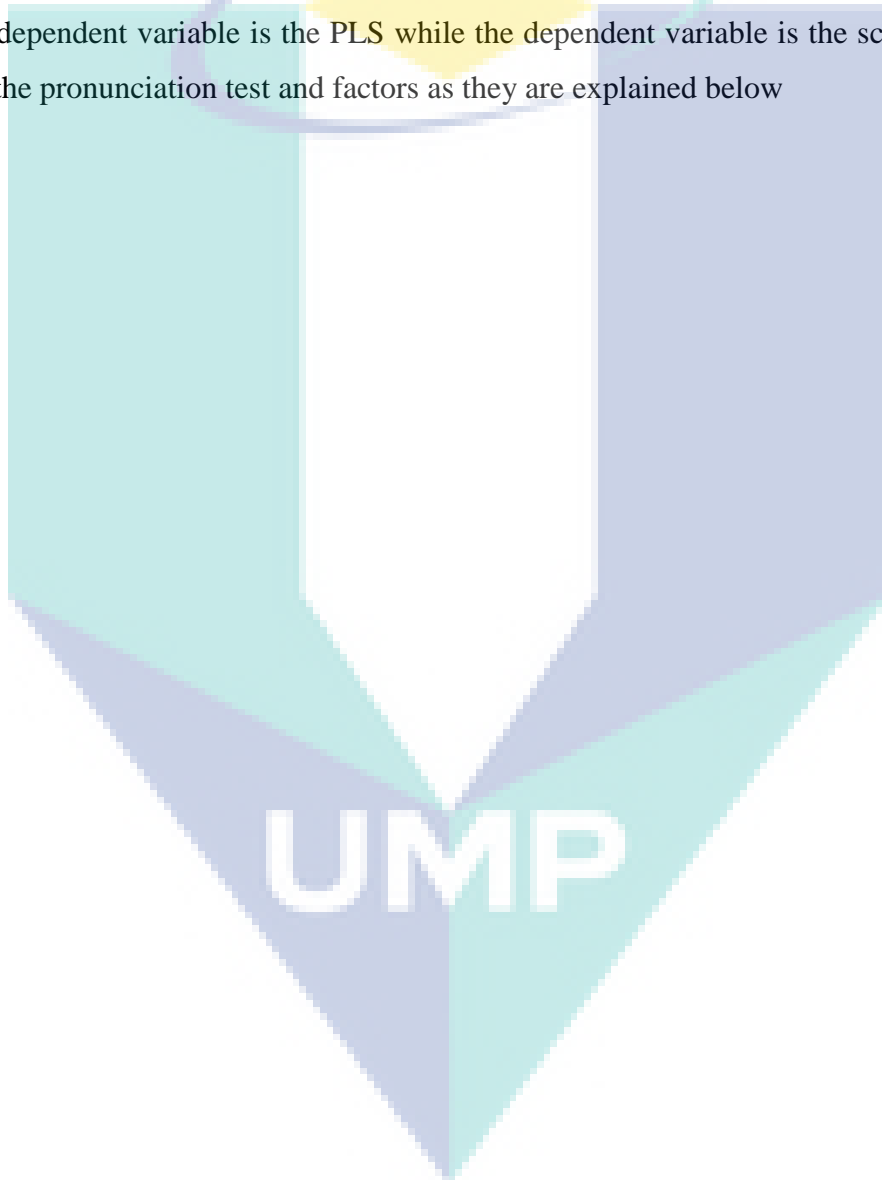
Kolb's (1984) Learning Cycle Construct	Pronunciation Acquisition Construct	Pronunciation Learning Strategies
Concrete Experience	Input / Practice	<p>Input</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intent listening • Focusing on articulatory gestures of others • Active listening • Eagerly listening to new sounds • Putting self in proximal points for hearing L2 pronunciation: TV, Movies, Radio, etc. • Representing sounds in memory • Focusing on individual syllables of words <p>Practice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading aloud • Practicing new sounds • Imitating and/or mimicry of native speakers • Practicing 'mock talk' or imitating L2 prosody using L1 words • Talking aloud/role-play • Memorizing the pronunciation of words • Helping facial muscles become accustomed to accommodating L2 pronunciation • Practicing different sounds, first in isolation and then in the context of words • Repeating after tapes in a language laboratory
Reflection on Observation	Noticing / Feedback	<p>Noticing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Noticing the intricate differences between L1 and L2 pronunciation • Focusing on supersegmentals of language • Intent listening • Distinguishing errors among other speakers • Focusing on articulatory gestures of others • Listening carefully to errors made by native speakers to infer key sounds or structures • Acquiring a general knowledge of phonetics

Table 2.4 Continued

Kolb's (1984) Learning Cycle Construct	Pronunciation Acquisition Construct	Pronunciation Learning Strategies
Reflection on Observation	Noticing / Feedback	<p>Feedback</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-monitoring • Focusing on supersegmentals of own speech • Using phonetic symbols and transcriptions • Monitoring and eliminating negative interference • Active listening • Asking for help • Cooperating with peers
Abstract Conceptualization	Hypothesis forming	<p>Hypothesis Forming</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring and eliminating negative interference • Self-correcting • Acquiring a general knowledge of phonetics • Doing special exercises for sounds not existing in the learner's native language • Finding out about the target language pronunciation
Action Based on New Conceptualization	Hypothesis testing	<p>Hypothesis Testing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Repeating new words according to new hypotheses • Skipping difficult words • Rehearsing sounds • Using proximal articulations • Increasing or decreasing volume of speech • Using a slower rate of speech • Using clear speech • Lowering anxiety

2.12 Conceptual Framework of the Study

According to Sekaran (2006), conceptual framework identifies the relationships between variables and the factors which are significant to the research problem. Figure 2.1 illustrates the conceptual framework of this study. Independent variables impact dependent variables and they are not depended on other variables (Sekaran, 2006). Meanwhile, the dependent variables are a postulated result or outcome on independent variables and can be influenced by dependent variables (Sakaran, 2006). In this study, the independent variable is the PLS while the dependent variable is the scores obtained from the pronunciation test and factors as they are explained below



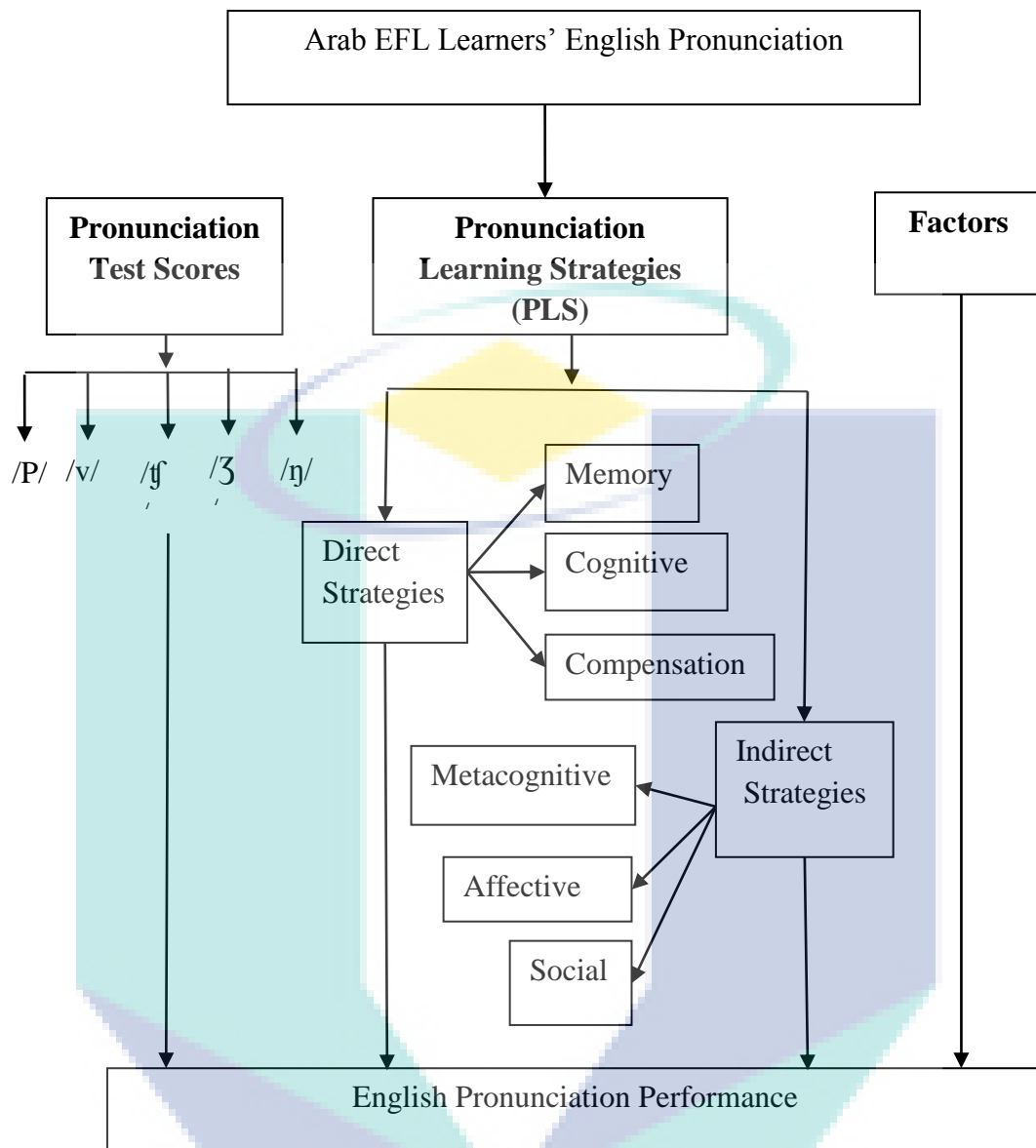


Figure 2.1: Conceptual Framework of the Study

2.13 Research on English Pronunciation among Arab EFL Learners

Several studies have been conducted on the errors made by Arab learners while learning English as a second or foreign language (Barros, 2003; Ahmad, 2011; Al-Saidat, 2010; Hassan, 2014; Elmahdi & Khan, 2015). These studies identified the problematic sounds Arab EFL learners face while pronouncing certain English consonants pronunciation such as /p/, /v/, /f/, /θ /, / tʃ/, /ð/, /dʒ/ and / ŋ/.

Many learners of English as a second language or foreign language face difficulties and struggle with correct pronunciation of English words. Avery and Ehrlich

(2012) believed that the learners' mother tongue directly influences the learners' ability to produce English sounds. Learners fail to produce certain sounds, which do not exist in their mother tongue. Arab learners face difficulties in pronouncing certain sounds when they are learning English due to the absence of these sounds in their Arabic language. Many Arab EFL learners consider pronunciation as the main difficulty they encounter when speaking the foreign language and believe that their poor pronunciation is the main source for their communication problems (Al-Saidat, 2010).

Moreover, many studies have been conducted on the mistakes made by Arab learners on the field of phonology, morphology and syntax, such as (Al-Shuaibi, 2009; Binturki, 2008; & Wahba, 1998; Altaha 1995; Kharma & Hajjaj, 1989; Abdul Haq, 1982) and some others.

Barros (2003) conducted his research among Arab speakers from different Arab countries. The aim of his study was to identify the difficulties that Arab EFL learners encounter when pronouncing English consonants. His findings showed that Arabic speakers have problems in producing eight English consonants, namely, /p/, /v/, /d/, /l/, /ŋ/, /dʒ/, and /r/. Moreover, the researcher found that the speakers' L1 interference seems to be the major contributing factor to having problems in pronunciation which might differ from one Arabic speaker to another depending on their countries of origin.

Al-Saidat (2010) conducted a study about phonological analysis of English phonotactics among Arab EFL learners in Jordan. The result of his study demonstrated that Arab EFL learners unintentionally insert an anaptyctic vowel (a short vowel between consonants) at the beginning as well as at the end of certain English syllables. The findings suggested that certain English syllables are difficult to learn by Arab learners of English and pronunciation problems arise from these difficult syllables.

Ahmad (2011) investigated the difficulties, faced by Saudi students graduated from secondary schools and enrolled in the Preparatory Year Program at Najran University when pronouncing certain English consonant sounds. The students, who participated in Ahmad's (2011) study were from different regions of Saudi Arabia, had never received any English instructions and had never been to any English countries so they did not have any exposure to English language. Eight students were selected randomly for the study from a Saudi Arabian university. Recording samples of

consonant sounds were taken from the research participants and four words selected for possible consonant sound problems using initial, medial, and final word positions. An English native speaker identified the problematic sounds from the participants' speech recordings. According to the researcher, the results showed that the participants had major difficulties in pronouncing specific consonant sounds such as /p/, /d/, /v/, /tʃ/, /ʒ/, and /ŋ/. The researcher reported that Saudi students tended to replace /p/ with /b/ in initial and final position. Furthermore, the students pronounced /v/ as /f/ when it appeared in the medial and final position. Besides, most of the participants replaced /tʃ/ by /ʃ/ when it appeared in all three positions. The /ʒ/ sound was replaced by /ʃ/, /z/ or /s/ in medial position, while in the final position it pronounced as /g/. Moreover, the result revealed that the /ŋ/ sound was sometimes replaced with /n-k/ or /n-g/ when it appeared in the word final position. The findings of the study indicated that when students speak a second or foreign language they will tend to produce the sounds, which are closest to the sounds that exist in their mother tongues that lead to pronunciation errors. Thus, the author suggested that special attention should be paid to the unfamiliar sounds that do not exist in the learners' first language (L1).

Additionally, a study conducted by Hassan (2012) identified the pronunciation problems experienced by Sudanese students and the factors contributed to these problems. The researcher applied three instruments to collect data which were observation, audio recording and questionnaire. The participants who were involved in Hassan's study were fifty students from Sudan University of Science and Technology (SUST) and thirty teachers from the same university. Hassan (2012) noted that Sudanese undergraduates were unable to pronounce some consonant sounds such as /p/, /tʃ/, /θ/ and /ð/. The researcher found that mother tongue interference, the differences in the sound system in the two languages, inconsistency of English sounds and spelling militate against Sudanese Students of English (SSEs) competence in pronunciation served as barriers that prevent the Sudanese students from having correct pronunciation.

Similarly, Rehman and Bukhari (2012) investigated the problematic consonant sounds experienced by speakers in Pakistan. Their study focused on five consonant sounds which are /f/, /v/, /θ/, /ð/ and /ʒ/. The study revealed that because of the lack of practical training Pashto speakers encounter difficulties in pronouncing the five selected consonant sounds. Additionally, the absence of these consonant sounds in the Pashto phonemic system causes the substitution by the nearest sounds in the Pashto L1.

Furthermore, Elmahdi and Khan (2015) conducted their study on the pronunciation problems that Saudi secondary school children encounter while pronouncing certain consonant sounds. The findings demonstrated that 85% of the participants faced problems in pronouncing sound /p/ in the three position of the word; initial, medial and final with a total percentage 89%, 86.65% and 81% respectively. Furthermore, sound /ʒ/ was considered as a problematic sound since 80.65% failed to pronounce it in final position. Besides, sound /tʃ/ was mispronounced by 75.8% of the participants in the initial position more than the other positions. Moreover, sound /ŋ/ was considered as one of the sounds that caused a big problem for our participants in Elmahdi & Khan's (2015) study especially when it occurred at the end of a word. The findings showed that 64% of the subjects failed to pronounce this sound in final position, while 59.95% of them were unable to pronounce it perfectly when it occurred in medial position.

However, in Yemen the situation is even worse because children start learning English in grade 7 (first preparatory class). Abbad (1988) admitted the weakness of Yemeni learners, he stated that "in spite of the low proficiency level in English of most applicants, they are accepted into the department" (p14). This is what happens in most of the universities in Arab world countries. English language departments accept high school graduates without taking into consideration their proficiency levels and whether or not they will be able to manage. In regard with this Khamis and Jupri (2018) conducted their study on the pronunciation of the /tʃ/ sound among Yemeni EFL learners. The participants in their study were four Yemeni EFL postgraduate students who had similar level of English Language proficiency based on their university placement test results and all of them had not had any type of exposure to a native English environment prior to the study. The participants were asked to read eighteen words containing the /tʃ/ sound in different word position (initial, middle and final). The researchers analysed the production of the target sound whether correct or not by using Praat software. Their findings revealed that the English voiceless postalveolar affricate /tʃ/ was problematic to pronounce for Yemeni EFL learners. It was found that, the participants pronounced /ʃ/ instead of pronouncing /tʃ/ in some words that they read. Furthermore, the findings showed that the participants had difficulties to pronounce /tʃ/ sound in all three word positions in general and in initial and final position in particular.

Similarly, Ashour (2017), in her contrastive analysis study between Arabic and English pronunciation systems, discovered the most problematic area that Arab learners suffered from when learning English pronunciation. The researcher indicated that differences between Arabic and English consonant systems emerge from the fact that there are some sounds found in English but do not exist in Arabic. E.g. / p, v, /ʃ/etc. The absence of these consonant sounds leads Arab learners to substitute these sounds with others that exist in their own language that have almost similar place and manner of articulation. Besides, she pointed out that difficulties faced by Arabs who are learning English differ from one to another according to the dialect that the learner speaks (Ashour, 2017).

2.14 Challenges that Arab EFL Learners Face in Pronunciation

Many research studies have been conducted on the problems EFL Learners encounter in English pronunciation such as European learners e.g. German, Spanish, Italian, Portuguese etc., Asian educators such as Chinese and Thai. There are also some studies on pronunciation errors among speakers of Arabic (Hassan, 2014). Learners who can speak English fluently, they are more aware of the factors that would affect their pronunciation. The prime objective of teaching pronunciation with any language is for intelligible and comprehensible pronunciation (Bouchhioua, 2017). Gilakjani (2012b) maintained that although the demonstration of precise pronunciation is unlikely, the pronunciation should fall within reasonable standards to meet the communicative needs of the learner. However, many second language learners struggle with producing intelligible and comprehensible English pronunciation.

Almahrooqi (2012) conducted a study among Omani students by administrating a qualitative questionnaire to 100 students in a focus group. The researcher investigated the students' perception about their low English proficiency. The study revealed that ineffective teachers, inadequate curricula, uninterested students, limited exposure to English outside the classroom, unsupportive parents, a poor school system, and peer-group discouragement were the major factors behind the students' inadequate English proficiency. It was found that the most frequent factor from the Omani students' point of view was the ineffective teacher with 85 frequency. Majority of the Omani students indicated that the main reason for their low proficiency level in English language was the ineffective teachers. Almahrooqi (2012) identified the reason for the students'

perception; she mentioned that the use of simple language inside the classroom might cause a low proficiency level. Moreover, the main concern for the teacher is to finish the syllabus without paying any attention to their students' pronunciations. Besides, the curriculum is determined as the second main obstacle for the students' low proficiency level. It was reported that the curriculum does not cover all the skills adequately. It mostly focuses on grammar and reading but there are no specific lessons for pronunciation.

Similarly, Kayaoğlu (2013) in his qualitative study through semi structured interviews investigated the perspective of the students' proficiency level. The researcher interviewed 30 participants at the Department of Basic English, School of Foreign Languages, at a state university in north eastern Turkey. The respondents stated that their poor pronunciation and the mistakes they made disturbed them while they were speaking. Besides, the participants viewed the lack of sufficient vocabularies deterred them from speaking English fluently. Therefore, they did not get enough speaking practice and the role of ineffective teachers with their limited expertise in teaching the students were notably reported to be the possible reasons for their linguistic difficulties.

