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**Investigating FL Learners' Errors of Pronunciation  
with Regard to Spelling: the Case of MMUTO EFL  
Licence Learners**

**Presented by:**

Ms. Hamlat Souad

Mrs. Derras Messaouda

**Supervised by:** Mrs. Maidi Naima

**Board of Examiners:**

**Chair:** Mr. Chetouane Madjid (MAA), Department of English, Mouloud Mammeri University of Tizi Ouzou.

**Supervisor:** Mrs. Maidi Naima (MAA), Department of English, Mouloud Mammerie University of Tizi Ouzou.

**Examiner:** Mrs. Fedoul Malika (MAA), Department of English, Mouloud Mammeri University of Tizi Ouzou.

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*To my beloved parents (Abd-Enour and Houria)  
for their motivation, support, encouragement, and love*

*To my dear brothers and sisters*

*To my nieces: Imane, Léticia, Mélissa, and my nephew:*

*Abd-Enour Amine*

*To my grandmother Aziza*

*To all my friends and teachers*

*To anyone who helped me, to anyone who loves me*

**SOUAD**

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*To my sweet heart parents, for their deep affection, motivation, support and  
love all these years. Thank you for your encouragement.*

*To my dear brothers, sister, and my nephew.*

*To my husband. For his patience, love, friendship, help, and great  
encouragement.*

*To my husband's family*

*To my friends.*

*To all those who love me.*

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## **Abstract**

*This study investigates the issue of learners' errors of pronunciation with regard to spelling, that is to say, dealing with errors of pronunciation by making relation to the written form. Our study aims at finding the major sources of pronunciation errors committed by learners of English when they read, and also to reveal the relationship between the written medium and the spoken one. To investigate this problematic, we have used two theories in relation to language learning; the first one is Error Analysis Theory (EAT), which enabled us to analyze the errors committed by learners of English, the second one is Contrastive Analysis Theory (CAT) which enabled us to compare between some elements of the Target Language structure with those of the learners' L1 like: phonology and morphology, to predict the difficulties the learners might encounter. For gathering data we used two research tools which are: a questionnaire that is administered to teachers of English at MMUTO department of English and a recording test which is organized for learners of English from licence levels. The results of the collected data are then represented in form of tables, diagrams, charts, and statistics. The gathered data is then analyzed by using descriptive statistical method and Qualitative Content Analysis which allowed us to confirm the hypotheses of this research and to answer the questions that are asked in the General Introduction.*

## **List of Key Words:**

- Error
- Error Analysis
- Learners
- Spelling
- Pronunciation Errors
- Target Language
- Teachers

## **List of Abbreviations**

- ALM: Audio-Lingual Method
- CA : Contrastive Analysis
- CAT: Contrastive Analysis Theory
- EA : Error Analysis
- EAT: Error Analysis Theory
- FL : Foreign Language
- L1 : First Language
- L2 : Second Language
- MMUTO : Mouloud Mammeri University of Tizi Ouzou
- MT: Mother Tongue
- NS: Number of Students
- NSCP: Number of Students with Correct Pronunciation
- NSUP: Number of Students with Uncorrect Pronunciation
- QCA: Qualitative Content Analysis
- SLA: Second Language Acquisition
- TL : Target Language

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- **Statement of the problem**

Language plays a great role in our life because it is a tool to acquire knowledge, transmit information, express feelings, emotions, and ideas. Today, English has become one of the most spoken languages all over the world. It is the most used international language of communication. In Algerian schools and higher educational institutions, English is taught as a foreign language which emphasizes on the four basic language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Learning a language means Learning its grammar, vocabulary, phonology, and even its culture. When learning a language, it is very important to master the pronunciation of that language and its appropriate use.

Pronunciation is the one of the important and difficult problems that learners of English language have to face when learning English. In fact, second or foreign language Learning and errors are interrelated since learners commit errors when they put the target language into use. Richard and Schmidt (2010) posit that error is only observed in the learning of (L2) and foreign language (FL), in other words, second language (L2) and (FL) are languages learnt after one has acquired his first language (L1). For this, learners of L2 often make errors. For learners of English, one of the most important aspects that they should master when learning the English language is the relationship between spelling and pronunciation, because the latter are interrelated. So, most of the English language errors of spelling and pronunciation are due to the lack of connection between them.

The study of the process of (FL) and (L2) learning has attracted a great interest of many researchers in an attempt to discover more about Second language acquisition. To reach their aim, researchers have taken the study of the language

produced by learners at different stages of their development as a starting point, because, it is as the most important source of information about how second language acquisition takes place. (Ellis, 1994: 435). By doing so, researchers focus on the study of learners' errors.

Error Analysis (EA) deals with all sources of errors and looks at errors as part of the process of learning and can inform researchers about the difficulties that hinder (FL) learning. According to Corder (1974) a systematic analysis of errors made by language learners makes it possible to determine areas that need reinforcement in teaching. The interest of many researchers has been on pronunciation errors since it is an important factor in learning and teaching English as a foreign language. One of the works which has been investigated in the department of English at MMUTO, is: Evaluating Pronunciation in an Algerian EFL Textbook: the Case of the Fourth Year Middle School Textbook "On the move", by "Mesbah Lydia".