It was found that teachers can have a positive influence on their students when they are able to make students enjoy their lessons in a positive classroom environment. Furthermore, it is an achievement if they can help them to overcome their pronunciation difficulties. But sometimes instructors affect the students negatively when they ignore their pronunciation mistakes and it can be difficult for the learners to stay motivated and interested when they are not making progress in learning English. These teachers fail dismally to work on the students' weaknesses.

Additionally, Muriungi and Mbui (2013) explored the influence of the mother tongue maintenance on English language acquisition among secondary school students in Kenya. Although English is a second language in Kenya, the lack of practicing English language has a negative impact on the learners' pronunciation skills. The study revealed that the use of mother tongue in interaction classes limited the students' opportunities to practice English language pronunciation. Apart from that, it was found that due to the mispronunciation, students made pronunciation errors in their academic writing too.

A study conducted by Gilakjani and Ahmadi (2011) on the contributing factors to the learning of English pronunciation. In their study, the researchers suggested eight contributing factors that affect the learning process in English pronunciation among Iranian students which are: the learners' accents, (stress, intonation, rhythm), attitude, instruction, age, learner's personality, the influence of mother tongue, motivation and exposure. The researchers declared age as one of the factors affecting the learning of English pronunciation. Moreover, age is considered as a crucial issue that influences the acquisition of English pronunciation; consequently, adult learners realize that they are unable to achieve native-like pronunciation as children do (Gilakjani & Ahmadi, 2011). Moreover, Fukada (2016) investigated the Indonesian difficulties in pronouncing labiodentals sounds. It was found out that the most difficult position in pronouncing the English labiodental sounds at second grade class of SMA Taman Siswa Pematangsiantar was the final position with /v/ sound. The findings revealed that children were noticed to be more capable to have a native like fluency, more than adult learners (Fukada, 2016). Nation and Newton (2008) corroborated that children can acquire a new language better than adult learners. The researchers claimed that before the age of six, there might be a little or no accent. While between the age of seven and eleven there is a possibility to have a slight accent. However, if the learner begins to speak after the age of twelve he/she will have a proper accent. However, more recent research suggested motivation may be more important factor in the development of native-like pronunciation than is age at acquisition (Marinova-Todd, Marshall, & Snow, 2000).

With regard to the difficulties that EFL learners encounter while learning pronunciation, Khan (2011) highlighted the hindrances Saudi EFL students faced in learning of English language in general and pronunciation in particular. Khan (2011) found that L1 interference, lack of knowledge and guidance served as the reasons that caused students' mispronunciation. Besides, the findings showed that Saudi EFL students who received a great motivation improved their proficiency level. On the other hand, it was established that the absence of motivation during learning English pronunciation hampered the students from having good pronunciation. Similarly, many studies have been conducted on the role of motivation to encourage the learners' aptitude to learn English language in general and pronunciation in particular. However,

lack of motivation has been considered as an important element that has negative effect on Saudi EFL learners' competence (Al-Khairy, 2013a; Alrabai, 2014b; Khan, 2011).

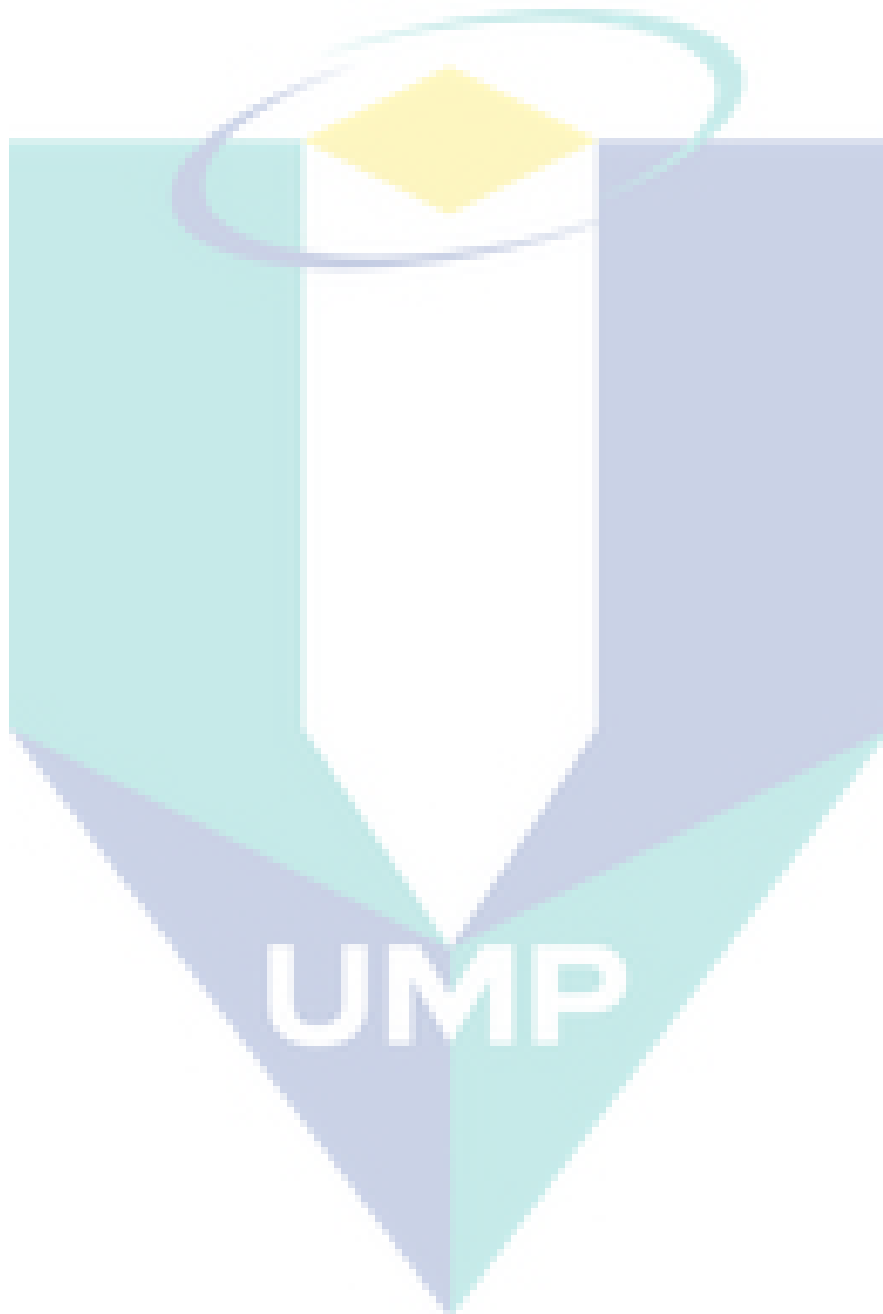
Meanwhile, Dornyei and Ushioda (2011) examined the effectiveness of teachers' motivation among Arab EFL learners. The researchers posited that due to the lack of interest within English class, the participants experienced difficulties in pronunciation. Low interest had been reported by the participants since they studied English as a compulsory subject in which they were only concerned about their marks rather than enjoying learning the foreign language. Dornyei and Ushioda (2011) indicated that when the learner loses his/her interest he/she becomes demotivated towards learning English pronunciation.

Many studies have explored the obstacles that hampered the learners from having good pronunciation. Rogerson-Revell (2011) found that exposure is an important factor in the learning of L2 pronunciation. Yet, limited amount of exposure to English language outside classrooms has contributed to having poor pronunciation. In regard to this issue, Rosyid (2017) conducted a study on the factors that affected Sudanese's pronunciation. The study comprised 30 students in their second semester in English Education Study Program at Pakuan University in Indonesia. The study revealed that based on the students' point of view, it was limited exposure to English language that was the major barrier behind their poor pronunciation. Furthermore, the students stated that their schools did not teach or did not focus on teaching them pronunciation. Additionally, their teachers only taught them vocabulary, reading, and so forth. In such condition the exposure in the area of pronunciation was very limited. Besides, the dominance L1 inside and outside the classroom led to their poor English pronunciation (Rosyid, 2017).

2.15 Summary

This chapter has previewed various previous research findings that have been conducted on learning and teaching foreign language in general and particularly on Pronunciation Learning Strategies. It discussed the significance of teaching English pronunciation, differences between English and Arabic consonants. It includes an overview on Language Learning Strategies, past studies related to PLS and the taxonomies of PLS. Furthermore, it presents the effect of applying PLS at improving

pronunciation skills, it also includes previous studies on the frequent utilization of PLS and a general overview of some research on the relationship between the use of PLS and pronunciation abilities. Factors that influence the pronunciation and the theoretical framework are also included.



CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the research methods that were employed in the study. In particular, it provides information on the participants. It includes detailed description of the instruments that were used for data collection, reliability and validity of the instruments and the procedures that were then followed to carry out this study. It also discusses the data analysis techniques used in the study.

3.2 Research Design

This research involved a quantitative method to answer its research questions. According to Creswell (2013) the quantitative method gives researcher adequate data from the participants who are under investigation. Besides, in quantitative method, researcher gathers, interprets, analyzes and writes the results of the study (Creswell, 2013).

In this study a questionnaire and a pronunciation test were employed to collect data and to gain knowledge from students. The questionnaire consists of two parts: the first part contains a 5 likert- scale to gauge the frequent use of Pronunciation Learning Strategies (PLS), then data analysis using descriptive statistics. While the second part of the questionnaire consists of an open-ended question which was thematically analysed to find out the perceived factors that influence the learning of English pronunciation the second instrument is the pronunciation test which was analyzed using coefficient

correlation to determine the relationship between PLS use and pronunciation test scores. Figure 3.1 shows the research design of the study.

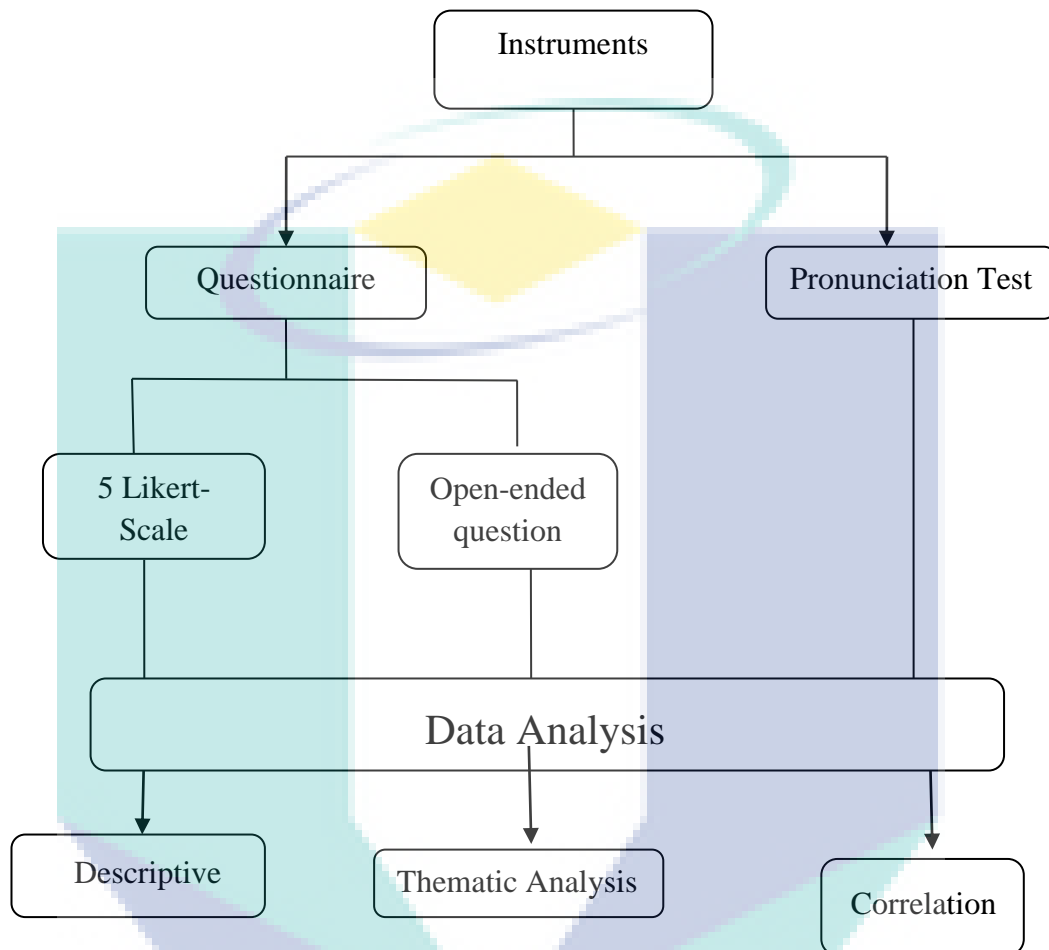


Figure 3.1 Research design of the study

3.3 Setting

This study took place in Universiti Malaysia Pahang (UMP) which is situated in the province of Pahang, specifically in Kuantan district. The total number of international students for PIE was 152. The participants of this study consisted of PIE students (Level 1), a total number of 104 Arab EFL learners from 2016/2017 intake.

3.4 Population and Sampling

The target population of the study was the Arab EFL learners at UMP. They were chosen as the samples of this study. The participants of the study were Arab EFL

learners and the mother tongue of the native Arab speakers is Arabic while English is a foreign language in their countries. They joined the Preparatory Intensive English (PIE) program in the first month upon the start of their first year at the university. They were selected as the samples because they had inadequate exposure to English language, and they needed to improve their English proficiency so they took the PIE course unlike those who had already started their study in the university and had been improving their English by practicing and communicating with other international students. In this study, one hundred and four participants were chosen to participate in the questionnaire while fifteen of them volunteered to do the pronunciation test. All the participants were Arab native speakers who enrolled in the PIE course in UMP. The Preparatory Intensive Program (PIE) is an English language course offered by Centre for Modern Languages and Human Sciences (CMLHS). It provides a foundation course for international students. Besides, the program comprises reading, writing, speaking, listening and grammar. The majority of students were in the 19-22 age range. Most of them learned English as one of their main subjects in school for six years and some stated that they studied English for twelve years. These students are no strangers to English as a foreign language for they studied it in their home countries. Joining PIE and being part of the study would help to improve their English proficiency in this university. This study was conducted over one year period. Collecting data began on 14th July 2016. Table 3.1. shows details about the participants.

Table 3.1 Information about PIE Participants

Gender	Age	Country of Origin	Number of students
Male	19-22	Egypt	3
		Iraq	2
		Libya	2
		Saudi Arabia	4
		Sudan	2
		Syria	4
		Yemen	87
		Total	7 Countries

3.4.2 Samples of the Questionnaire

In this study, questionnaire was the instrument used to identify the Pronunciation Learning Strategies (PLS) deployed by Arab EFL learners. Purposive sampling was utilized to choose Arab students due to the nature of the research, aims and objectives and non-Arab students were excluded to avoid random sampling. The total number of participants who responded to the questionnaire was 104 Arab EFL learners.

3.4.3 Samples of the Pronunciation Test

The pronunciation test was the second research instrument utilized to determine the relationship between the PLS and pronunciation scores. Volunteerism was the method employed to choose the participants as there were 15 participants who volunteered to do the pronunciation test.

3.5 Research Instruments

The instruments of this study were a questionnaire and pronunciation test to collect relevant data. The details of the instruments are explained in the preceding discussion.

3.5.1 Questionnaire

A questionnaire of this study which was Pronunciation Learning Strategies (PLS) was adapted from Calka (2011) whose findings were based on Oxford's (1990) definition of learning strategies and Peterson's (2000) classification (Appendix B). The aim of the questionnaire was to gauge students' frequent utilization of some pronunciation learning strategies such as memory, cognitive, compensation, metacognitive, affective and social strategies to learn English pronunciation.

The questionnaire in this study consisted of three main parts. The first part concerned with demographic background of the participants. Arab EFL learners were required to write their names, age, gender and country of origin. The demographic questions were formed as close-ended multiple-choice items or open-ended items as presented in Table 3.2. below:

Table 3.2 Demographic question

Items	Close-ended multiple choice	Open-ended
Demographic questions	Gender	Name
		Age
4 items		Country of Origin

The second part of the questionnaire contained 27 close-ended items dealing with strategies of learning English pronunciation to gauge the frequent utilizations of the PLS among the respondents who used them to answer the RQ 1. A Likert Scale was used to indicate how often the respondents used the strategies to learn English pronunciation by choosing any of these responses: '1' for Never, '2' for Rarely, '3' for Sometimes, '4' for Usually and '5' for Always. The responses of the strategies would be acquired to sum up their results on the scale.

The last part contained 1 item that was developed by the researcher to suit the objective of the research and answer the RQ 3. It dealt with the factors that influenced the learning of English pronunciation. It consisted of 1 open-ended question that may be responded in English or Arabic to identify the factors that influenced the learning of English pronunciation. Altogether, there were 28 items composed for the questionnaire, (see Appendix A)

3.5.2 Pronunciation Test

A pronunciation test was employed to gauge how students produced five consonant sounds which were /p/, /v/, /ʒ/, /ʃ/ and /ŋ / by audio recording. The pronunciation test that was used to answer the RQ 2 was based on Baker's (2006) book entitled Ship or Sheep which was used in a pronunciation course and the test consisted of three main phases. The pronunciation test contained words, minimal pairs and sentences (See Appendix C). Twenty five words were included in the test; each consonant sound contained five examples. Then, students were asked to read twenty minimal pairs. Finally, students also had to read five sentences; each sentence contained one or more than one consonant sound. The students' scores in their pronunciation test were given based on the correct pronunciation of each consonant sound; each consonant

sound was given 1 mark for correct pronunciation and 0 for wrong pronunciation. The overall score was 64 marks for the three phases. Inter-raters evaluated the students' pronunciation according to their correct pronunciation of words, minimal pairs and sentences. Agreement between the raters only counted to give the total mark for each student; if both raters gave the student 1 mark then it is counted but if one of them gave 1 mark and the other gave 0 in this case there is no agreement between the two raters, therefore, 0 mark is given. The phases of the pronunciation test can be seen in Figure 3.2.