This work is about investigating learners' errors of pronunciation with regards to spelling. In other words, the errors in students' pronunciation that can be traced ultimately to spelling. It has been noticed that "spelling pronunciation errors" is a subject which has not been investigated before in the department of English at MMUTO. The previous studies related to this topic have only dealt with the analysis of pronunciation errors without taking into account the relationship between pronunciation and spelling. The aim of this work is to investigate how the errors in pronunciation made by learners of English are related to spelling, and to determine the relationship between the written word and its phonetic transcription. In doing so the theoretical frame work explored in the present dissertation is Corder's theory which is described in his article entitled the *Significance of Learner Error*, Published in 1967.

- **Aims and Significance of the Study**

The present work is a case study of English language learners at the level of Mouloud Mammeri University of Tizi Ouzou. It aims to investigate the learners' errors of pronunciation in relation to spelling. EA Theory is used to sort out the sources of pronunciation problems of the EFL learners in MMUTO. It aims also to sort out the relationship between the written word and its speech sound. In fact, the most important objective in conducting this research is to shed some light on the learners' errors as a real and inevitable phenomenon that should be considered in any study of foreign and second language learning. The analysis of these errors can facilitate the learning process by identifying how students progress during the process of acquisition of the target language as well as it unveils the effectiveness of learning foreign languages (Ellis, 2008 :41).

- **Research Questions and Hypotheses**

Since there are no previous works which dealt with spelling pronunciation errors in the department of English at MMUTO, the present work will bring some knowledge about this topic by providing answers to the following research questions:

1. -What are the sources of pronunciation problems of EFL learners in MMUTO?
2. -Does spelling influence the way in which learners pronounce English sounds?

3. -Is there any relationship between pronunciation errors and the spelling of the words?

In an attempt to answer these research questions, the following hypotheses are advanced:

1. Most of errors made by students of English in the pronunciation process are due to their ignorance of the fact that some letters of the English alphabet are silent in, in addition to the interference of the mother tongue, and the lack of knowledge about the target language rules.

2. Spelling influences the way in which learners pronounce English sounds.

3. Spelling does not influence the way in which learners pronounce English sounds.

4. There is a relationship between pronunciation errors and spelling.

5. There is no relationship between pronunciation errors and spelling.

### • **Research Techniques and Methodology**

To conduct the research, the study uses a mixed method approach in order to collect data. In the first part, the quantitative method is used for quantifying the number of students who often make errors of pronunciation in the Department of English. In the second part, the qualitative method is used to determine the sources from which pronunciation errors originate, and to identify these errors to see whether spelling influences students' pronunciation. In order to provide answers to these hypotheses, we used as research techniques to gather and collect information: a questionnaire, which is administered to teachers of English at the level of MMUTO and a recording test for English language learners from different levels at the same department.

- **Structure of the Dissertation**

The present dissertation is structured following the traditional simple model. It is divided into four chapters, in addition to a General Introduction and a General Conclusion. The first chapter presents the key concepts and definitions related to the issue of EFL learners' errors of pronunciation in relation to spelling. The second chapter is about the techniques and methods used to conduct the research. The third chapter comprises the presentation of the findings which shows the obtained results. The last chapter is the discussion of the findings in which the results are analyzed and explained using Corder's framework of Error Analysis. Finally, a General Conclusion which summarizes the whole work.

## **Introduction**

This chapter of our research deals with the review of the literature on spelling pronunciation errors. It aims at presenting the concepts related to the issue of English language learners' errors of pronunciation in relation to spelling. This chapter is divided into two sections: The first section covers the scope and definitions of concepts that are related to pronunciation, spelling, and errors. The second part covers the different approaches related to Error Analysis, and some explanations about the latter (EA).

### **1. Definition of Concepts**

#### **1.1. Pronunciation**

It is the way or act of pronouncing words and sentences. Because it is a part of speech which provides people with the capacity to communicate with each other in an effective way. Pronunciation is needed in language learning. One of the authors who defined the concept of pronunciation is Peter Roach. According to him, pronunciation is *"the act of producing the sounds of a language"* (Peter Roach, 2001:86). That is to say, pronunciation is the manner in which words, letters, and sounds are pronounced.

Learning the correct pronunciation of English words is an important factor in learning and acquiring this foreign or second language. According to Dalton and Seidhofer (1993) *"pronunciation is integrated and integral part of language teaching and learning. It includes elements much wider than sounds (consonants and vowels)"*.

## 1.2. Spelling

In order to write down sentences and words, learners of English language have to know about English spelling. According to Kenworthy (1990)

*“the spelling system is considered in two different situations: the situation of the reader, and that of the writer. In writing, a person has to know about the spelling of a word that he or she wants to write down, that is to say, something that must be pulled out of memory; whereas, in reading a person uses the patterns on the page to decide how to pronounce a particular word”.*

That is to say, spelling means how a word is spelt, or written down.

## 1.3. Errors

Error is something which is very attached to human beings. Thus, making errors is something natural and normal. The definition of error differs from one scholar to another. George, for example, explains the concept of errors as follows:

*“EFL learners make errors in both comprehension and production, the first being rather scantily investigated. All learners make errors which have different names according to the group committing the error. Children's errors have been seen as "transitional forms", the native speakers ones are called "slips of the tongue" and the second language errors are considered "unwanted forms” (George 1972).*

In fact, Errors are part of everyday communication, and are unavoidable when humans communicate with each other.

The term "error", according to Lennon (1991) refers to: *“a linguistic form or combination of forms which in the same context and under similar conditions of production would, in all likelihood, not be produced by the speakers' native speakers counterparts”* In other words, errors generally are produced by learners of the Target Language, not by the language native speakers.

Norrish (1987), defining error, claims: *“...error is a systematic deviation, when a learner has not learnt something and consistently gets it wrong”.* That is to say,

errors are committed when the learner hasn't got or hasn't understood something in the right way, for example: the pronunciation of the letter "k" in the word "know".

According to H. Douglas Brown an error is: "*a noticeable deviation from the adult grammar of a native speaker, reflecting the interlanguage competence of the learner*" (1994:205)

#### **1.4. Error Vs Mistake:**

Corder (1967) claims that: "*errors reflect gaps in a learner's knowledge of the TL, that is, the learner does not know what is correct*". In other words, an error is an issue of knowledge about the rules of language.

Whereas, a mistake according to Brown refers to: "*a performance error*" (2000:217). This means that mistakes are due to the learner's inability to apply some linguistic rules due to tiredness, nervousness, or carelessness. In other words a mistake is not an issue of knowledge, but an issue of application of rules.

#### **1.5. Spelling Pronunciation errors**

By spelling pronunciation errors, we mean the errors in students' pronunciation which can be traced ultimately to spelling. As well as, to the strange relations between the written medium and the spoken one in English. In other words, committing errors in the pronunciation of a word according to the way in which it is spelled. e.g: the word "island" is pronounced by many learners of English /aisland/ instead of /ailənd/.

#### **1.6. English Sounds**

Unlike other languages, English language has 22 vowel sounds and 24 consonant sounds. Some English vowels are long, others are short, but all vowels

change length depending on the level of stress on them. For most of English language learners, the 22 vowel sounds of English language present an important area of study.

Consonant sounds are also problematic because some of them are silent, others are pronounced, some are voiced, others are voiceless, and some of them may change even the way in which it is pronounced from one word to another. For example ‘th’ sounds /θ/ and /ð/ and the approximate ‘r’ sound, often requires attention; and other sounds such as /h/, /w/ and /ŋ/ cause a lot of errors. For this reason, everyone who learns English needs to learn them. All students need to pay attention to accurate consonant production: voicing and placement need to be mastered.

### **1.6.1. English Vowels**

According to Peter Roach: “*Vowels are sounds in which there is no obstruction to the flow of air as it passes from the larynx to the lips*” (1991:10). That is to say, vowels are produced easily because the sound passes directly from the larynx to the lips.

According to Jones, vowels are “*some of the continuous voiced sound, produced without obstruction in the mouth, unaccompanied by any frictional noise*”. Jones (1958:15) in his book “*The Pronunciation of English*” classifies the vowels into five classes based on the position of the tongue;

**(1). Front vowels**, in the production of which the ‘front’ of the tongue is raised in the direction of the hard palate. For example, /i:/ in /i:t/ eat.

**(2). Back vowels**, in the production of which the ‘back’ of the tongue is raised in the

direction of the soft palate. For example, /u:/ in /gu:d/ good.

(3). **Central vowels**, when the position of the tongue is in the middle or in the intermediate of front and back. For example, /ɜ:/ in /gɜ:l/ girl.

(4). **Close vowels**, when the tongue is held as high as possible consistently with not producing a frictional noise. For example, /i:/ in /fi:d/ feed and /u:/ in /fu:d/ food.

(5). **Open vowels**, when the tongue is held as low as possible as in /a:/ in /ga:ðə/ gather. Jones (1958:15)

### 1.6.2. English consonants

According to Kelly, English consonants can be described in terms of:

- **The place of articulation**

(1). **Dental:** Any sound which is articulated by the tip tongue against the upper teeth; e.g. /f/.

(2). **Alveolar:** Namely sounds articulated by the tip or blade of the tongue against the teeth-ridge; e.g. /t/.

(3). **Palatals:** Namely sounds articulated by the back of the tongue against the hard palate; e.g. /j/.

(4). **Velars:** Namely sounds articulated by the back of the tongue against the soft palate; e.g. /k/

(5). **Glottal:** Namely sounds articulated in the glottis; e.g. /h/.

- **Manner of articulation**

(1). **Plosive:** A complete closure is made somewhere in the vocal tract, and the soft palate is also raised. Air pressure increases behind the closure, and is then released ‘explosively’, e.g. /p/ and /b/.

(2). **Affricative:** A complete closure is made somewhere in the mouth, and the soft palate is raised. Air pressure increases behind the closure, and is then released more slowly than in plosives, e.g. /t/ and /d/.