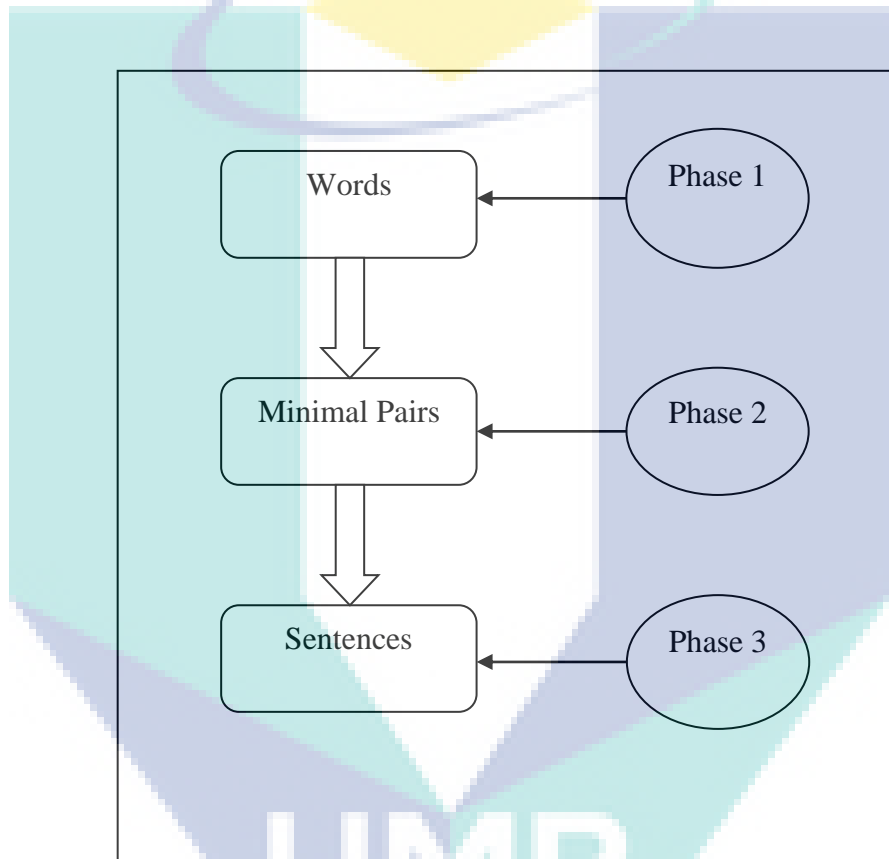


Figure 3.2 Phases of the pronunciation test

3.6 Data Collection

Data collection selects and identifies individuals for a certain study, obtains their permission to be studied, also gathers and collects information by administering instrument through asking students or other people questions or observing their behaviour (Creswell, 2012). The procedure of collecting data for the study is shown in Table 3.3.

Table 3.3 Dates and Activities in Collecting Data for the actual study

Dates	Activities
14 July 2016 – 20 Dec 2017	Distributing Questionnaire
19 Sep 2017– 21 Dec 2017	Pronunciation Test

3.7 Analysis Technique for Quantitative Data

There were two techniques employed in the study to analyze the quantitative data.

3.7.1 Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive methods are techniques used to summarize data, aiming to explore trends and patterns and summarize findings (Tahshakkori & Teddlie 2009). Data from questionnaire are analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 20. According to Dornyei (2007), SPSS is most commonly used statistical package in applied linguistics and educational research. Data analysis is considered to be the process used to answer research questions of the study (Merriam, 2009). According to Babbie (2010), quantitative methods highlight the objective measurements and numerical analysis of data that are collected through polls, questionnaires or surveys. The quantitative study's main concern is to gather numerical data and generalize it across groups of people. Descriptive statistics are used to summarize the basic information created in the research questions (Pallant, 2011). In describing the data, the study used mean and standard deviation. The descriptive statistics we used to analyze the first research question (RQ1).

3.7.2 Inferential Statistics

Inferential statistics are certain types of procedures that allow researchers to make interference about the population based on the findings from a sample (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2012). It is used to compare the mean score for the participants. The participants' pronunciation test scores were analyzed using correlation. In this study, correlation was used to find the relationship between the frequent use of strategies and pronunciation test scores.

Correlation analysis is used to describe the strength of the relationship between two variables (Pallant, 2011). In this study, correlation would be used in analysing the second research question RQ 2 of the study as it is presented in the Table 3.4. In this section, the main focus is on describing and detecting relationships between variables, in other words, to test a relationship between variables (Pallan, 2011). Mackey and Gass (2005) said that correlation research attempts are to determine the relationship between or among variables. When a researcher calculates a correlation, he/she comes up with a correlation coefficient r (ranges from +1 to -1) which determines the direction of the line. Based on the direction of the line, correlation coefficients can be expressed as a positive, negative or zero value which means that there is no relationship between variables (Mackey & Gass, 2005). In this study, Spearman's rho correlation of two variables was tested to identify the relationship between the strategies employed and the pronunciation test scores.

3.7.3 Thematic Coding Analysis for Qualitative Section

Thematic analysis is a way to identify and describe implicit and explicit ideas within the data, which is called themes (Guest & Namey, 2011). According to Guest and Namey (2011), codes are used to represent the identified themes for data analysis. In this study, thematic analysis was employed to answer RQ 3 and elicit the themes from the respondents about the factors contributed to their learning of English pronunciation. Themes were manually analyzed based on the respondents' answers, then the repeated themes were classified as different factors. Codes were given for each respondent as follows:

- Respondent (R)
- Respondent number (1-104)

For example, R5 indicates a respondent whose response code is 05. The responses were analyzed based on the themes of the respondents' answers. The obtained responses were applied to find out the constraints that hindered the students from having a proper or good pronunciation.

The statistical tool techniques that were employed to analyze the quantitative data are shown in Table 3.4.

Table 3.4 Research Questions and statistical tools techniques used in analyzing data

No	Research Questions	Statistical tool Techniques
1.	What are the pronunciation learning strategies (PLS) that deployed by Arab EFL learners?	Descriptive Analysis (Mean and SD)
2.	Is there a correlation between strategy use and pronunciation scores?	Correlation (Spearman's rho)
3.	What do participants perceive to be the factors that influence the learning of English pronunciation?	Thematic Coding Analysis (Manually)

3.8 Pilot Study

Pilot study, according to Fraenkel and Wallen (2009) is defined as a small-scale study administered before conducting actual study. It can detect any problems so that they can be remedied before the actual study is performed (Shuttleworth, 2008). Hully and Stephen (2007) posited that pilot study is a small scale preliminary study conducted so as to evaluate feasibility, cost, time, adverse events and effects size (statistical variability) in an attempt to predict an appropriate sample size and improve the study design prior to performance of a full-scale research project.

To achieve the aims of the study, the researcher adopted a questionnaire developed by Calka (2011) after changing and modifying some items as well as the scoring scheme as recommended by the jury members and finally deleting some items after conducting the pilot study to suit the aims of the present study. Based on the panels' suggestions, the researcher minimized the number of the PLS questionnaire from 65 to 27 items.

The pilot study was conducted from 19th Feb to 05th March 2016 with Arab EFL learners at UMP to obtain the reliability of the questionnaire and the test. It was also conducted to ascertain that survey items in the questionnaire were clearly understood by the participants. The sample for the pilot study was composed of 30 UMP Arab EFL learners who enrolled in the Preparatory Intensive English (PIE) course. The participants were sampled based on availability.

For the pilot study, the researcher consulted a senior lecturer at Inter - Disciplinary Studies Unit, DRB-HICOM University (DHU) to translate the questionnaire items to Arabic language, as the lecturer is an expert translator according to his part time job as an Arabic translator and interpreter. He requested for the questionnaire to be emailed to him as well the researcher's proposal to get an idea on the research. The main reason to translate the questionnaire is to avoid any misunderstanding of the items according to participants' low level of English vocabularies. The translated version of the questionnaire was very useful for the actual study.

3.9 Validity of the Instruments

The validity of instruments consists of two parts. The first part involves the validity of the questionnaire and the second part concerns the validity of the pronunciation test.

a) Validity of the questionnaire

According to Field (2009), the term validity basically means measure what is intended to be measured. Frenkel, Wallen and Hyun (2011) indicated that validity refers to the meaningfulness, appropriateness, usefulness and correctness of the inferences that are made by the researcher. It is the most essential point to consider when selecting and preparing an instrument of a research to use. Straub, Boudreau and Gefen (2004) identified content validity as the degree to which items in an instrument reflect the content universe to which the instrument will be generalized. Furthermore, Boudreau, Gefen and Straub (2001) indicated that content validity involves evaluation of a new survey instrument to make sure that it includes all items that are essential and eliminates undesirable items to a particular construct domain. In this study content validity were applied to validate the questionnaire. The content of the questionnaire was checked by an English lecturer at Inter - Disciplinary Studies Unit, DRB-HICOM University (DHU). The lecturer commented on the questionnaire and suggested a few changes, particularly the add-on introduction for the questionnaire. For instance, he suggested the participant's name to be optional. This was to give a clear comprehension to the items. The lecturer's remarks were entirely valuable and significant. Attentively,

the researcher took the remarks of the lecturer into consideration and worked on them to have a better validity for the questionnaire.

b) Validity of the Pronunciation Test

The pronunciation test was checked by an English lecturer at Inter - Disciplinary Studies Unit, DRB-HICOM University (DHU) based. The lecturer commented on the pronunciation test and suggested a few changes regarding the consistency of the consonant sounds for the three phases. Additionally, the pronunciation test was examined by an English lecturer at UMP. The lecturer suggested making the words in the first phase contain consonant sound in three positions of the word. Lecturers' remarks were entirely valuable and significant. Considerately, the researcher took the remarks of the lecturers into consideration and worked on them to have a better validity for the pronunciation test.

3.10 Reliability of the Questionnaire

According to Merriam (1995) the reliability of research instruments is concerned with the score or degree to which results are consistent during a period of time, and if the outcome of an investigation can be produced again, then the study instruments are acknowledged to be reliable. The reliability coefficient of the pilot study that was obtained indicated that instrument was satisfactory and reliable for the study goals. The data of the pilot study were computed using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS). The reliability of the questionnaire, coefficient alpha (r), can range from 0 to 1, with 0 representing a questionnaire that is not reliable and 1 representing absolutely reliable questionnaire. A reliability coefficient (alpha) of 0.70 or higher is considered acceptable and good reliability in SPSS (Bolarinwa, 2015; Fraenkel and Wallen, 2003). A study conducted by Akyol (2013), in which the same questionnaire was used. The result showed the Cronbach alpha value was 0.73 which indicates a high level of reliability. Rokoszewska (2012), the reliability of the questionnaire instrument in her study was 0.89 which revealed a high level of reliability. To sum up, the value of the coefficient obtained through Cronbach alpha for this study showed an acceptable level of reliability. The result of the questionnaire that was computed resulted in having 0.806 for its Cronbach alpha value.

3.11 Inter-Rater Reliability

Gwet (2014) defined the term Inter-Rater Reliability (IRR) as the process of asking two individuals referred as raters to perform the activity with same set of objects. According to Graham, Milanowski and Miller (2012), various variables can be used to mark a text. The rater and how a rater uses the scoring key is among the variables especially when two or more raters score a text even though reliability is improved if there is more than one rater (Weigle, 2002).

Reliability is very important especially when there are two or more raters who either agree or disagree with the exact rating of results. So it is most important that the rating targets are generally improved with trained raters.

In this study, two raters were chosen to evaluate the pronunciation test. The first rater is a native speaker; she used to be an English teacher while the second rater is an English lecturer at Inter - Disciplinary Studies Unit, DRB-HICOM University (DHU) on his previous experience in teaching phonetics. Both of the raters who were chosen to score the pronunciation test have similar teaching experience and number of years in teaching. In order to minimize the threat to reliability in their rating, they were trained by the researcher on how to score the test. Inter-rater reliability was carried out to determine the reliability between the raters. When tested using Pearson Correlation Coefficient, the inter-rater reliability was $r = .971$, which signifies a high reliability based on Mackey and Gass's (2015) guidelines.

3.12 Summary

This chapter discussed the following methods that were involved in the study: research design, the role of the participants, sample and procedure, the instruments for collecting the data, reliability of the instruments, data collection and the pilot study. Analysis technique for quantitative data and instruments of validity and reliability were also included. The next chapter explores the findings of the current study.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the findings of the instruments involved in the study. It consists of two sections. The first section describes the result of the quantitative data collected through the questionnaire analyzed using SPSS. It reviews the results of the participants' responses based on the questionnaire items which were about the pronunciation learning strategies. The second section demonstrates the result of the pronunciation test.

4.2 Findings from the Questionnaire

The questionnaire was conducted to gauge the frequent uses of the PLS and to determine the factors affected the learning of English pronunciation. The questionnaire was divided into two parts, the first part elaborated the uses of the PLS among the Arab EFL learners and the results answered the first research question of the study. While the second part illustrated the factors that influenced the learning of English pronunciation and the findings provided the answers to the third research question.

4.2.1 Findings of the PLS Questionnaire

The findings of the frequent uses of the PLS achieved enlightening answers to the first research question (RQ 1).

Research Question 1: What are the pronunciation learning strategies (PLS) applied by Arab EFL learners?

The Pronunciation Learning Strategies (PLS) is a field of study that links certain strategies to a pronunciation skill. In this section, the participants were asked to identify the PLS deployed by them to learn English pronunciation. The result of the questionnaire on PLS shows that Arab EFL learners in the current study used various strategies from different strategic approaches namely Memory Strategies, Cognitive Strategies, Compensation Strategies, Metacognitive strategies, Affective Strategies and Social Strategies but the most preferable strategy for Arab EFL learners was the Metacognitive Strategies. Details on the frequent use of PLS strategies with their mean and standard deviation are explained below.

In the Memory Strategies (Table 4.1): the tactic that was most often used was repeating a word aloud or silently several times. The participants stated that they always used this rote learning tactic (M= 4.04). Furthermore, the participants reported that they usually formed visual-auditory associations, such as linking the pronunciation of a word or sound with a situation in which they had heard it (M= 3.88), as well as auditory associations such as linking the pronunciation of a word or sound with words or sounds existing in languages or nature (M= 2.51). Visualizing the transcription of words or sounds was the least tactic used (M= 1.71). Also, the participants used other tactics from time to time including regular revision of the pronunciation of new words (M= 3.25), making up sentences, songs and rhymes to memorize pronunciation (M= 3.38) and grouping similar words (M= 2.90). According to the result, the tactics of making notes, creating vocabulary lists and highlighting important information were rarely used (M= 2.02).

Table 4.1 Direct PLS – Memory Strategies

Memory strategies	Tactics (questionnaire items)	M	SD
A. Reviewing well	1. Regular revision of the pronunciation of new words (8)	3.25	1.18
B. Rote learning	1. Repeating a word (loud or silently) several times over (6)	4.04	1.07

Table 4.1 Continued

Memory strategies	Tactics (questionnaire items)	M	SD
C. Representing sounds in mind	1. Making up sentences, songs, rhyme etc., to memorize pronunciation (7)	3.38	1.16
	2. Grouping (2)	2.90	1.14
	3. Making associations:		
	a) visual		
	- visualizing the transcription of a given word (4)	1.71	1.09
	b) visual- auditory		
	- association the pronunciation of a word or sound with a situation in which one has heard it (5)	3.88	1.07
	c) auditory		
	- association the pronunciation of a word or sounds with words or sounds existing in other languages or nature (1)	2.51	1.18
D. Employing action	1. Making notes: creating vocabulary lists with transcription, posters, highlighting, etc. (3)	2.02	1.01

Meanwhile, Cognitive Strategies were related to practicing pronunciation (Table 4.2) The participants used some tactics to practice pronunciation in a formal way such as talking to oneself in the target language (M= 3.50), listening to recordings to identify the pronunciation of new words (M= 3.52), reading aloud and paying attention to pronunciation (M= 3.10). They sometimes repeated simultaneously with native speakers (M= 2.92). In order to receive and send messages on pronunciation: they looked up the pronunciation of new words in dictionaries (M= 1.94). While analyzing and reasoning, the participants rarely compared English sounds with sounds existing in other languages (M= 1.85). To feel the differences between the languages, they sometimes imitated the native speakers (M= 2.52).

Table 4.2 Direct PLs – Cognitive Strategies

Cognitive strategies	Tactics (questionnaire items)	M	SD
A Practicing Pronunciation	1. Formally practicing with sounds		
	a) repeating simultaneously with TL speakers (9)	2.92	1.10
	b) listening to recordings to identify the pronunciation of new words (practicing perception) (10)	3.52	1.14
	c) reading aloud, paying attention to pronunciation (12)	3.10	1.06
	d) talking to foreigners in the TL (11)	1.48	0.78
B. Receiving and sending messages on pronunciation	1. Using resources		
	a) checking the pronunciation of new word in dictionaries (13)	1.94	1.32
C. Analyzing and reasoning	1. Analyzing contrastively (14)	1.85	0.88
	2. Imitating TL native speakers speaking the learner's mother tongue in order to feel the differences between the languages (15)	2.52	1.05

Table 4.3 demonstrates the mean and standard deviation of the Compensation Strategies. The results show that despite the participants' lack of knowledge in the area of pronunciation of the target language, sometimes they made an effort to guess the pronunciation of new words (M= 2.92), but they tried to avoid words whose pronunciation they did not know (M= 2.19).

Table 4.3 Direct PLS – compensation strategies

Compensation strategies	Tactics (questionnaire items)	M	SD
A. Guessing intelligently	1. Guessing the pronunciation of new words (e.g. on the basis of spelling) (16)	2.92	1.18
B. Overcoming limitation in pronunciation	1. Avoiding words whose pronunciation one does not know (17)	2.19	1.31

Table 4.4 shows the Metacognitive Strategies. It was observed that the most often used tactic was paying attention to pronunciation (M= 4.32), and looking for information on pronunciation learning (M= 4.40). Other tactics used sometimes included seeking practice opportunities (M= 3.42) and planning for a new task (M= 3.11). The least tactic used was the evaluating one's own pronunciation based on recording (M= 2.55).

Table 4.4 Indirect PLS – Metacognitive Strategies

Metacognitive strategies	Tactics (questionnaire items)	M	SD
A. Centering one's learning	1. Paying attention to pronunciation a) in general (directed attention) (19)	4.32	0.90
B. Arranging and planning one's learning	1. Searching for information on pronunciation learning (20)	4.40	3.28
	2. Planning for a language task (21)	3.11	1.40
	3. Seeking practice opportunities (18)	3.42	1.07
C. Evaluating one's learning	1. Self-evaluation (recording oneself to evaluate one's pronunciation) (22)	2.55	1.30

In the Affective Strategies (Table 4.5), the participants sometimes used the tactic of relaxation technique such as breathing, music and laughter (M= 3.11). They rarely discussed their own feelings about learning pronunciation (M= 2.90). The tactic used the least was rewarding themselves for success in learning pronunciation (M= 1.52).

Table 4.5 Indirect PLS – Affective Strategies

Affective strategies	Tactics (questionnaire items)	M	SD
A. Reducing anxiety	1. Using relaxation techniques, e.g., breathing, laughter and music (23)	3.11	1.21
B. Encouraging oneself	1. Rewarding oneself for success in the TL (24)	1.52	0.87
C. Taking one's emotional temperature	1. Discussing feeling with others (25)	2.90	1.35

Finally, for the Social Strategies (Table 4.6), the participants indicated that they sometimes asked others for help (M= 3.55), while others revealed that they quite often cooperated with others (M= 3.16).

Table 4.6 Indirect PLS – Social Strategies

Social strategies	Tactics (questionnaire items)	M	SD
A. Asking questions	1. Asking for help (26)	3.55	1.18
B. Cooperating with others	1. Cooperating with peers and/ or advanced users of the TL (27)	3.16	1.21

In general, the mean frequency of use for direct and indirect strategies was equal to 2.97 (Table 4.7), which indicates that on average the Arab EFL learners only sometimes used the strategies. Standard deviation was equal to 0.38, which means that the use of PLS was rather homogenous in the sample. It is clear that the Arab EFL learners' utilization of the indirect strategies was more than the direct ones. More specifically, the mean frequency of use for the indirect strategies was 3.20, whereas for the direct strategies was 2.83. It is significant to point out that the number of the direct strategies measured in the questionnaire was higher than the number of the indirect ones. Moreover, SDs were low in the two strategy groups, which indicates that the Arab EFL learners' use of the strategies was rather similar.