(3). **Fricative:** When two vocal organs come close enough together for the movement of the air between them to be heard, e.g. /f/ and /v/.

(4). **Nasal:** A closure is made by the lips, or by the tongue against the plate, the soft plate is lowered, and air escapes through the nose, e.g. /m/ and /n/.

(5). **Lateral:** A partial closure is made by the blade of the tongue against the alveolar ridge. Air is able to flow around the sides of the tongue, e.g. /l/.

(6). **Approximant:** Vocal organs come near to each other, but not so close as to cause audible friction, e.g. /r/ and /w/. Kelly (2000:47)

## **1.7. English Diphthongs**

Diphthongs (combination of vowel sounds) are sounds which involve a change in quality during their production. Diphthongs are represented phonetically by sequences of two letters. The first showing the starting point and the second indicating the direction of the movement. There are three kinds of diphthongs. They are: closing diphthongs, falling diphthongs, centering diphthongs.

### **(1). Raising or Closing Diphthongs**

The position of the tongue when the second vowel is pronounced is higher than its position when the first vowel is pronounced. For example:

- /ai/, like in time /taim/, fine /fain/
- /ei/, like in make /meik/, take /teik/
- /au/, like in now /nau/, how /hau/
- /əu/, like in no /nəu/, go /gəu/

### **(2). Falling Diphthongs**

The position of the tongue when it utters the second vowel is lower than the first one. For example: /iə/, like in fear /fiə(r)/, hear /hiə(r)/

### **(3). Centering Diphthongs**

The position of the tongue when uttering the second vowel is at the centre. For example: /ɛə/, like in there /ðɛə/

## **1.8. English Triphthongs**

In English, the most complex sound is the triphthong; which is defined by Crystal (2003:237) as the glide from one vowel to another and then to a third vowel; all this is produced rapidly and without interruption. For example: /aiə/ as in “heir”.

## **1.9. Phonemes**

A phoneme is defined as one of the units of sound (or gesture in case of sign languages) that distinguish one word from another in a particular language. Within

linguistics there are different views about the nature of phonemes. However, a phoneme is generally regarded as the smallest unit of sound in speech. According to Bloomfield (1933: 77) a phoneme is: “*a minimum unit of distinctive sound-feature...*” E.g. the word “cat” has three phonemes: ‘c’ ‘a’ and ‘t’, which make it different from the word “hat”.

## **1.10. Stress**

Stress is the pressure of breath with which sounds are produced. There are two types of stress: word stress and sentence stress. Harmer(1993) claims that students have to be sure about what they want to say because, at the meaning level, some words are given more prominence than others. Consequently, the position of the stress can change the meaning or even the function of the words. For example:

- She gave **me** a flower (not to someone else)
- She gave me a **flower** (not something else)

### **A- Word stress**

Every word which has two or more syllables and is pronounced alone can be called a “word stress” if it has a stress on one of its syllables. Harmer (2001:187) claims that “*stress is important in individual words, in phrases, and in sentences*”.

### **B- Sentence stress**

We can talk about sentence stress only in connected speech because when we talk we pronounce words randomly and quickly. So, some words can lose their stress and others keep it. The words which keep their stress form are what we call “word stress”.

## 1.11. Intonation

Intonation is the changes in the music of the voice while producing speech. Jones (1958:59) states that in speaking, the pitch of the voice, i.e. the pitch of the musical note produced by the vocal cords, is constantly changing. These variations in pitch are called intonation (or inflection). Intonation is thus quite independent of stress, with which it is sometimes confused by beginners. Fluctuations in pitch either involve a rising pitch or a falling pitch. Intonation is found in every language and even in tonal languages, but the realization and function are seemingly different. It is used in non-tonal language to add attitudes to words (attitudinal function) and to differentiate between wh-questions, yes-no questions, declarative statements, commands, requests, etc. Generally speaking, the following intonations are distinguished:

- **Rising Intonation** means the pitch of the voice rises over time;
- **Falling Intonation** means that the pitch falls with time;
- **Dipping Intonation** falls and then rises;
- **Peaking Intonation** rises and then falls.

## 1.12. Rhythm

It generally means a “*movement marked by the regulated succession of strong and weak elements, or of opposite or different conditions*” Annon (1971:2537). That is to say learners of English should be able to say a word or sentence without hesitating over the sounds in order to make it fluent.

### 1.13. Voicing

The term “voicing” according to Jones (2003:581) refers to the vibration of the vocal folds. That is to say, each sound which is accompanied by voicing, is said to be a “voiced sound”, while sounds which are not accompanied by voicing are called “voiceless sounds”.

For example: /b/ is a voiced sound while /p/ is a voiceless sound, even though the position is the same for both sounds (Roach, 1991:26-34).

### 1.14. Phonetics and phonology

Teaching and learning the English pronunciation requires phonetics and phonology. Both disciplines (phonetics and phonology) are very crucial in language speech process which is the main focus of English language speakers.

- **Phonetics**

David Crystal (2003:237) views that: *“phonetics is the study of the way humans make, transmit, and receive speech sounds. It is divided into three main branches, corresponding to these three distinctions: articulatory phonetics, acoustic phonetics and auditory phonetics”*. That is to say, phonetics aims to study how people produce, receive and transmit sounds of any language.