Table 4.7 The use of PLS

Data	Direct	Indirect	Total
Mean	2.83	3.20	2.97
Standard Deviation	0.39	0.56	0.38

The mean frequency of use for Memory Strategies was equal to 2.96, for Cognitive Strategies was equal to 2.76 and for Compensation Strategies was equal to 2.55 (Table 4.8). It is clear that Arab EFL learners used the three strategies at a similar level. Furthermore, SDs were low for all the three strategy groups, which means that their utilization was quite similar among the Arab EFL learners involved in the study.

Table 4.8 The use of direct PLS

Data	Memory	Cognitive	Compensation	Total
Mean	2.96	2.76	2.55	2.83
Standard Deviation	0.51	0.50	0.97	0.39

The Arab EFL learners made a great use of Metacognitive Strategies (see Table 4.9). Furthermore, the use of the Metacognitive Strategies was the highest of all the direct and indirect groups of PLS. The mean frequency of use for Metacognitive Strategies was equal to 3.55, for Affective Strategies were 3.40 and for Social Strategies were 3.36. The results show that the utilization of the indirect strategies was more frequent than the direct ones.

Table 4.9 The use of indirect PLS

Data	Metacognitive	Affective	Social	Total
Mean	3.55	3.40	3.36	3.20
Standard Deviation	0.85	0.89	1.03	0.56

4.2.2 Findings of the Open Ended Question

Findings of the open-ended question were employed to answer the third research question (RQ 3).

Research Question 3: What do participants perceive to be the factors that influence the learning of pronunciation?

In this section, the data that is obtained to answer RQ 3 derives from part 3 of the questionnaire. The participants were asked to determine the factors that influence their learning of English pronunciation. For this purpose, data were collected from the participants through a questionnaire. Table 4.11 shows the factors that influence English pronunciation.

Table 4.10 Factors that influence Arab EFL learners' pronunciation

No.	Items	Frequency
1	Formal Instruction	27
2	Lack of Practice	15
3	Learners' Age	13
4	Lack of Exposure	8
5	Lack of Motivation and Interest	8

This question was analyzed manually since each participant gave his/her own opinion. Some respondents faced difficulties in expressing their opinions in English due to their low proficiency level, so they were allowed to write down their opinions in Arabic language. Thematic coding analysis was applied to answer the Research Question 3 and the themes immersed are discussed as follows:

1. Formal Instruction

The way teachers deliver English pronunciation is the most dominant factor majority of the respondents pointed out. The lack of teachers' pronunciation skills is one of the factors that contributed to the students' poor pronunciation. The respondents reported that teachers rarely correct their mispronunciation; they ignore the students' mispronunciation. One respondent stated that he sometimes received wrong pronunciation. He claimed that *"Receiving incorrect pronunciation from my teachers affects my ability to pronounce."* (R45). Another respondent (R103) claimed that "عدم" *"Teachers do not pronounce the word correctly; they make us acquire wrong pronunciation."* (Translation version). Similarly, other respondents reported as follows:

R90: "أغلب المعلمين نطقهم ضعيف ونحن نتعلم منهم النطق الخاطئ" "Most of the teachers have poor pronunciation and we learn wrong pronunciation from them." (Translation version)

R67: "عدم تصحيح المعلم لنطقنا إذا كان خطأ يجعلنا نستمر في ارتكاب الأخطاء" *"Teachers do not correct our mispronunciation; so we continue making mistakes."*

R30: "In my opinion, teachers in my country teach us wrong pronunciation, so we grow up with incorrect pronunciation."

R28: "الكثير من المعلمين ينطقون حسب لهجتهم مما يجعلنا نكتسب منه نطق خاطئ" "Many teachers pronounce according to their own dialects, and they make us acquire incorrect pronunciation."

R47: "المعلمين يقومون بتعليم الطلاب النطق الخاطئ" "Teachers teach the students incorrect pronunciation." (Translation version).

R14: "نطق الكلمات بشكل خطأ منذ بداية تعلمنا للغة الإنجليزية" "Mispronunciation since we started learning English language." (Translation version).

Moreover, prior instruction and linguistic knowledge are essential to improve the learners' pronunciation. Learners can achieve native-like pronunciation with support of precise instructions, speaking practice, intensive listening and phonetic lessons. It was found that there was no particular class to teach English pronunciation. One respondent stated that teachers do not teach them how to pronounce sounds. She claimed that "Teachers do not include pronunciation in their classes." (R60). Similarly, another respondent added that they have not learnt English pronunciation in school. He stated that "We do not learn how to pronounce in our school." (R13). Another respondent mentioned that there has not been a particular teacher to teach them linguistics so they can have good pronunciation. He reported that "We do not have a linguistic teacher." (R80). Furthermore, another respondent pointed out that there is no part in the curriculum that concentrates on teaching pronunciation. He stated that "تركيز المناهج على قواعد اللغة فقط ولا يوجد جزء مختص بتعليم النطق" "Curriculum focuses on grammar while there is no part to teach English pronunciation." (Translation version).

The respondents of the study revealed that receiving adequate instructions from teachers is one of the important aspects to enhance students' pronunciation in English. Moreover, they stated that if there was no direct feedback from their instructors, they would not be able to pronounce correctly. Besides that, respondents (R50, R60 and R13) claimed that having a phonetic awareness would help them to utter each sound of the English language properly. It is not surprising that the respondents claimed that receiving inadequate guidance from the teachers as one of the factors contributing to

their mispronunciation. From responses given by the respondents, it is clear that teachers are the main source of pronunciation acquisition as the respondents stated that they imitate their teachers' pronunciation. Teachers' feedbacks are important for the students to help them realized and overcome their mistakes. Moreover, trained teachers with good phonetics experience would encourage students to have better pronunciation.

2. Lack of Practice

The most important thing in learning a foreign language is practicing the language. Lack of practice is one of the main factors that the majority of the respondents pointed out. Respondents stated that lack of practice is a major barrier to them to pronounce English words correctly. Most of them agreed that they do not have enough practice inside or outside the classroom. According to them, limited practice is the main reason behind their pronunciation' errors. One respondent mentioned that the daily practice will help them to acquire proper pronunciation. He claimed that "عدم ممارسة اللغة" "Lack of practice in our daily life makes us have incorrect pronunciation." (Translation version). Similarly, other respondents reported as follows:

R19: "عدم استخدام المفردات الجديدة في حياتنا اليومية" "Lack of using new vocabularies in our daily life." (Translation version).

R75: "We need to practice speaking with other people."

R29: "Lack of practice is one of our problems to improve our pronunciation."

R66: "Limited time spent in practicing the language."

R16: "قلة الإختلاط وعدم وجود أصدقاء اجانب أو أصدقاء يجديون تحدث اللغة" "Lack of social interaction and the lack of having native friends or friends who speak English language well." (Translation version).

R97: "لايوجد ممارسة منذ الصغر" "There haven't been any practices since childhood." (Translation version).

The respondents of the study revealed that practicing the English language in their daily life is essential to acquire proper pronunciation. Additionally, they indicated that the lack of interaction and practice are some of the obstacles that hinder correct pronunciation.

3. Learner's Age

Age is one of the factors that the majority of the respondents pointed out. Most of the respondents indicated that they started their journey to study English language in secondary school while few of them highlighted that they had studied English in primary school. For instance, one respondent (R4) claimed,

R4: "تعلم اللغة منذ الصغر يعد من أهم العوامل التي تؤثر على النطق" *"Learning the language since childhood is a very important factor that affects English pronunciation."* (Translation version).

Likewise, other respondents pointed out as follows:

R5: *"In our country, we study English in secondary school so we do not acquire good pronunciation."*

R6: "عدم وجود أساسيات منذ الصغر" *"Lack of basics since childhood."* (Translation version).

Similarly, another respondent pointed out that studying a foreign language in adulthood affects learners' ability to acquire the new language:

R20: "نحن نتعلم اللغة الإنجليزية في المرحلة الإعدادية وأعمارنا تكون 14 أو 15 سنة وهو السن الذي تقل فيه نسبة اكتسابنا للغة أجنبية" *"We learnt English in secondary school while we were 14 or 15 years old which means our ability to acquire a foreign language becomes less."* (Translation version).

R81: *"We did not learn the basic English at an early age; but we started learning A, B, C alphabetic when we were 13 years old."*

Overall, learning a new language in late age could be one of the difficulties that impeded them from having a good pronunciation. Learners at younger age from 1-12 years have more ability to acquire a foreign language than adults. From the responses given by respondents, it seems that they wish to study English language at an early age because they think an early start will give them an advantage.

4. Lack of Exposure to English Language

Living in a native environment plays a significant role to improve the EFL learners' pronunciation, the more daily practice they spend time with, the better pronunciation they have. A majority of respondents stated that living in the surrounding environment in which English is spoken around them would have a great influence on the learners' pronunciation. Moreover, they indicated that being surrounded by people who have a command of English would hinder them from having a good pronunciation. One respondent claimed that the lack of an environment to practice target language is one of the factors that contribute to poor English pronunciation. *"In my opinion, I think that lack of a good environment to practice the English language is one of the reasons to have poor pronunciation."* (R74). Another respondent (R22) indicated that speaking the Arabic language during the English class is the main barrier to them to practice at least at the school; he claimed that "التحدث باللغة العربية أثناء حصة اللغة الإنجليزية في الصف" *"Speaking Arabic language in classroom even during the English class."* (Translation version). Similarly, another respondent mentioned that "Environment is the main influence for people to learn pronunciation." (R25). Furthermore, another respondent stated that receiving Arabic instruction from English teacher is another hindrance to speak English inside classrooms. He reported that *"Teachers explain and give us instructions in Arabic."* (R27).

Generally, it seems that surrounded by Arabic environment is one of the barriers towards attaining English proficiency. Respondents expressed their willingness to receive instructions in the English language to develop their English pronunciation.

5. Lack of Motivation and Interest

Motivation is the key factor that contributes to students' desire to learn English in general and English pronunciation in particular. The respondents revealed that the lack of encouragement from different sources breaks down their willingness to study the English language skills. They claimed that there are not any sources of motivation to enhance their pronunciation skill. One respondent (R31) mentioned that *"There is no source of motivation to encourage us to learn English pronunciation."* Likewise, another respondent (R63) claimed that family support or lack thereof either enhances or breaks the desire to learn pronunciation. He claimed that "أحد العوامل التي تؤثر على النطق هو قلة التشجيع من الأهل" *"One of the factors that affects the learning of English pronunciation is the lack of parent's motivation."* (Translation version).

Another respondent stated that lack of teachers' motivation limits their ability to have a better pronunciation. He claimed that "قلة تشجيع المعلمين لتعلم اللغة الإنجليزية يحد من رغبتنا لتعلم النطق باللغة الإنجليزية" *"Lack of motivation limits our desire to learn English pronunciation."* (R84).

Besides, students' lack of interest is the main factor among the other factors. Respondents claimed that they feel English language is not important to learn consequently they show less effort to master it. One respondent (R55) claimed that he does not have any interest to learn English pronunciation because it is not the native language of Arab learners and they do not speak English in their daily life. He answered *"It is not the mother tongue for Arab speakers, so they say we do not need it in our daily life."* (Translation version). Likewise, another respondent (R42) stated that learning English language is not significant. He pointed out *"The indifference in English language is the main reason that makes many people suffer."* (Translation version).

Another respondent claimed that the absence of desire and interest to learn pronunciation is one of the hindrances behind his mispronunciation. He stated that *"Lack of interest in English language is one of the factors that influence my pronunciation ability."* (R11).

R70: “When we learn English, we care about our marks only without enjoying the language.”

In general, lack of motivation and interest is one of the obstacles that have impeded the students from having accurate pronunciation. Moreover, raising the awareness of the English language and creating interest in the studies among the students can encourage them to improve their proficiency level. It is not surprising that the respondents claimed that lack of motivation and interest as one of the factors that have contributed to their pronunciation incompetence. The respondents revealed that encouragement from both parents and teachers are highly required to enhance their desire to develop a foreign language pronunciation. Students are eager to learn English language pronunciation but eagerness alone is not good enough without a persisting tendency to stay self-driven in order to achieve their dreams to have a native-like pronunciation, especially when they do not have a strong self-motivation to give them the push to attain their goal.

In conclusion, findings from the open-ended questions illustrated the factors that are perceived by the respondents to have influenced their English pronunciation. The factors include formal instruction, lack of practice, age, lack of exposure to the target language and lack of motivation and interest.

4.3 Findings of the Pronunciation Test

The pronunciation test was used to answer the second research question (RQ2) below:

Research Question2: Is there a correlation between pronunciation learning strategies use and pronunciation scores?

Before determining the relationship between the use of strategies and the scores obtained through the pronunciation test, a detailed result of the three phases of the pronunciation test is explained to show the difficulties that Arab EFL learners face while pronouncing the five consonant sounds.

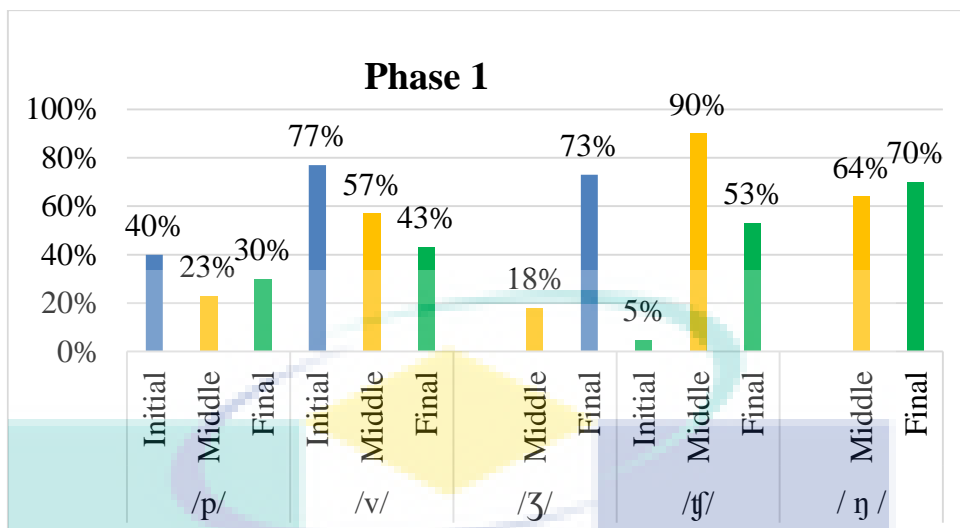


Figure 4.1 Correct pronunciations of consonant sounds

Figure 4.1 depicts the result of the correct pronunciation of the five target sounds /p/, /v/, /f/, /ʒ/ and /ŋ/ in the first phase of the pronunciation test in three positions of the word: initial, middle and final.

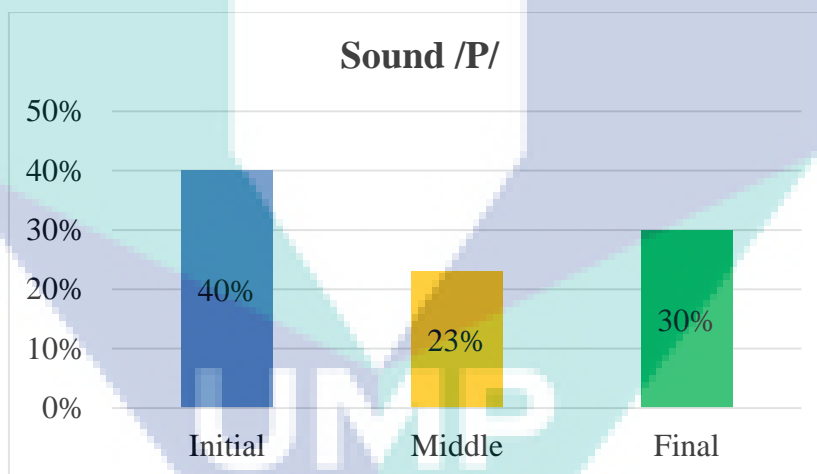


Figure 4.2 Correct pronunciation of sound /p/

Figure 4.2 displays the percentage of Arab EFL learners' correct pronunciation of sound /p/ in three positions of the word. It is clear that Arab EFL learners faced problems in pronouncing /p/ sound especially in middle position with 77% of the Arab EFL learners mispronounced it. Moreover, 70% of Arab EFL learners mispronounced it in the final position while 60% of them had mispronunciation in the initial position. The results indicated that Arab EFL learners made a great mistake in pronouncing /p/ sound in three positions of the word as the pronunciation test revealed that they could not

pronounce /p/ sound correctly with more than 50% of errors. They replaced /p/ sound with /b/ sound which caused mispronunciation of the /p/ sound as the percentage showed.

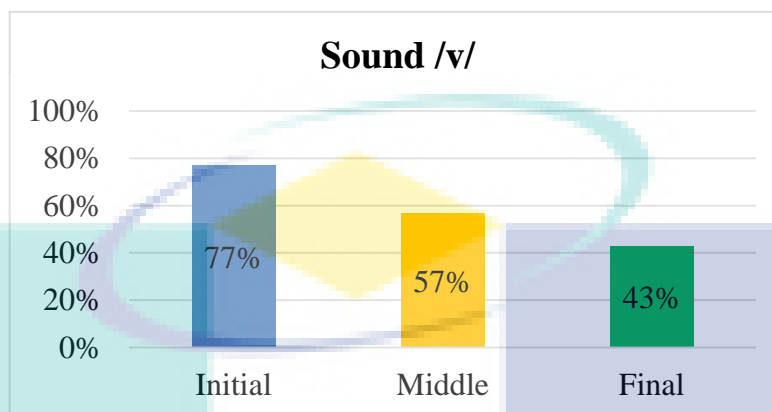


Figure 4.3 Correct pronunciation of sound /v/

Figure 4.3 represents the percentage of Arab EFL learners' correct pronunciation of sound /v/ in three positions. 57% of the Arab EFL learners had wrong pronunciation for /v/ sound when it occurred in final position especially for the word /of/ in which they pronounced it as /ɒf/ instead of its correct pronunciation /ɒv/, while 43 % of them mispronounced it in the middle position. However, the Arab EFL learners made fewer mistakes for /v/ when it occurred in initial position with 77% correct pronunciation. The results indicated that /v/ sound was replaced with /f/ sound.

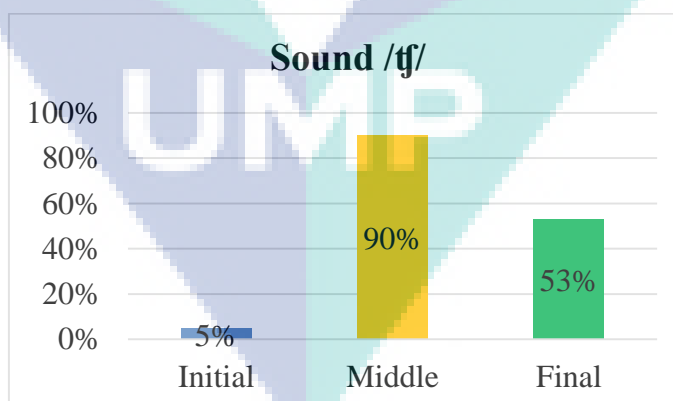


Figure 4.4 Correct pronunciation of sound /ʃ/

Figure 4.4 shows the total percentage of correct pronunciation of /ʃ/ sound according to the sound position. Only 5% of the Arab EFL learners could pronounce /ʃ/

sound correctly in initial positions. The result indicated that 95% of the participants were unable to pronounce sound /ʒ/ when it appeared in the initial position. On the other hand, 90% of them had a correct pronunciation of /ʒ/ sound in the middle position. While 47% of Arab EFL learners replaced /ʒ/ sound with /ʃ/ sound in the final position.

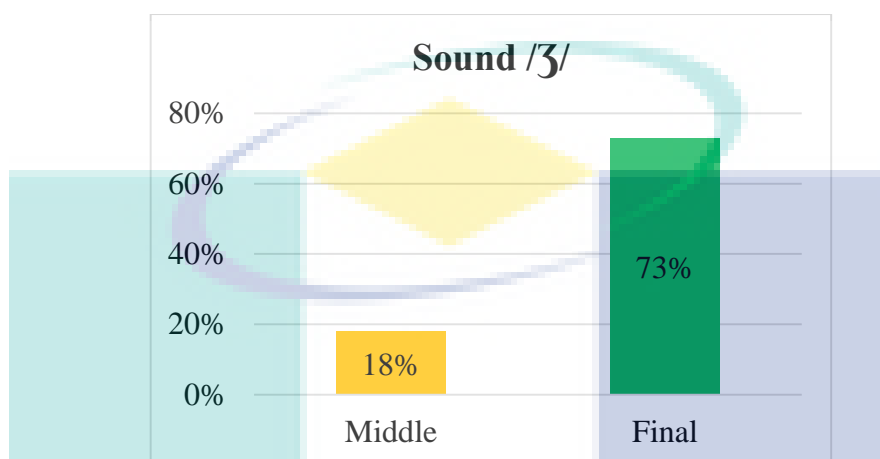


Figure 4.5 Correct pronunciation of sound /ʒ/

Figure 4.5 demonstrates the percentage of Arab EFL learners' accurate pronunciation of /ʒ/ sound in two positions middle and final as this sound never occurred in initial positions. The percentages indicated that Arab EFL learners hardly pronounced /ʒ/ sound in middle positions with 18% of correct pronunciation as in word Asia. They tended to pronounce /ʒ/ sound as /s/ sound as in word Asia /'eɪʒə/ which was pronounced by most of the Arab EFL learners as /æsiə/. In contrast, only 27% of them had mispronunciation of /ʒ/ sound in final positions as in the word 'massage.'

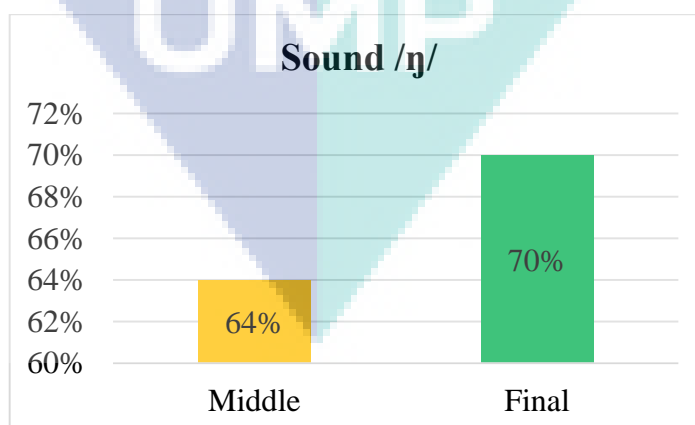


Figure 4.6 Correct pronunciation of sound /ŋ/

Figure 4.6 illustrates the percentage of the correct pronunciation of sound /ŋ/ among Arab EFL learners in the middle and final positions as /ŋ/ did not occur in the initial position. 30% of the participants mispronounced /ŋ/ in the final position, while 37% of them mispronounced it in the middle position.

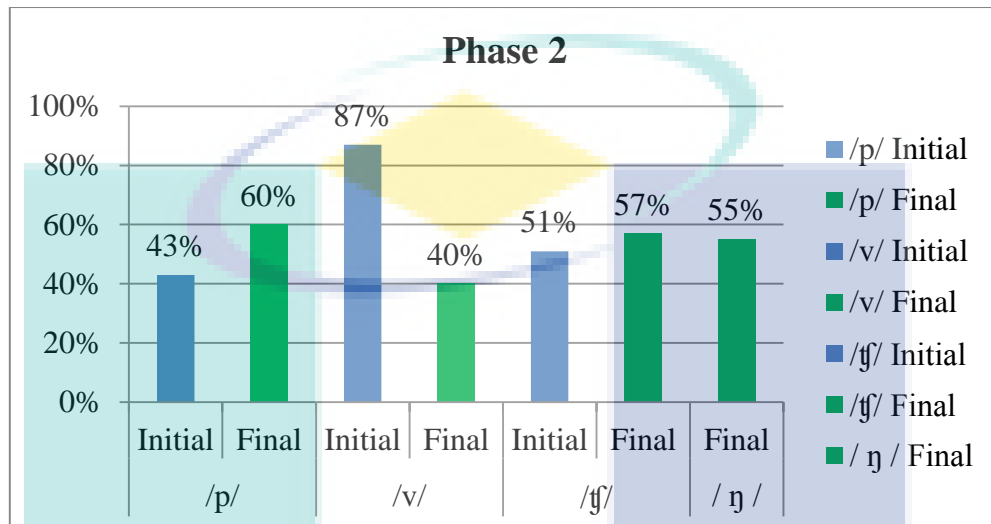


Figure 4.7 Correct pronunciations of consonant sounds in Phase 2

In the second phase of the pronunciation test, Arab EFL learners were asked to read different sets of minimal pairs occurred in the initial and final positions for sounds /p/, /v/ and /ʃ/ or the final position for sound /ŋ/. Sound /ʒ/ did not have minimal pairs so it was not included in phase 2 as in Figure 4.7.

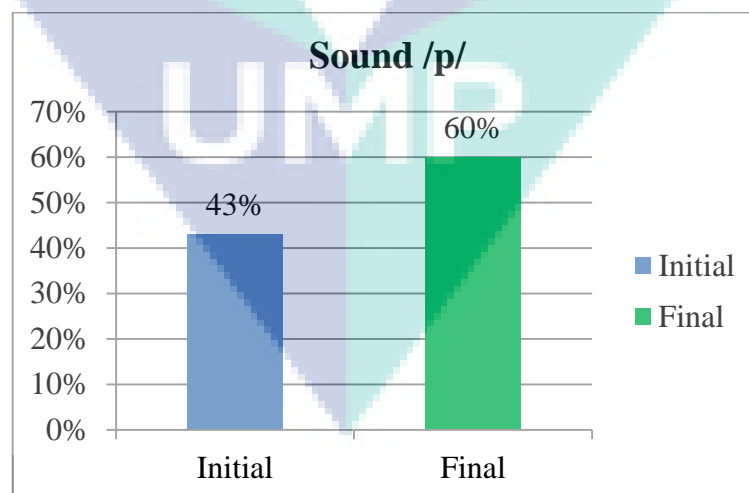


Figure 4.8 Correct pronunciation of sound /p/

The data in Figure 4.8 represents the percentage of pronouncing /p/ sound. The students reported 43% in the initial position, while 60% of them had correct pronunciation in final position.

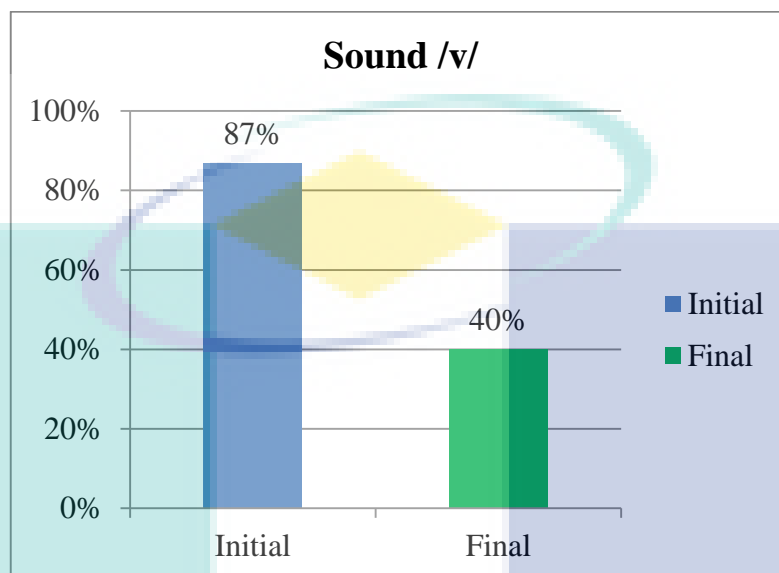


Figure 4.9 correct pronunciation of sound /v/

Arab EFL learners showed a slight improvement in pronouncing /v/ sound in the second phase in initial position with 87% of correct pronunciation. On the other hand, 60% of them mispronounced /v/ in the final position (Figure 4.9).

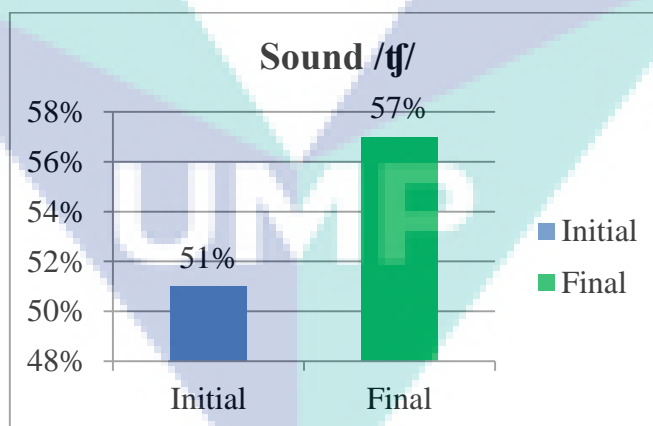


Figure 4.10 correct pronunciation of sound /tʃ/

Figure 4.10 demonstrates the percentage of the accurate pronunciation of sound /tʃ/ in the second phase among Arab EFL learners. The results indicated that the Arab EFL learners became more conscious when pronouncing /tʃ/ sound in the initial positions with 51% of correct pronunciation. Whereas their ability to pronounce sound

/tʃ/ at the end of the word was a bit higher than in the first phase with 57% of correct pronunciation.

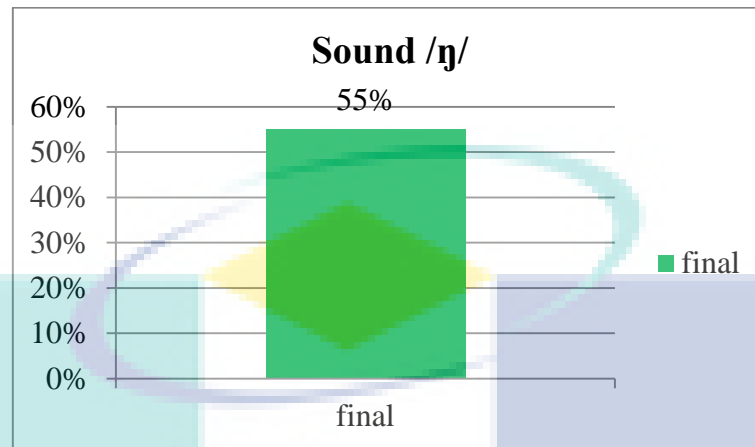


Figure 4.11 correct pronunciation of sound /ŋ/

Figure 4.11 shows that sound /ŋ/ occurred in final positions only in the second phase. The participants mispronounced /ŋ/ sound with 45% of mispronunciation in the final position. Arab EFL learners experienced difficulties in pronouncing consonant sound /ŋ/ as it has been frequently replaced with /n-k/ or /n-g/.

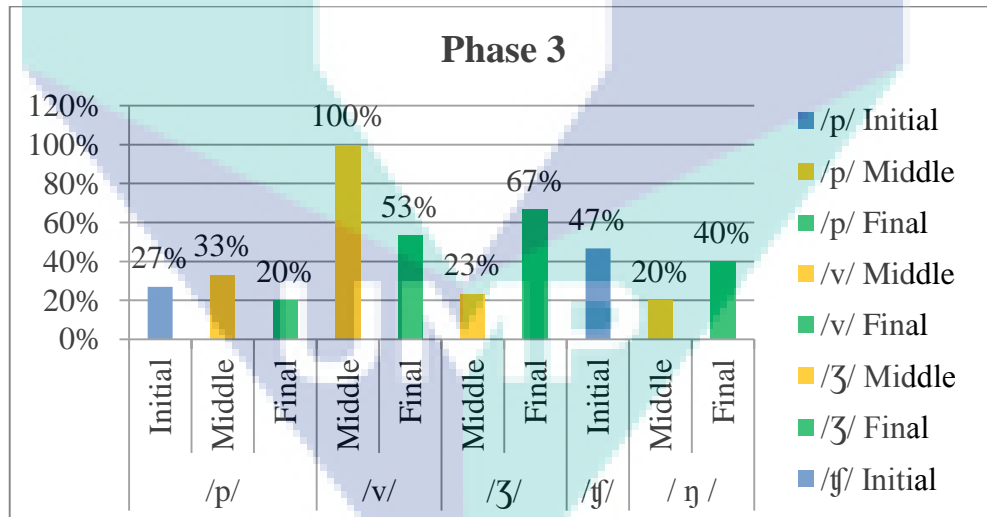


Figure 4.12 correct pronunciation of consonant sounds in phase 3

Figure 4.12 represents the total percentage of Arab EFL learners' correct pronunciation of the five target consonant sounds in the third phase. 100% of Arab EFL learners were able to pronounce /v/ sound correctly when it occurred in middle position. On the other hand, the least percentage of correct pronunciation appeared in

pronouncing /p/ sound in the final position and /ŋ/ sound in the middle position with 20% for both sounds.

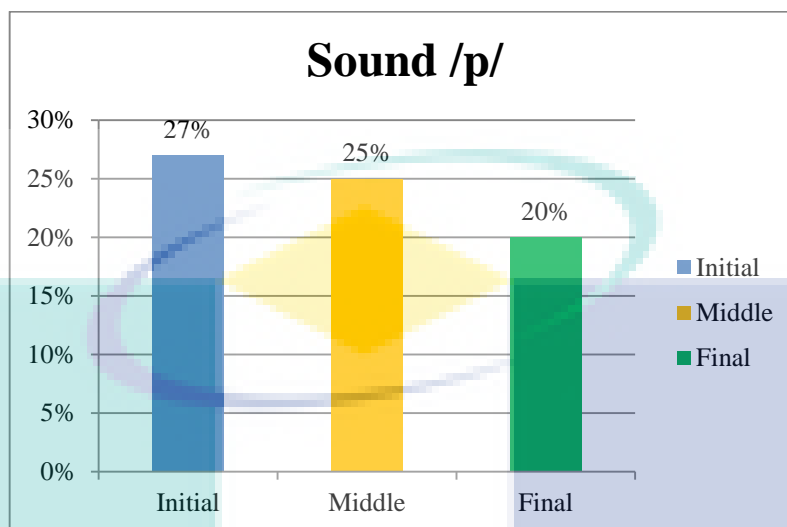


Figure 4.13 correct pronunciation of sound /p/

Figure 4.13 illustrates the Arab EFL learners' ability to pronounce consonant /p/ correctly in three positions. It was found that only 20% of them could pronounce sound /p/ accurately when it occurred in the final position, 25% for middle position and 27% for initial position. The result pointed out that consonant sound /p/ was a problematic sound for majority of Arab EFL learners as they generally tended to replace /p/ sound with sound /b/.

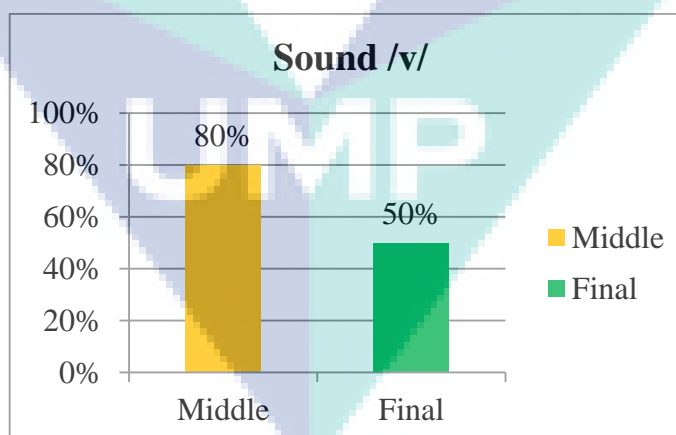


Figure 4.14 Correct pronunciation of sound /v/

Arab EFL learners experienced less difficulty in pronouncing sound /v/ initially with 20% mispronunciation. In contrast, they commonly replaced /v/ sound with /f/ in final position with 50% wrong pronunciation (Figure 4.14).

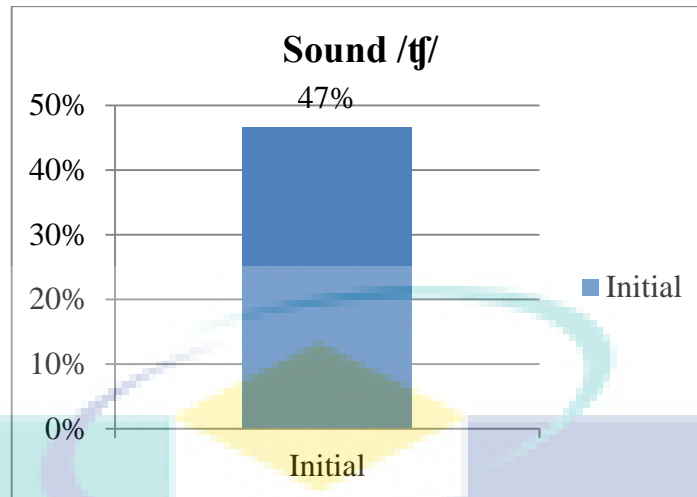


Figure 4.15 Correct pronunciation of sound /tʃ/

Figure 4.15 exhibits the percentage of Arab EFL learners' correct pronunciation for /tʃ/ in the initial positions only for the third phase. The results revealed that 53% of Arab EFL learners mispronounced consonant /tʃ/ in the initial word position.

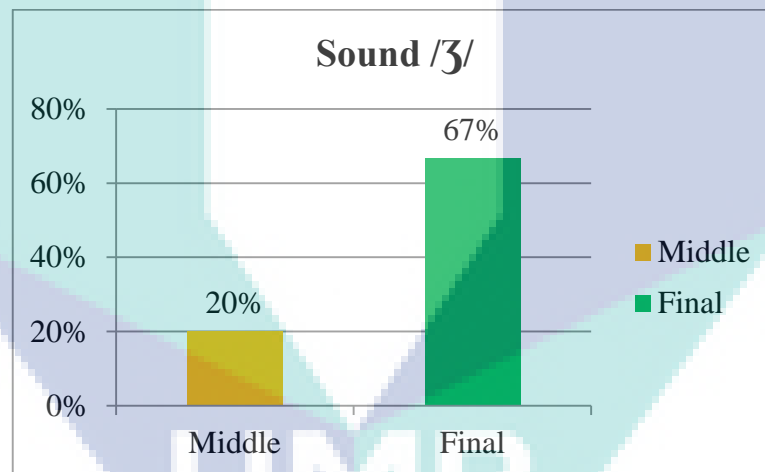


Figure 4.16 correct pronunciation of sound /ʒ/

Figure 4.16 represents the correct pronunciation of sound /ʒ/ among Arab EFL learners with their percentages. The graph shows that the percentage of mispronouncing sound /ʒ/ in the middle position was rather high with 80% wrong pronunciation. While 33% of the participants failed to pronounce /ʒ/ sound when it occurred in final position.