- **Phonology**

Phonology is a discipline which analyzes the sound system of the language. Gimson (1989:6) asserts that *“phonological level analyzes the pattering of sounds in a language”*

David Crystal (2003:237) agrees with Gimson (1989) when he says that:

*“phonology is the study of the sound systems of languages and the general properties displayed by these systems. Phonology is interested in studying differences of meaning by analyzing contrasts in sounds. When talking about the “sound system” of English, we are also talking about the number of phonemes, that English speakers use, and how they are organized”.*

For this reason, we can say that it is difficult to study the phonetics of a given language without studying its phonology, because the two disciplines are interrelated.

## **1.15. Joining**

Away from the English sounds, it is of great importance to join everything together in the right manner. English has various ways of joining words, among them:

### **1.15.1 Assimilation**

According to Laver (1994:383) assimilation is *“the influence exercised from a segment at the beginning of one word to a segment at the beginning of the next”*.

It means that sounds belonging to one word can cause changes in sounds belonging to neighboring words, e.g: “in the” is pronounced →/innə/,

“get them” is pronounced →/gettəm/.

### **1.15.2 Elision**

Elision according to David Crystal is *“the omission of sounds in connected speech where both consonants and vowels may be affected and sometimes whole syllables may be elided”* (Crystal, 2003:158). That is to say, under some circumstances some sounds may disappear, e.g. “texts” is pronounced →/teks/.

### 1.15.3 Linking

Dretzke (1998:112) defines linking as “*one of the typical features of spoken English; connecting sounds smoothly*” which means, linking words and sounds together in real connected speech. e.g. “here are” is pronounced → /hiərar/,

“green eyes” is pronounced → /gri:naiz/.

## 2. Major approaches to analyzing errors committed by learners of a target language

### 2.1. Contrastive Analysis

CA is the comparison of two languages (the mother tongue and the target language) at the level of linguistic systems, for example, the sound system. CA is “*a systematic comparison of specific linguistic characteristics of two or more languages*” (Van et al, 1984: 36). During the learning of a Second language, learners are influenced by their native language, the errors that are made are caused by the interference from the mother tongue. According to (Brown, 2000: 208):

*“Contrastive analysis hypothesis claimed that the principal barrier to Second language acquisition is the interference of the first language system with the second language system and that scientific structural analysis of the two languages in question would yield a taxonomy of linguistic contrast between them which in turn would enable the linguist to predict the difficulties a learner would encounter”.*

The idea presented in the statement above is that, the acquisition of a Second language is affected or influenced by the interference of the mother tongue. It states that comparing L1 with L2 system is a way to know where difficulties can occur and to predict the errors that can be made by learners of a foreign language. CA confirms that, when the learner is unable to make a correct production in the L2, he refers to his knowledge of the native language in order to cover his/her difficulties. Furthermore, this comparison is helpful for the linguists in

the prediction of learners' errors and it makes the teachers able to know the areas in which learners find difficulties and work on them.

CA was criticized when many studies proved that the transfer from L1 is not the only source of errors and these latter can be originated from other sources. (Ellis, 1996 :19) argues that “*The study of learner errors showed that although many errors were caused by transferring L1 habits, many more were not*”.

The limitations and weaknesses of CA paved the way to the emergence of Error Analysis (EA). (Spolskey, 1989: 120) argued that “*the original weakness of contrastive Analysis hypothesis was its failure to go beyond a statement of difference to a supportable theory of difficulty*”.

## **2.2. Error Analysis**

Error Analysis (EA) is a type of linguistic analysis that focuses on the errors committed by learners. It is concerned with the study of types and causes of learners' errors. This idea is originated from (Bussmann, 1996: 155) statement in which he says that “*error analysis studies the types and causes of linguistic errors*”.

The errors and difficulties faced by a foreign language learner is the same with that of children acquiring their native language. This is what is understood from Corder's statement: “*His situation is similar to that of an infant acquiring his mother tongue. He regularly produces utterances which are not those of an adult speaker*” (Corder, 1973: 260).

In EA, errors are seen as being natural during the learning process, and considered as an important point in both learning and teaching processes because it could inform researchers about the difficulties that hinder foreign language learning. According to Troike (2006:

39) “errors are thus a sign that the learner is exploring the new system rather than just experiencing ‘interference’ from old habits”.

Unlike the Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis which believes that interference from L1 knowledge is the only source of errors, EA proves that there are other sources which consist of interlingual and intralingual.

### **3. The Classification of the Sources of Errors**

#### **3.1. Interlingual Errors**

Interlingual errors are considered as a source of errors for every foreign language learner. The process of acquiring a second language is very difficult because learners always commit errors. These errors are related to the mother tongue interference. Ellis (1994:140), describes interference as “*The process by which the learners’ L1 influences the acquisition and use of an L2*”. From this, it’s true to say that foreign language learners often face difficulties while learning the target language. They transfer their old knowledge from the first language to the target language and the fact that these two languages are different causes errors.