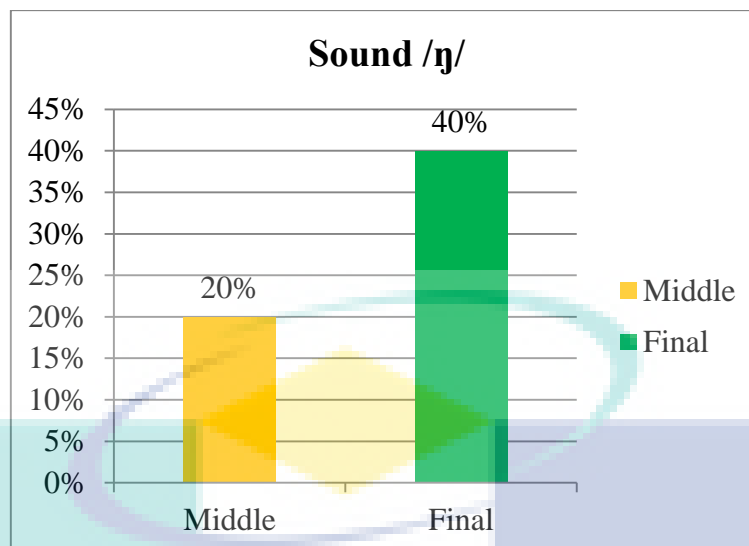


Figure 4.17 correct pronunciation of sound /ŋ/

Arab EFL learners experienced difficulties in pronouncing the nasal sound /ŋ/ in both middle and final positions. The graph demonstrates that 80% of the participants tended to mispronounce /ŋ/ more when it was in the middle position. Furthermore, 60% of Arab EFL learners had wrong pronunciation of sound /ŋ/ in the final position as they often replaced it with /n-k/ or /n-g/ repeatedly (Figure 4.17).

Overall, the pronunciation test revealed that Arab EFL learners have difficulties in pronouncing English consonant sounds as their scores in the pronunciation test showed that only five participants scored more than 50% mark of correct pronunciation. While the other ten participants obtained less than half of the total mark.

4.4 The Relationship between Strategy Use and Pronunciation Scores

To determine if there was a relationship between participants' utilization of strategies and their pronunciation scores, pronunciation test was conducted. The findings were analyzed using Spearman's rho correlation. The pronunciation test was conducted after the participants filled up the PLS questionnaire to measure if there was a relationship between their frequent use of the strategies and their p-test scores. Table 4.11 represents the findings of the Spearman's rho correlation between variables.

Table 4.11 Correlation between PLS use and p-test performance

Spearman's rho	Score	Correlation Coefficient	1.000
		Sig. (1-tailed)	.
Memory Strategy or Strategies?		Correlation Coefficient	.362
		Sig. (1-tailed)	.326
Cognitive Strategies		Correlation Coefficient	.211
		Sig. (1-tailed)	.225
Compensation Strategies		Correlation Coefficient	.450**
		Sig. (1-tailed)	.165
Metacognitive Strategies		Correlation Coefficient	.282
		Sig. (1-tailed)	.155
Affective Strategies		Correlation Coefficient	.445**
		Sig. (1-tailed)	.048
Social Strategies		Correlation Coefficient	.189
		Sig. (1-tailed)	.250
Total Strategies		Correlation Coefficient	.026
		Sig. (1-tailed)	.463
Direct Strategies		Correlation Coefficient	.102
		Sig. (1-tailed)	.359
Indirect Strategies		Correlation Coefficient	.137
		Sig. (1-tailed)	.314

*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (1-tailed)

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (1-tailed).

In this study, bivariate Spearman's rho correlation was applied to find out the correlation between Arab EFL learners' usage of PLS and their scores of p-test.

In statistics, Qin (2004, p.238) stated that the absolute value of the coefficient lower than 0.20 represents the lowest correlation while if the correlation coefficient is between 0.20 and 0.40, it represents low or weak correlation. Correlation coefficient between 0.40 and 0.70 represents moderate correlation and the absolute value between 0.70 and 0.90 shows strong correlation. As indicated in the Table 4.11, the overall correlation coefficient for all the strategies used is $r = .026$, $p < .05$ which means that there is no significant correlation between variables. In other words, the result indicated that there was a positive but weak correlation between the used of the six PLS and p-test scores according to Spearman's rho analysis.

Therefore, it can be seen from Table 4.11 that p-test scores are positively correlated with the use of compensation strategies, affective strategies and memory strategies ($r = .450, .445, .362, p < 0.05$). While metacognitive and cognitive showed low correlation coefficient ($r = .282, r = .211, p < 0.05$). However, the least favourable strategies were social strategies with the least correlation coefficients ($r = .189, p < 0.05$).

In general, the results showed a weak positive correlation between Arab EFL learners' utilization of PLS and their scores in pronunciation test. More specifically, the correlation coefficient for the six PLS and the p-test scores ($r = .026$), for direct strategies ($r = .102$), and for the indirect strategies ($r = .137$). Yet, there is no significant relationship between variables.

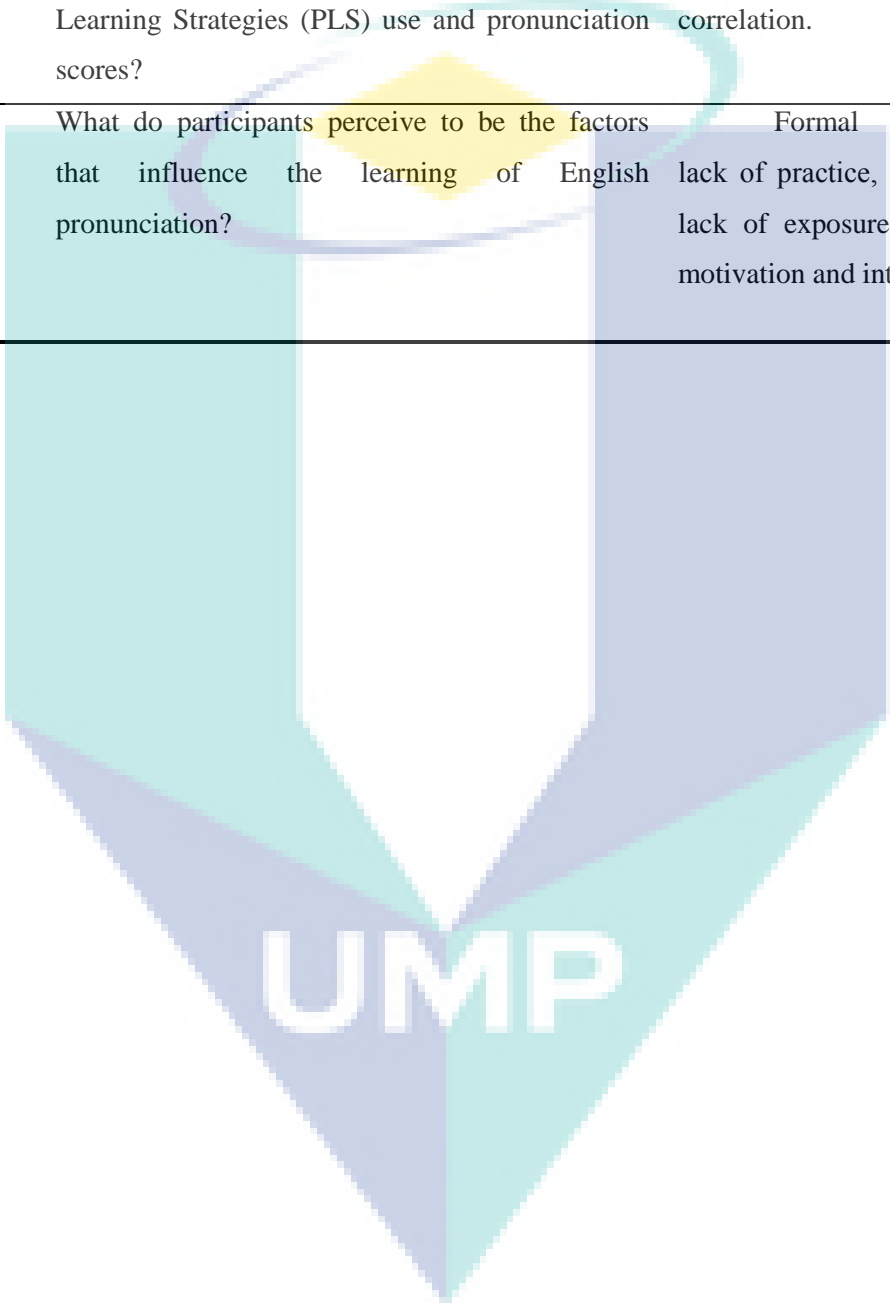
In other words, Arab EFL learners tended to rely on indirect strategies more than direct ones such as compensation and affective strategies which reflected on their performances of the pronunciation test as these two strategies gained the higher correlation among other strategies.

4.5 Summary

This chapter summarizes the findings obtained from the two instruments employed in the study which included a set of questionnaire and pronunciation test. The data extracted from first part of the questionnaire which is related to the utilization of the PLS which was analyzed through SPSS. It is showed that participants relied more on indirect strategies such as Metacognitive Strategies and Affective Strategies. While the second part of the questionnaire, which was thematically analyzed, revealed the factors that contributed to the learning of English pronunciation. Moreover, the statistical analysis in this study showed that there was a positive but weak correlation between the uses of PLS and pronunciation scores among Arab EFL learners. Table 4.12. sums up the main findings of the three research questions.

Table 4.12 Summary of the main findings

No	Research Question	Findings
1	What are the Pronunciation Learning Strategies (PLS) applied by Arab EFL learners?	Metacognitive Strategies and Affective Strategies.
2	Is there a correlation between Pronunciation Learning Strategies (PLS) use and pronunciation scores?	Yes, there is a weak positive correlation.
3	What do participants perceive to be the factors that influence the learning of English pronunciation?	Formal instruction, lack of practice, learners' age, lack of exposure and lack of motivation and interest.



CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter demonstrates the results of the study. This chapter discusses the obtained results in order to achieve the aim of the study. It begins with the overall discussion of the results of the quantitative data obtained from the questionnaire and the pronunciation test. The findings are discussed based on the research questions of the study.

5.2 Discussion of the Findings

The discussion of the study is based on the three main parts of the study which are: the use of Pronunciation Learning Strategies (PLS) among Arab EFL learners, the relationship between the utilization of the strategies and p-test scores and the factors contributing to the learning of English pronunciation. The findings of the study and their relation to the previous research findings are also discussed and compared.

5.2.1 The Frequent Use of PLS Applied by Arab EFL Learners

This study attempted to gauge the frequent utilizations of the PLS among the Arab EFL learners. Data obtained from the questionnaire reported the total mean of the indirect strategies was equal to 3.20, while the total mean of the direct strategies was 2.83. It indicates that the participants used indirect strategies in learning English pronunciation more than direct strategies. In the group of the direct strategies, it was found that memory strategies were the dominant ones among other strategies (M=2.96). Moreover, it was noted that Arab EFL learners preferred to listen to recordings in order to identify the pronunciation of new words (M=3.52). Moreover, they made an effective

(strong claim) use of metacognitive strategies in the group of indirect strategies with a total mean ($M=3.55$). It was found that Arab EFL learners were eager to find out ways to enhance their English pronunciation performance with a mean frequency ($M= 4.40$). It is not surprising to find that Arab EFL learners employed PLS sometimes since they did not learn pronunciation in a formal way in their previous studies, nor did they receive any strategy training.

The findings of the study were similar to Rokoszewska (2012), where it was found that the first year students of English department in Poland frequently used the indirect strategies more often than the direct strategies ($M= 3.37$, $M=2.85$ respectively). Similarly, in her study, the findings revealed that her participants commonly used Metacognitive Strategies in the group of indirect strategies ($M=3.52$), while in the group of direct strategies, the use of Cognitive Strategies was the highest ($M= 2.91$). In this study, it was found that Arab EFL learners relied on Metacognitive Strategies more than other strategies as the learners mostly tried to search for new ways to learn English pronunciation and to find any opportunities to practice what they have learnt to pronounce.

In contrast to the findings of this study, Szyszka (2015) found that good pronunciation users (GPU) mostly used Cognitive Strategies. The researcher investigated pronunciation learning strategies adapted by 28 EFL students who had good English pronunciation. It was found that GPU preferred to listen to native speakers, songs and movies as ways to develop their pronunciation proficiency. Other GPU declared that imitation and repetition were other preferred tactics to learn English pronunciation.

Furthermore, the results of this study stood in contrast to the results of another study conducted among 120 undergraduates who attended English preparation class in Turkey. For instance, Hakan, Aydin, and Bulent (2015) found that the male participants mostly used the Affective Strategies. Furthermore, the second preferred strategy used by their participants was the Memory Strategies. Compared to the findings of this study, since majority of the participants were males (97%) they made less use of Affective Strategies because males might not prefer to share feelings while learning English

pronunciations. Furthermore, they might not like to reward themselves when working hard on their pronunciation.

Moreover, the findings of this study contradicted with that of Tam's study (2013). The researcher investigated 50 first year students at Hong Kong Polytechnic University. It was found that the students made a great use of two direct strategies which were Cognitive and Compensation Strategies with a total mean of frequency 3.35 and 3.40 respectively. Similarly, the results of this study were different from that of Sawitri's (2012) study. The study was conducted among 99 postgraduate Indonesian students who were taking speaking class for International English Language Testing Systems (IELTS). The findings revealed that 87.22% of the participants relied on socioaffective strategies to learn speaking skills for IELTS. It was found that those who used socioaffective strategies obtained good scores in the speaking skills in IELTS especially those who used cooperation and clarification tactics in learning English pronunciation.

Overall, the findings of this study were compared to other previous research concerned about the pronunciation learning strategies and their relation on the learners' pronunciation performance.

5.2.2 Correlation between Strategy Use and Pronunciation Test Scores

This section illustrates the relationship between the learners' utilization of the PLS and the scores gained in the diagnostic test. Surprisingly, this study revealed a weak positive correlation between the Arab EFL learners' use of the PLS and their pronunciation scores. This finding was unexpected as it was predicted that participants who made a good (strong claim) use of PLS would obtain good scores. The findings of this study indicated that the uses of PLS did not have influence on the Arab EFL learners' scores in English pronunciation test. A possible explanation for these results suggested that Arab EFL learners were not aware about the importance of learning proper English pronunciation. Besides, the PLS seemed to be not effective for the learners, since they claimed they used the strategies rather frequently, but they hardly applied it seriously as ten of them obtained less than fifty marks in the pronunciation test. However, the findings of this study corroborates with Rokoszewska (2012). It was found that a significant weak relationship between the use of the PLS and the students'

scores in the pronunciation test. The researcher found that other factors hampered the participants from mastering the target language pronunciation such as anxiety, lack of motivation and the limited attention and goals setting towards learning English pronunciation.

The findings of this study corroborates with Eckstein's (2007) study. The study was conducted among students who enrolled in intensive English program at Brigham Young University where it was found that there was a significant correlation between PLS and the adult ESL learners' pronunciation skill. It was revealed that the participants engaged in the study preferred to use metacognitive strategies; by paying more attention to others' pronunciation and avoiding their mistakes. The researcher posited that good pronunciation learners used PLS more frequent than poor learners.

On the other hand, the findings of present study showed differences in comparison to Pawlak's study (2018). Pawlak examined the speaking strategies that advanced learners of English used in the performance of two communicative tasks. The data collected by means of open-ended questionnaires that were distributed to 30 participants after the completion of the two tasks. The findings revealed that there was no evidence for the influence of proficiency level. Besides, it was found that females preferred to use PLS more than males in performing their tasks. Furthermore, they seemed to be more meticulous about their tasks. There was a study of young learners at Northwestern university in 2008 and the result revealed that for males to study a language in a most effective way was to learn visually as well as orally. It was reported that they preferred to use more study strategies, whereas, females relied more on varied study methods according to the language journal *Porta Linguarum*. It was also mentioned that males tended to use only a handful of study methods.

Additionally, the result of this study stood in contrast to Campos's study (2015). The result obtained by the researcher demonstrated that there was a positive correlation between the use of Pronunciation Learning Strategies and pronunciation intelligibility levels. Moreover, it was found that there was no major correlations between PLS frequency/duration and pronunciation accuracy; nor was there a major correlation found between language aptitude and pronunciation accuracy. Nevertheless, the application of a statistical model comprising the most frequently used PLSs and those with the longest duration yielded a positive correlation between the PLSs and pronunciation ability. The

results suggested that there was a good deal of coincidence between those PLSs that were used with the highest frequency and those that were used with the greatest duration. Moreover, the results indicated that the PLSs that were used more frequently had been used for the longest period of time by the participants belonged to the Cognitive Strategies.

5.2.2.1 Difficulties in Pronouncing English Consonant Sounds

This section discusses the challenges faced by Arab EFL learners in pronouncing English consonants and the relationship between their utilization of PLS and their obtained scores in the diagnostic test.

Some researchers identified the difficulties Arab EFL learners face in pronouncing English consonant sounds. Hassan (2014) investigated the pronunciation problems experienced by the Sudanese students. It was viewed that Arabic background affects the pronunciation of English consonant sounds. The findings of this study corroborate with Hassan's study (2014). It was found that some English consonants do not exist in Arabic system. Consequently, Sudanese students mispronounced these sounds which were /p/ and /tʃ/. The researcher explained that a majority of the students in Sudan replaced /p/ with /b/ as in 'happy' and 'map' but they rarely substituted /b/ with /p/. Additionally, it was noticed that Sudanese student had substitution of /tʃ/, /ʃ/, /v/ and /f/ sounds.

Similarly, a study conducted by Ahmad (2011) supported the findings of this study. The researcher investigated the pronunciation problems encountered by Saudi students in pronouncing certain English consonant sounds. It was discovered in his study that Saudi students replaced /p/, /tʃ/ and /v/ with /b/, /ʃ/ and /f/ respectively. The researcher posited that /ʒ/ did not have equivalent in the Arabic consonantal system. Consequently, Arab students replaced it with /dʒ/, /ʃ/ or /z/. Furthermore, they mispronounced /ŋ/ sound as either /n-k/ or /n-g/.

Another study also corroborates with the findings of this study. Elmahdi and Khan (2015) conducted a study among Saudi secondary school learners to identify the students' difficulties in pronouncing specific consonant sounds. The findings of this study were similar to Elmahdi and Khan (2015). Their findings revealed that students

faced difficulties while pronouncing /p/, /v/, /ʒ/, /ʃ/ and /ŋ/. They found that the 85% of the participants were unable to pronounce /p/ in the three word positions. Additionally, the researchers indicated that due to the absence of /v/ sound in the Arabic phonemic system, Saudi students tended to substitute it with /f/ sound. Moreover, the findings revealed that Saudi students struggled in pronouncing /ʒ/, /ʃ/ and /ŋ/.

5.2.3 Factors that Influence Learning English Pronunciation among Arab EFL Learners

This study aimed at determining the factors contribute to the learning of English pronunciation by answering Research Question 3. It is very important to highlight the obstacles that hinder the Arab EFL learners from having accurate pronunciation.

It was found that there were various perceptions of factors that hinder the Arab EFL learners from having correct pronunciation. Barriers in delivering a good English pronunciation such as teachers' input, lack of practice, age, lack of exposure, prior instruction and linguistic knowledge, lack of motivation and lack of interest are explained as follows:

1. Formal Instruction

The study found that teachers are ill-equipped to teach the Arab EFL learners because of their lack of expertise in English. Consequently, the teachers' lack of competence, lack of confidence and lack of quality that demotivate Arab EFL learners from having a good English pronunciation. The findings of this study were similar to Fraser (2010), where it was found that teacher is the key of learning English pronunciation. He posited that learners believed that their teachers' utterances are the correct pronunciation. By the time, the Arab EFL learners have realized their incorrect pronunciation they would blame the teachers for the confusion between vowel sounds and their difficulty in differentiating between sounds. Consequently, the Arab EFL learners claimed that they have acquired their Arabic accent in English from their teachers. Fraser (2010) revealed the impact of the teachers' input on acquiring correct or wrong pronunciation.

According to Elliot, 1994 (as cited in Gilakjani, 2012) teachers do not have background or tools to teach pronunciation in second language classrooms as a result

they ignore teaching pronunciation and focus on building the four language skills such as reading, writing, listening and speaking. Due to this, teachers tend to view pronunciation as the least important skill and they direct their time on other areas of language during class time.

A study reported by Al-Mahrooqi (2012) revealed similar findings related to this study. The researcher found that 85% of the Omani students claimed that teachers were the main reason for their low proficiency level in English. Students experienced low level of English due to the use of Arabic language during English class. Teachers used simple English inside classroom, notably they did not speak English outside classroom. Hence, the students used Arabic language more than English. Furthermore, even with limited speaking practices, teachers tended to focus on the good students and ignore those who struggled to learn English proficiency and the use of simple language by teachers inside classrooms. Moreover, teachers do not speak English outside classroom thus, students use Arabic language more than English.

Similarly, Kayaoğlu (2013) investigated linguistic difficulties among Turkish students in speaking class. He interviewed 30 learners at north-eastern state university in Turkey. His study revealed that the teacher is the main cause of having problems in the pronunciation learning process. Thus, instructors are considered as the key determinant of success or failure. He indicated that sometimes teachers' input during the language class might create a problem for the learners, especially if the learners fail to acquire a correct pronunciation.

Moreover, findings of this study suggested that prior instruction and phonetic knowledge have to be assessed at the beginning of the course in order to gauge how much knowledge and skills the Arab EFL learners have had before the course. Limited phonetic knowledge and instruction serve as a main factor that contributes to having poor pronunciation. Due to this factor English pronunciation has proved to be a problem for many Arab EFL learners. The participants viewed that their poor pronunciation ability was due to the lack of receiving linguistic instruction to pronounce sounds correctly in their early stages of learning English. The finding was in agreement with Zhang and Yin (2009) who found that prior pronunciation instruction is one of the important factors that hinder the process of having a native-like pronunciation.

Moreover, the researchers posited that phonetic instruction is an effective way to help learners to correct pronunciation. They indicated that learners even with low proficiency level can improve on a daily basis especially when they can identify their pronunciation errors and mispronunciation that they have learned from their early linguistic instruction. With the recognition of their bad speaking habit they should be able to fix it in order to communicate effectively and write correctly.

Lintunen (2013) reported similar findings related to the learners' problems in pronunciation. The researcher found that phonetic teaching had a great influence on the learners' awareness of the target language pronunciation. Learners' limited awareness of their pronunciation problems posed the main cause of their errors. Due to this, students were not able to identify their mistakes. It was found that after learning pronunciation skills and phonetics, the learners' awareness increased and they became aware of their pronunciation difficulties. This was because of the students focused on the sound system and they started to evaluate their pronunciation.

Furthermore, the findings of this study stood in contrast with Suter, 1976 (as cited in Gilakjani, 2012). Suter (1976) investigated the relationship between the pronunciation accuracy of sixty- one non- native speakers and classroom instructions. He reported that there was insignificant relationship between classroom training and students' pronunciation of English as a Second Language. The researcher found that students who concerned more about their pronunciations were able to attain accurate pronunciation.

2. *Lack of Practice*

The findings of this study suggested that lack of practice is another main obstacle faced by Arab EFL learners. The participants mentioned that limited time spent to learn the language and the lack of oral communication in English negatively affected their oral proficiency. The finding was in agreement with Rehman and Bukhari (2012) who found that lack of opportunity allocated to practice English pronunciation was the main problem for the speakers in Pakistan to learn correct English pronunciation. Similarly, Muriungi and Mbui (2013) found that most of ESL students faced difficulties in acquiring English pronunciation due to the lack of practice. Consequently, it was

found that lack of practice was the main reason for the students' pronunciation errors. The researchers noticed that students reverted to their mother tongue in most of their activities inside the classroom which limited their opportunities to practice the language (Muriungi & Mbui, 2013).

Mourad's study (2010) supported the findings of this study. He found that a majority of the Algerian students had incorrect pronunciation due to the lack of practice. The researcher found that lack of practice during the phonetic and speaking classes led to less attention on the students' errors. Mourad (2010) noted that phonetic class is merely theoretical and thus, insufficient time and crowded class cause the neglecting of oral practice. Besides, priority to fluency is not dedicated within oral expression class and consequently teachers do not focus on the students' pronunciation errors. It was noted that instructors should raise the awareness of pronunciation among the students and provide them with phonetic activities that could increase their practice of English pronunciation.

3. *Learner's Age*

The findings of this study suggested that age is another obstacle in acquiring a new language. The participants who engaged in this study were aged between 19 and 21 years old, as they stated that it would be difficult for them if they were going to learn the pronunciation skills. Thus, age is considered as a main barrier to have adequate pronunciation performances.

Gilakjani and Ahmadi (2011) found that age is an important factor that influences the language acquisition, especially pronunciation. The researcher posited that age hinders the process of having a native-like pronunciation. Moreover, he indicated that adult learners found that pronunciation was to be the most difficult part of a language to master. Gilakjani and Ahmadi's (2011) findings were supported by the Critical Period Hypothesis (CPH) which indicated that children are born with an innate ability to acquire a new language more than adults as children's brains are more flexible to assimilate a new language than adults Lenneberg (1967, as cited in Ganjooe & Narafshan, 2016).

Furthermore, Lee and Macaro (2013) found that Korean young learners have a better proficiency level than adults in acquiring new English vocabularies. It was found that 443 elementary school children experienced a high level proficiency than adults at university level. Thus, the findings of their study indicated that age is a significant factor for having correct pronunciation as children can obtain better pronunciation than in puberty age.

In contrast to the findings of this study, Nation and Newton (2008) suggested that if the learner did not learn a foreign language before a certain age, he/ she might not acquire a better pronunciation than those who started to learn a foreign language at a proper age. They stated that if the learner began to learn English language before six years old, there would be little or no accent. Besides, if the learner began to speak between the age of seven or eleven, there might be a possibility to have a slight accent. But if the learner began after the age of twelve, the learner would almost have a proper accent (Nation & Newton 2008, p.78). However, the researchers claimed that adult learners were more likely to have a good pronunciation and native like-accent than children.

4. Lack of Exposure

The findings of this study suggested that lack of exposure is another main obstacle that Arab EFL learners suffer from. Limited amount of exposure and limited usage of English outside classrooms have contributed to poor pronunciation. The finding was in agreement with Rogerson-Revell (2011) who viewed exposure as an essential factor in the learning of L2 pronunciation.

The findings of this study are similar to the findings obtained by Al-Mahrooqi (2012). The study found that lack of exposure to use the English language outside classrooms was one of the reasons behind Omani students' low proficiency level. The participants viewed that paucity of contact with native speakers or English speakers made it difficult for them to engage a second language, for it limited their usage of English language inside and outside the classroom. Moreover, students mentioned that lack of school's events to encourage using English language; teachers' utilization of Arabic outside the classroom; and the use of Arabic language at home are the factors

limit their opportunity to use English. These are the major causes of their lack of proficiency.

Similarly, the findings of this study were supported by Karnati and Vaidhyanathan (2017). They found that due to the lack of continuous exposure to the foreign language, both undergraduate and postgraduate students faced difficulties in improving their Russian spoken skills in Indian. It was noted that the learners did not use the foreign language outside the classroom. Karnati and Vaidhyanathan (2017) posited that students reverted back to their mother tongue or other local language once they were out of their classroom.

Additionally, Mutiara (2014) reported similar findings related to the factors contributed to the errors in pronouncing English vowels. The researcher found that Indonesian officers in Juanda airport mispronounced English vowels. She found that among the factors was the lack of exposure to English language which causes pronunciation errors.

5. Lack of Motivation and Interest

The result pointed out that the role of motivation by teachers, parents and learners is very essential to encourage the students to learn English pronunciation. It was found that teachers' motivation was not received in the classroom. Participants mentioned that they were poorly motivated and consequently they failed to attain a good pronunciation. Some researchers indicated that the lack of motivation is a major attribute that negatively affects Saudi EFL learners' competence (Alrabai, 2014b; Al-Khairi, 2013a; Khan, 2011).

Khan's study (2011) was consistent with this study. It was found that lack of motivation is one of the factors that affect the learning of English language in Saudi Arabia. He asserted that demotivated EFL learners are impeded to develop their English proficiency.

Furthermore, López and Tun's (2017) study reported that male and female students in Mexico experienced some factors that affect their participation in English speaking classes. It was found that goal performance, teachers' feedback and peers

support are motivational factors for male students. While the female participants reported that interacting with native speakers motivates them to keep practicing and learning. Moreover, female students indicated that being in a supportive classroom is an essential factor that motivates them for a better performance.

The findings of the current study pointed out that the participants experienced difficulties in English pronunciation due to the lack of interest to learn a foreign language. It was found that Arab EFL learners have a low interest to learn English pronunciation. Participants mentioned that since English is a compulsory subject, their main concern is their marks only. The finding was supported by Dornyei and Ushioda (2011, p. 138) who found that the learner who loses his/her interest towards learning English language is because they are demotivated due to some reasons.

In the same vein, Arefinezhad and Golaghaei (2015) found that students' lack of interest was a demotivating factor in learning English vocabulary. It was noted that institutions should respond to learners' needs for good environmental learning conditions and sufficient materials to raise the students' desire and interest. In addition, it was suggested that instructors should dedicate enough time and effort in teaching the English pronunciation and helping the learners to overcome their difficulties in pronunciation.

Likewise, a study conducted by Al-Mahrooqi and Denman (2014) among Omani EFL students in public universities found that motivation is the most important factor in language acquisition. They posited that the sources of motivation, as reported by the participants were family members, good teachers and the learners' positive attitude towards the foreign language. On the other hand, it was found that cruel and unqualified teachers, learners' negative attitude towards the language and the lack of purpose to learn the English language were the demotivational factors that highly contributed to the learners' lack of desire to learn the language.

Overall, the participants in this study were of the opinion that the learner's interest is an important factor aimed at improving their English pronunciation. In addition, Sykes (2015) indicated that the learners' particular interest affect their learning process and may result in success or failure to learn a second language.

5.3 Theoretical Implication

The theoretical implication of this study is to provide an understanding of the empirical results obtained from this study. From a theoretical standpoint, this study has provided an insight into the Second Language Acquisition, Input Hypothesis and Kolb's Learning Construct. The former relates to individual learner difference, situational and social factors, learner's choice of learning strategies. On the other hand, Social Constructive theory relates to the term of interactions among teachers, students, tasks and context.

With regards to the theoretical implication on Social Constructivism in the present study, it is witnessed that students interpret the learning of the pronunciation in their own ways. This is by using a technique which is taught by the teacher to facilitate them in learning the pronunciation of new words. In doing so, they share their individual minds with others when they interact with their classmates.

The roles initiated by the learners, teachers, task and context suggest that a potential plan for a brief vocabulary session within the class hours can be arranged by the class teacher. With the object to develop vocabulary growth, he/she may include the vocabulary activities in the four learning skills while preparing the content.

It is instructive to transfer Kolb's construct to the area of pronunciation acquisition where it can help to make sense of pronunciation acquisition theory and also categorize pronunciation learning strategies. This construct can then be used as the theoretical foundation for a pronunciation learning strategy categorization scheme where strategies are organized according to their efficacy in improving a learner's ability to obtain input or encourage practice, notice specific pronunciation details either through implicit or explicit feedback, form hypotheses about those details, and test such hypotheses

Based on the current findings, which support the theories, in the sense that Arab EFL learners use pronunciation learning strategies to improve their pronunciation in English language, Arab EFL learners are hoping to get more inputs from the teachers because they believe that a learned system is based on teachers' inputs. Moreover, Arab EFL learners complained that they have lack of practice of English pronunciation and formal instruction which affected their results in the pronunciation test. Furthermore, It

is instructive to transfer Kolb's construct to the area of pronunciation acquisition where it can help to make sense of pronunciation acquisition theory and also categorize pronunciation learning strategies. This construct can then be used as the theoretical foundation for a pronunciation learning strategy categorization scheme where strategies are organized according to their efficacy in improving a learner's ability to obtain input or encourage practice, notice specific pronunciation details either through implicit or explicit feedback, form hypotheses about those details, and test such hypotheses.

5.4 Summary

The purpose of this study was to analyze the Pronunciation Learning Strategies applied by Arab EFL learners. The findings obtained in this study corresponded to some of the previous studies. It began with an overall discussion obtained from two instruments employed in this research. The study revealed that Arab EFL participants used indirect strategies more frequently than direct strategies. It was found that they made an effective use of the Metacognitive Strategies in an indirect group. Furthermore, a positive but weak relationship was found between the Arab EFL learners' use of the PLS and their scores in the pronunciation test. Moreover, the factors that contributed to the learners' mispronunciation were explored as well.

The logo of the University of Wollongong (UWP) is a large, stylized 'W' shape composed of several overlapping triangles in shades of teal, light blue, and yellow. The letters 'UWP' are printed in white, bold, sans-serif font across the bottom of the 'W' shape.

UWP

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

6.1 Introduction

This chapter concludes the thesis, elaborates the pedagogical implications of the research findings and recommendations for future research. This research has demonstrated a valuable insight into Arab EFL learners' use of Pronunciation Learning Strategies (PLS) towards English pronunciation. This study helps the teachers to discover more about the factors that influence the learning of English pronunciation.

6.2 Main Findings

The primary purpose of this study was to explore the utilization of PLS among Arab EFL learners. The findings of this exploratory research have been concluded respectively in this section.

This study is significant as it was done to address the problems faced by the Arab EFL learners to master English, namely the lack of interest, lack of motivation, lack of opportunity to speak the language, the incompetence of the teachers etc., that are parts of the negative contributions. In the case of this study, the purpose was to find a suitable methods and approaches to help the learners to improve their English. Remedial measures will be taken into consideration so as to inject fresh interest in learners to acquire English as the second language. Based on the findings as can be seen in the evidence of the use of PLS among Arab EFL learners in enhancing their English pronunciation. The findings of the study pointed out that Arab EFL learners rely more on indirect strategies than direct strategies. It was found that the majority of Arab EFL learners ($M=3.55$) made more use of the Metacognitive Strategies in the indirect strategy group. Besides, Memory Strategy was also the dominant strategy in the direct

strategy group that was applied by the learners (M=2.96). Since Arab EFL learners in this study consisted of males, they showed a preference to learn English pronunciation by themselves such as searching for effective ways to learn English pronunciation and paying attention to others' utterance while they are speaking.

Another major finding was the level of relationship between the use of PLS and the pronunciation scores. It was reported that there was a weak positive relationship between the strategy use and the students' performances in the pronunciation test. The data showed that regardless of PLS the students utilized, there was no influence on their pronunciation test score. Nevertheless, the utilization of PLS may have contributed to the improvement of the learners' English pronunciation. These findings add to the growing body of literature on the role of strategies in developing learning performance (Rokoszewska, 2012; Szyszka, 2015; Tam, 2013).

The last significant finding from this study is the factors that influence the learning of English pronunciation among Arab EFL learners. This study found five main obstacles that hinder the Arab EFL learners' proficiency namely, 1) formal instruction, 2) lack of practice, 3) age of the learners, 4) lack of exposure and 5) lack of motivation and interest. The factors found in this study can be of assistance to teachers to better understand the challenges faced by these learners to master good English pronunciations.

Table 6.1 Perceived factors that hinder Arab EFL learners to master English pronunciation

Formal instruction
Lack of practice
Learners' age
Lack of exposure
Lack of motivation and interest

6.3 Summary of the Findings

The discussions of the findings are summarized in Figure 6.1 which illustrates the independent variable (Pronunciation Learning Strategies), dependent variable (English Pronunciation Performance), the factors (External and Internal factors) and their effects and relationships on one another.

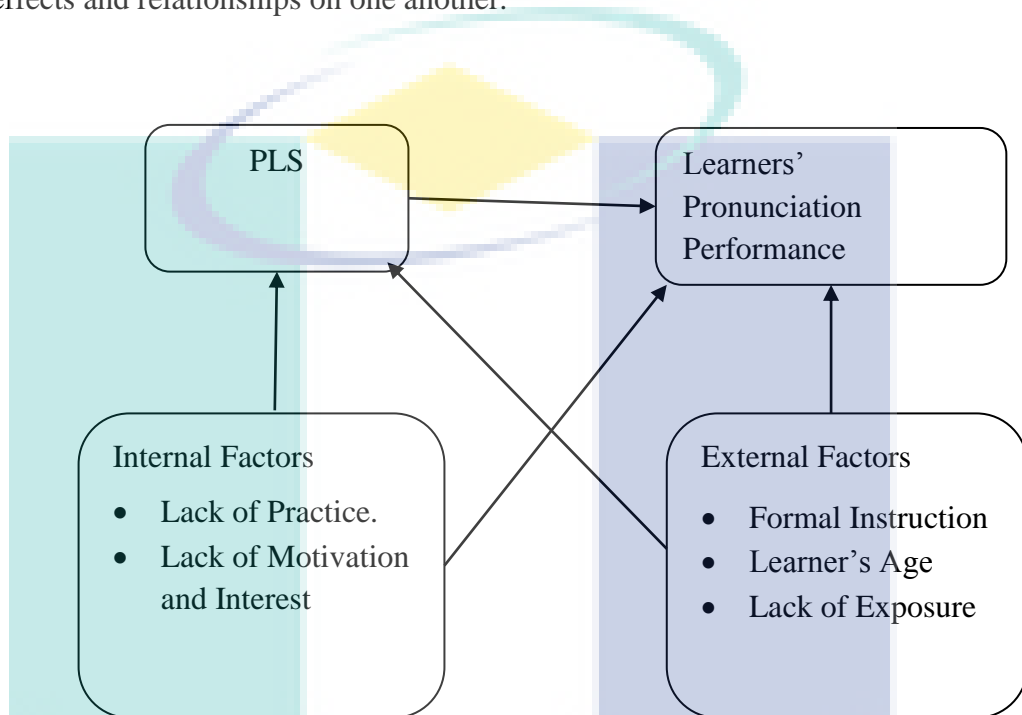


Figure 6.1: Factors influence the learning of English pronunciation and the relationship between variables

6.4 Pedagogical Implications

Based on this study, a number of pedagogical implications are highlighted:

The findings of this study reported that the majority of the students employed Metacognitive Strategies in learning English pronunciation. Even though the relationship found between the strategies used and the pronunciation performance was weak, it was still a positive relationship. Therefore, language instructors can teach Metacognitive Strategies explicitly in the classroom to their English language learners particularly the Arab EFL students. It is hoped that the Arab EFL learners will apply the PLS strategies in their actual learning to improve their pronunciation skills.