#### **3.2. Intralingual Errors**

Intralingual errors are those errors that result from the new language learned. They are errors which reflect general characteristics of the rule learning, such as faulty generalization, incomplete application of rules, and failure to learn conditions under which rules apply (Richards, 1971). Students’ interference from the mother tongue is not the only reason for making errors but, learners while learning a target language commit errors because they do not know the target language very well. Intralingual errors occur at the level of morphology, syntax, lexicon, spelling, punctuation and the organization of essays. For example adding

« ed » for all the verbs to form the past tense and “ s “ for all the words to form the plural are errors of simplification and overgeneralization (Richards, 1971).

#### **4. Pedagogical Implications of Error Analysis**

Studies concerning errors are carried out because of different reasons: firstly, to identify the way learners acquire a language. Secondly, to sort out the causes and sources of learners' errors and then, to gather information on the difficulties and obstacles faced by learners in language learning, this can be helpful for teachers in their teaching process. Students' errors are considered as a feedback for teachers to evaluate the effectiveness of their teaching methods. Brown (2001: 66) argues that *“errors are, in fact, windows to a learner's internalized understanding of the second language, and therefore, they give teachers something observable to react to”*. Errors can help educators in selecting materials and choosing appropriate techniques so, through errors teachers can know how the students reach their performances also, it gives the teacher the opportunity to find what lacks in their teaching process and what they should add to motivate or to develop in their students' process of learning.

Concerning designing a syllabus, the analysis of errors can help the designers to design courses and to decide what should be the content. According to Richards (1971:208)

*“Many of the learners' errors came from the strategies that they use in language acquisition and the reciprocal interference of the target language items. Error Analysis would allow teachers to figure out what areas should be focused on and what kind of attention is needed in an L2 classroom. So, language teachers can be better able to develop curriculum and select materials that can facilitate L2 learning processes”*.

This means that the analysis of language learners' errors is important to find the difficulties that can occur in FL learning then, to provide students with appropriate teaching methods in order to help them improve their learning development process.

## **Conclusion**

This section has reviewed the different concepts and definitions which are related to pronunciation, spelling and error. It is composed of three parts; each one of them tries to bring a new insight into the domain of spelling pronunciation errors. The first part has investigated the definitions given to this concept by other linguists and scholars. The second part has dealt with the different approaches that are related to errors. The last part tackles an overview of the theoretical framework.

## **Introduction**

The present chapter is devoted to the presentation of the research methodology. It includes the research design which is used to investigate the pronunciation problems faced by learners of English, in relation to spelling. To answer the questions that are already asked in the General Introduction, it is important to use a research methodology that consists of data gathering tools and data analysis procedures. The section comprises the main points which are related to the research methods used in social sciences namely: The mixed method research (quantitative and qualitative), population sample, the procedures of data collection, and the procedures of data analysis.

### **1-Research Methods**

In the present study, the mixed-methods approach is adopted as the methodology of this research because it assures credibility in reporting the findings. Quantitative and qualitative data are gathered through: a questionnaire, which comprises both close and open ended questions, addressed to the teachers of English at MMUTO, and a recording test for different levels of English language learners at MMUTO.

As for the analysis of the collected data, we used descriptive statistical method and qualitative content analysis. On the one hand, open ended questions are interpreted and analyzed by adopting Qualitative Content Analysis (QCA) to gather data. On the other hand, we used descriptive statistical method to analyze close ended questions by the use of percentages, diagrams, tables, pie charts...etc to present the statistics.

## **2-Context of Investigation and Population Sample**

This investigation is carried out in the department of English at MMUTO. That is to say, this research is carried out in a realistic setting. The population which is considered as the principle source of the data collected in this research comprises English language learners, and English language teachers of the department of English at MMUTO. However, because it is impossible to deal with the large number of students, a representative sample is randomly chosen from different levels. Thus, in order to do the recording test with the learners of English, we have randomly selected twenty students from each level. Knowing that there are three levels of license in the MMUTO English department, i.e. (L1, L2, L3), which means that we have dealt with sixty students.

The present work is considered as a case study which is “*An investigation into a specific instance or phenomenon in its real-life context*” Arsenault and Anderson (1998:121); (cited in Cohen et al, 2007: 170). Furthermore, the case study according to Bell “*provides an opportunity for one aspect of a problem to be studied in some depth*” (Bell, 2005: 10).

## **3-Procedures of Data Collection**

For the sake of collecting data and information, researchers use different types of data collection procedures when conducting their investigations. We have adopted in this work, two main research instruments namely: the questionnaire and the recording test.

### **3-1-The Questionnaire**

*“The questionnaire is a widely used and useful instrument for collecting*

*survey information, providing structured, often numerical data, being able to be administered without the presence of the researcher...*” (Wilson and Mc Lean, 1994 cited in Cohen et al.,2007: 317). Questionnaire is one of the most useful instruments which are used for gathering data in FL/SL research. In most cases, the questionnaire includes two types of questions (or items); these are: open-ended and closed ended questions (Cohen et al., 2007). For the first type i.e. (open-ended items): the respondents are free to answer as they want because they are less oriented by the researcher. So, they can express their thoughts and ideas in their own manner. Whereas, in the second type which is known as the close ended items, the respondents are obliged to chose the answer from the suggestions given by the researcher (the researcher suggests the possible answers that can be chosen by the respondent). As far as we are concerned, the questionnaire, which is part of this research, is handed to teachers of English in the department of English at MMUTO.