Besides teaching specific strategy such as Metacognitive Strategies to the learners, the exposure to other PLS strategies such as Memory, Cognitive, Compensation, Affective and Social Strategies is also vital. This will enable the learners to have a number of options to choose from which suit their personality and interest. Application of PLS in learning English pronunciation is found to be helpful to reduce the possibilities of having incorrect pronunciation among learners.

Additionally, phonetics training and more opportunities to practice should be given to the students to practice pronunciation in the classroom. Teachers should teach the students Received Pronunciation (RP) so that the learners will be aware of the correct way of pronouncing English words. This would reduce the challenges faced by the learners in pronouncing English sounds correctly.

Furthermore, this study sheds some light on the impediments that have impeded Arab EFL learners from having correct English pronunciation. It was found that having a lack of (formal) proper pronunciation instructions was the factor that most Arab EFL learners highlighted. In this case, the teacher is considered as a very important instrument in the acquisition process as students will try to imitate their teacher's pronunciation. For this reason, English teachers should have good phonetic skills as they are the role models for the learners. Moreover, teachers should highlight pronunciation as an important part of communication which means more pronunciation practices inside and outside the classroom are needed. Thus, more activities on pronunciation should be prepared by the teachers, focusing on certain consonants, vowels or diphthongs which are found challenging for the students.

6.5 Recommendations for Future Research

The following recommendations are presented based on the findings and conclusion drawn from this study.

This study is restricted to Arab EFL learners who enrolled in Preparatory Intensive English course (PIE) in Universiti Malaysia Pahang. Therefore, the findings may not be generalized to other Arab learners from different Arab countries. A replica of this quantitative research with a larger group of Arabs from other Arab countries could be done to explore more information and richer data for better generalization.

Thus, there is a need for more studies focusing on the relationship between pronunciation learning strategy use and pronunciation Performance. Such further research would enable researchers to determine and examine the nature of the relationship of the findings of the current research.

Future studies on pronunciation learning strategies among Arab EFL learners employing quasi experimental methodology are recommended. A quasi experimental research could be employed as it would enable the researchers to gauge the effectiveness of the PLS used by the learners after certain duration of time.

The scope of this study focused on the challenges faced by Arab EFL learners in learning English pronunciation. These contributing factors were gathered through open-ended questions. The findings helped the participants to assess their weaknesses based on their own inputs from the evaluation of the pronunciation test scores.

For future research, researchers may conduct an in-depth investigation on the factors that might influence the learning of English pronunciation among Arab EFL learners through qualitative methods, such as interviews and observations. Through these methods, more rich data can be gathered and more interesting findings will be explored.

The present study could not find a significant and a common pattern applicable either for successful and less successful students. In other words, the results did not suggest a particular set of strategies that may distinguish proficient learners from less proficient ones. In this sense much research is needed at the individual strategy level to investigate whether some set of Pronunciation Learning Strategies can account for differences in pronunciation ability at different levels.

A comparative study between Arab EFL learners and other EFL or ESL learners can also be conducted. The findings of this research will certainly shed more interesting and enlightening findings and thus, help teachers to better understand the issue of mastering English pronunciation.

Teachers should engage their students in practicing pronunciation via repetition drills on both discrete word or phrase level and the rules of pronunciation like the different pronunciation of sounds such as /æ/ as in man, /ɑ:/ as in car and /ɔ:/ as in ball.

6.6 Conclusion

The present study has shed more lights on the learning of English pronunciation among Arab EFL learners. The findings have identified the main factors, and problems that the learners have found most challenging about learning English. The data on the most frequent used PLS, which is Metacognitive Strategy, demonstrated that the learners did employ certain strategies to improve their pronunciation skills. The study addressed the potential role that PLS had on the learners' pronunciation performance, which indicated that by applying certain strategies in learning a foreign language pronunciation it could lead to the right direction of possessing a correct pronunciation. Proper pronunciation can enhance the learners' communication skills in daily interaction and avoid being misunderstood by others. Consequently, much attention should be paid on the prominence of gaining an accurate pronunciation by both learners and teachers.

The logo for UMP (Universitas Muhammadiyah Purwokerto) is a large, stylized letter 'U' shape. The top part of the 'U' is a light blue horizontal bar. The two vertical sides of the 'U' are light blue on the left and light purple on the right. The bottom part of the 'U' is a light blue triangle pointing downwards. The letters 'UMP' are written in white, bold, sans-serif font across the bottom of the 'U' shape.

UMP

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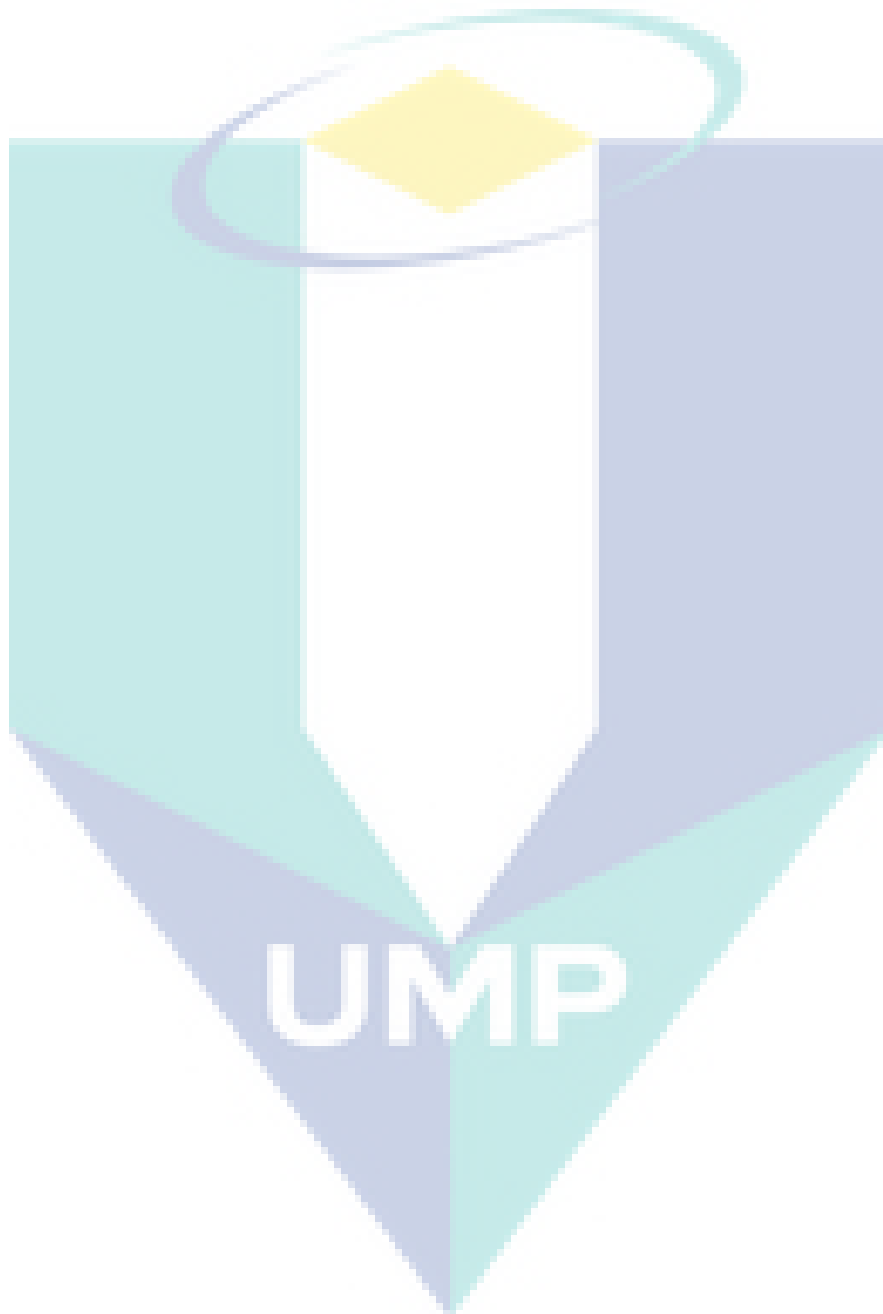
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Appendix A: Consent Form

Universiti Malaysia Pahang

Centre for Modern Languages and Human Sciences (CMLHS)

Dear participants,

I thank you for accepting to participate in my research entitled “An analysis of pronunciation learning strategies among Arab EFL learners at Universiti Malaysia Pahang”. This research will explore the utilization of pronunciation learning strategies, the relationship between strategy use and participants’ pronunciation score and finding the factors that affect the learning of English pronunciation. I would be glad to ask for your consent formally and specifically in terms of data use. I would be thankful if you could tick “√” and sign the content clauses below:

I consent to the recording and related document being analysed for research purpose and understand that as far as possible anonymity will be preserved if extracts are included for publication and report.

I consent that all input provided is initiated by my own self and without force.

I consent that I can withdraw from the study at anytime I want.

Signature:

Date:

Appendix B: Questionnaire



Dear participants,

Thank you for participating in this research. I need your cooperation in assessing us completing this questionnaire, which is designed to ask about the learning strategies adopted by Arab EFL learners and the factors influencing Arab EFL learners at Universiti Malaysia Pahang in learning English pronunciation. Please be assured that your responses will be kept confidential and your responses will be used solely for research purposes.

Name (Optional):

Country:

Age:

Gender: Male

Female

Instruction:

You are kindly requested to read the statements below and encircle the response that best indicates how often you use the given ways to learn English pronunciation according to the following scales:

1- Never or , 2- Rarely, 3- Sometimes, 4- Usually, 5- Always

Part A

No	Item	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually	Always
		1	2	3	4	5
1	<p>In order to memorise the pronunciation of a given word I try to associate it with the pronunciation of a different word (in another language I know) or with some sounds (e.g. animals sounds, sounds of machines, devices).</p> <p>لكي أتذكر نطق الكلمة المعطاة، أحاول أن أربطها بنطق كلمة مختلفة (في لغة أخرى أعرفها) أو أربطها ببعض الأصوات (مثل أصوات الحيوانات، الآلات، والأجهزة).</p>					
2	<p>I group words that sound similar in order to memorise their pronunciation.</p> <p>أضع الكلمات التي تبدو متشابهة في مجموعة واحدة لكي أتذكر نطقهم.</p>					
3	<p>I use visual aids to memorise the pronunciation of new words (e.g. posters with transcription of new words, and marking phonetic symbols with various colours).</p>					

	<p>أستخدم الإعلانات المرئية لكي أتذكر نطق الكلمات الجديدة (مثلاً الإعلانات التي تحتوي على تقطيع للكلمات الجديدة و عمل رموز صوتية بألوان مختلفة).</p>					
4	<p>I memorise the pronunciation of a given word by visualizing its transcription. أتذكر نطق الكلمات المعطاة عن طريق تخيل مقاطعها.</p>					
5	<p>I memorise the pronunciation of new words when I associate them with a situation in which I have heard them. أتذكر نطق الكلمات الجديدة عندما أقوم بربطها بموقف معين سمعتهم من قبل فيه.</p>					
6	<p>I repeat a word several times over (aloud or in my mouth) to memorise its pronunciation. أكرر الكلمات مرات عديدة (بصوت عالي أو بصمت في فمي).</p>					
7	<p>I memorise the pronunciation of a given word by putting it in a context (a sentence, a story, a rhyme, etc.). أتذكر نطق الكلمة المعطاة من خلال وضعها في سياق الحديث (جملة, قصة , بيت شعر .. الخ)</p>					

8	I review the pronunciation of recently learnt words regularly. أقوم بمراجعة نطق الكلمات التي تعلمتها حديثاً بانتظام.					
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Part B

No	Item	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually	Always
		1	2	3	4	5
9	I repeat sounds, words, sentences, etc., simultaneously with English speakers, imitating their gestures and facial expressions. أكرر الأصوات, الكلمات, الجمل ... الخ تزامناً مع المتحدث الإنجليزي, وأقوم بتقليد إشاراتهم وتعابير وجوههم.					
10	I listen to the radio and/ or watch TV in English. أستمع الى الراديو و/ أو أشاهد التلفاز باللغة الإنجليزية.					
11	I speak to foreigners in English. أتحدث مع الأجانب باللغة الإنجليزية.					
12	I practice reading aloud paying attention to my pronunciation. أمارس القراءة بصوت عالٍ, من خلال الإصغاء بدقة إلى نطقي.					

13	I look up the pronunciation of unknown words in a dictionary. أبحث في القاموس عن طريقة نطق الكلمات الغير معروفة.					
14	I analyse the differences between English pronunciation and the pronunciation of other languages. أقوم بتحليل الاختلافات بين النطق في اللغة الإنجليزية والنطق في لغات أخرى.					
15	I imitate native speakers of English, speaking Arabic in order to feel the difference between the two languages better. أقلد الناطقين باللغة الإنجليزية لكي أشعر بالفرق بين اللغتين بشكل أفضل.					

Part C

No	Item	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually	Always
		1	2	3	4	5
16	If I do not know how to pronounce a given word, I guess its pronunciation. في حالة عدم معرفتي بكيفية نطق الكلمة المعطاة , فإنني أظن نطقها.					
17	If I do not know how to pronounce a given word, I avoid using it. في حالة عدم معرفتي بكيفية نطق الكلمة المعطاة فإنني أتفادى استخدامها.					

Part D

No	Item	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually	Always
		1	2	3	4	5
18	I try to find as many different ways of practising my pronunciation as I can. أحاول بقدر المستطاع أن أجد عدة طرق مختلفة لممارسة نطقي.					
19	I pay attention to pronunciation when someone is speaking English. أقوم بالانتباه والتركيز على النطق عندما يتحدث شخص آخر.					
20	I try to find out how to improve my pronunciation. أحاول أن أقوم بالكشف عن كيفية تطوير نطقي.					
21	When I prepare a talk in English, I look up the pronunciation of new words in a dictionary and practise their pronunciation. عندما أقوم بتجهيز حديث باللغة الإنجليزية، أبحث في القاموس عن كيفية نطق الكلمات الجديدة وأقوم بممارسة نطقها.					
22	I evaluate my progress in pronunciation by recording myself and comparing my pronunciation to the pronunciation of native speakers. أقوم بتقييم تقدمي في النطق عن طريق تسجيل نفسي ومقارنة نطقي ب نطق متحدثي اللغة الإنجليزية.					

Part E

No	Item	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually	Always
		1	2	3	4	5
23	I try to relax whenever I feel afraid of reading aloud or speaking in English. أحاول أن أهدأ في حال شعرت بالخوف من القراءة بصوت عال أو التحدث باللغة الإنجليزية.					
24	I give myself a reward or treat when I have worked hard on pronunciation. أكافأ نفسي بإعطائها جائزة عندما أعمل بإجتهاد لتطوير نطقي.					
25	I talk to someone else about how I feel when I am learning pronunciation. أتحدث مع شخص آخر وأخبره كيف أشعر عندما أتعلم النطق.					

Part F

No	Item	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually	Always
		1	2	3	4	5
26	I ask others for help if I do not know how to pronounce a given sound or word. أطلب المساعدة من الآخرين إذا لم أكن اعرف كيف أنطق الكلمة أو الصوت المعطى.					
27	I learn pronunciation with other students, friends. أتعلم النطق مع الأصدقاء الآخرين.					

Other

No	Item	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually	Always
		1	2	3	4	5
28	I use other way(s) of learning pronunciation (explain what you do) أستخدم طرق أخرى لتعلم النطق (قم بتوضيحها في الأسفل)					

Explain here

- ❖ In your opinion, what are the factors that influence the learning of English pronunciation?

من وجهة نظرك، ماهي العوامل التي تؤثر في تعلم النطق باللغة الإنجليزية؟

Thank you for your cooperation

Fatima Ali Lardhi

Master of Science

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Appendix C: Pronunciation Test



Dear participants,

This research aims to investigate the English pronunciation learning strategies among Arab EFL learners in Universiti Malaysia Pahang.

Name: Country:

Age: Gender: Male Female

Instructions:

You are kindly requested to read the words and sentences below and pronounce them with high voice.

Note: You will be recorded, please feel relaxed.

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Phase one: Please read the words below:

Number	Words with /p/	Words with /v/	Words with /ʒ/	Words with /tʃ/	Words with /r/
1	Policeman	Valley	Confusion	Champion	Bank
2	Price	Very	Unusual	Cheerful	Finger
3	Dropped	Arrived	Treasure	Butcher	Nothing
4	Helpful	Lovely	Asia	Kitchen	Ring
5	Envelope	Five	Garage	Lunch	Thinking
6	Stop	Of	Massage	Which	Wrong

Phase two: Please read the following pairs

No	Sound /b/	Sound /p/
1	Beach	Peach
2	Big	Pig
3	Bin	Pin
4	Cab	Cap
5	Bear	Pear

No	Sound /ʃ/	Sound /tʃ/
1	Sheep	Cheap
2	Sherry	Cherry
3	Wash	Watch

No	Sound /tʃ/	Sound /dʒ/
1	Choke	Joke
2	Larch	Large

No	Sound /f/	Sound /v/
1	Fail	Veil
2	Ferry	Very
3	Few	View
4	Fine	Vine
5	Safe	Save

No	Sound /ŋk/	Sound /ŋ/
1	Sink	Sing
2	Stink	Sting
3	Wink	Wing

No	Sound /n/	Sound /ŋ/
1	Run	Rung
2	Thin	Thing

Phase three: please read the following sentences:

- He is singing.
- It is chilly in the garden.
- Michelle has a job in a shop selling casual shoes.
- I think I've lost the passports.
- She does sports massage occasionally, not every day.

Thank you for your cooperation

Fatima Ali Lardhi

Master of Science

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Appendix D: List of Publication

Conference Papers

1- Fatima Ali Salah Lardhi, Noor Raha Mohd Radzuan(2017). Arab EFL Learners' Mispronunciation of English Language Consonant Sounds. SOLS 2017 International Conference. Putrajaya, Malaysia 21-22 November 2017.

2- Fatima Ali Salah Lardhi, Noor Raha Mohd Radzuan & Abdelmadjid Benraghda (2017). Factors that Affect Arab EFL Learners' English Pronunciation. 5th International Conference on Language, Education, Humanities and Innovation (ICLEHI). Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia 21-22 January 2017.

Journal Papers

1- Fatima Ali Salah Lardhi, Noor Raha Mohd Radzuan & Abdelmadjid Benraghda (2017). Factors that Affect Arab EFL Learners' English Pronunciation. *English for Specific Purpose World Journal*, 19 (53).



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