- **The Teachers’ Questionnaire**

In the present research, the teachers’ questionnaire starts by an introduction that explains to the teachers that it is part of our research work; and it also seeks to define the relationship between English learners’ errors of pronunciation and the spelling system. It is handed to ten (10) teachers of English language in the department of English at MMUTO, and is made up of eleven (11) items. The items are of different types (that is to say, there are close questions and open ones). They are arranged in three (3) sections:

**General Questions:** (composed of two questions) it aims at showing the importance of teaching pronunciation for both learners and teachers.

**Language Learning and Pronunciation Problems:** (composed of five questions)

which is designed to get information about the problems that learners face when learning English pronunciation, and how can teachers face them.

**Pronunciation Errors and spelling:** (composed of four questions) which aims at obtaining data from English teachers about the relationship between English pronunciation and the spelling system; and how can one of them influence the other. Moreover, some questions seek to present the strategies and activities used by teachers to improve the students' pronunciation.

### **3.2. The recording Test**

The second research tool that is used in the present research is a recording test for sixty students who study English at MMUTO. It consists in asking native speakers of Kabyle language, who are learning English language, to pronounce some English words, phrases and short paragraphs in their own way, and recording them using a sound recorder, and then analyze those recordings in order to see in which areas of language learners make errors and what are the causes behind them. The analysis of this recording test is based on the sources of errors given by Corder (1984) in his article entitled: *"The Significance of Learners' Errors"* they include: overgeneralization, ignorance of rules, and incomplete application of rules.

But, because of lack of time and the great number of students (which we can't all record), we randomly selected a sample to represent the whole number of English learners at MMUTO. The sample used in the present research consists of twenty (20) students from each level; knowing that there are three levels of licence in the department of English at MMUTO, i.e. (L1, L2, L3), which means that we have dealt with sixty students to complete the present work.

## **4-Procedures of Data Analysis**

This part includes data analysis procedures. It presents the quantitative and qualitative Content Analysis methods that are used to analyze the data gathered from the two tools of research (teachers' questionnaire and students' recording test). Thus the collected data is analyzed on the basis of the mixed-method approach, which involves the combination of both quantitative and qualitative means of research.

### **4-1- Definition of the Mixed Method Research**

It is concerned to collect and analyze data, as well as to integrate the findings and to draw inferences by using an exact mixture of both quantitative and qualitative approaches. Heigham and Croker (2009, 137) claim that "*mixing quantitative and qualitative data at some stage of the research process within a single study in order to understand a research problem more completely*". This statement explains that the mixed method research is based on the combination of the quantitative and qualitative methods in order to understand the research problems and improve the research subject with effective solutions.

- **Quantitative Research**

It is an empirical investigation of phenomena which is based on positivism (without feelings or opinions). It is used to measure a given problem by the use of numerical data, to finally get results in the form of statistics.

- **Qualitative Research**

This method depends on discovering and understanding the perspectives and experiences. That is to say, qualitative research presents a naturalistic approach to

the world, because researchers in qualitative research study things in their natural setting.

## **4-2- Descriptive statistical Method and Qualitative Content Analysis**

This part is devoted to analyze the data elicited from the two research tools. In fact both a descriptive statistical method and qualitative content analysis are adopted to deal with quantitative and qualitative data.

- **Descriptive Statistical Method**

A descriptive statistical method is used to calculate the number of students who make errors in the pronunciation of English sounds and letters, and count the students with correct pronunciation.

- **Qualitative Content Analysis**

A qualitative Content Analysis is adopted to analyze the main relationship between spelling and pronunciation in English language and to analyze the errors of pronunciation made by students in the department of English. Therefore, in our analysis we will focus on finding the factors that lead to incorrect pronunciation. In our study, the various pronunciation errors gathered from the data will be classified and categorized following Error Analysis theory which is described in Corder's article entitled "The significance of learners' error", published in (1967)

## **Conclusion**

This section has dealt with the methodology to be used in the present

research. The procedures of data collection are first explained; including the setting of our research, the participants, and the methods of research that we used to describe the data. The quantitative and qualitative approaches are both used to present and explain the sources of learners' pronunciation errors at the level of MMUTO English department. Then, the second part shows that our research focuses on Error Analysis theory.

## **Introduction**

This chapter is delivered to the description of the results that we have reached throughout the analysis of the recording test of students from different levels, and the analysis of teacher's questionnaire as a second research tool. The results reveal the errors that learners commit in their pronunciation of English words. This chapter is divided into two sections: the first one deals with the presentation of the results of the recording test; the second one deals with the results of the teachers' questionnaire.

## **Results Concerning Pronunciation Test and Distributed Questionnaire**

### **1-The Recording Test**

This test aims to identify the pronunciation errors among the students of the department of English at MMUTO when they read English words and sentences. So, a number of words were chosen randomly, but each word contains a sound which is expected to be pronounced in an incorrect way by a group of English students. The test contains both vowel and consonant sounds. Some words were put in sentences. The students were asked to read all the words and the sentences aloud, while their voices were recorded. At the end of this process, the errors were written down on a paper, and then analyzed statistically and descriptively.

#### **1-a- Results concerning Vowels, Diphthongs, Vowel sequences**

Words	Number of students	Number of students with correct pronunciation	%	Number of students with incorrect pronunciation	%
Pronunciation	60	9	15	51	85
<b>Obstacle</b>	60	7	11,66	53	88,33
Service	60	27	45	33	55
<b>Too</b>	60	23	38,33	37	61,66
Passage	60	03	05	57	95
Studio	60	02	3,33	58	96,66
Led	60	60	100	00	00
Lead	60	19	31,66	41	68,33
Weather	60	40	66,66	20	33,33
Employ	60	37	61,66	23	38,33
Fear	60	36	60	24	40
Annoy	60	53	88,33	07	11,66
Riot	60	11	18,33	49	81,66
Lawyers	60	05	8,33	55	91,66

**Table 1: The pronunciation of some English vowels by the students of the department of English**

As seen from the table, only (9) (15%) were able to give the correct pronunciation of the sound /ɒ/ in the word ‘pronunciation’. With the word ‘obstacle’, we notice that a few number of students (7) (11,66%) among the whole sample were able to pronounce /ɒ/ sound correctly. In the following word ‘service’ only (27) (45%) pronounced the sound /i/ in a correct way. The same thing with the word ‘too’, there were only (23) (38,33%) of the

students who pronounced the sound /ʊ:/ correctly. Concerning the word ‘passage’ there were only (3) students who achieved the correct pronunciation of the sound /i/. In the word ‘studio’ only (2) students were able to give an exact pronunciation of the target sound /ju:/. However, all the students gave the correct pronunciation of the word ‘led’. For the word ‘lead’, the target sound was /i:/, (19) students pronounced the sound correctly. (40) students succeeded to pronounce the word ‘weather’ with the sound /ð /correctly .Then, in the word ’Employ’ (37) students pronounced the sound/i/as it has to be done. At last the words ‘fear’, ’riot’, ’lawyers’ that contain diphthongs and vowel sequences were pronounced wrongly by the majority of students, whereas there were a high number of them gave the correct pronunciation of the word ’annoy’.

### 1-b- Results concerning “Silent Letters”

Words	Whole Sample	Number of students with correct pronunciation	%	Number of students with incorrect pronunciation	%
<b>L</b> etter	60	13	21,66	47	78,33
<b>D</b> octor	60	22	36,66	38	63,33
<b>N</b> orms	60	4	6,66	56	93,33
<b>S</b> torm	60	19	31,66	41	68,33
<b>C</b> omb	60	8	13,33	52	86,66
<b>C</b> limb	60	11	18,33	49	81,66
<b>M</b> uscle	60	27	45	33	55
<b>W</b> ednesday	60	54	90	6	10
<b>K</b> nee	60	23	38,33	37	61,66

<b>Knife</b>	60	60	100	00	00
<b>Talk</b>	60	3	5	57	95
<b>Calm</b>	60	19	31,66	41	68,33
<b>Salmon</b>	60	21	35	39	65
<b>Autumn</b>	60	15	25	45	75
<b>Psychology</b>	60	40	66,66	20	33,33
<b>Pneumonia</b>	60	17	28,33	43	71,66
<b>Listen</b>	60	60	100	00	00
<b>Fasten</b>	60	12	20	48	80

**Table 2: Pronunciation of some Words Containing Silent Letters**

From the table above, we notice that a high number of students failed to pronounce the given words correctly because they contain silent letters. The letter “r” in the four words at the beginning of the table shouldn’t be pronounced, but the recording test shows that only (13) students pronounced the word ‘letter’ without pronouncing the sound “r”, and there were (22) students who gave the correct pronunciation of the word “doctor”. In the word “norms” only (4) students avoided to pronounce the silent letter “r” and (19) students pronounced the word ‘storm’ correctly. Concerning the word ‘comb’ and “climb” we found that no more than (8) students gave the correct pronunciation, and only (11) students pronounced the word “climb” without pronouncing the sound “b”. In the word ‘muscle’ only (27) students pronounced it correctly because they didn’t pronounce the sound “c”. In the following word “Wednesday”, the silent letter is ”d”, so (54) students gave a correct pronunciation. Also, in “knee” the letter “k” is silent, (23) students gave a correct pronunciation, whereas the whole sample didn’t make errors in pronouncing the word “knife”.

Three other words contain “L” as silent letter. In “talk” only (3) students pronounced it correctly, and in “calm” there were (19) students gave a positive pronunciation, the same is

true in the word “salmon” since there were (21) students were able to pronounce it in a correct way. In addition, the word “autumn” in which the letter “n” is silent, we notice that only (15) students pronounced it correctly. In the words “psychology” and “pneumonia”, the silent letter is “p”. The number of students who pronounced “psychology” is (40) and “pneumonia” is (17). In the words “listen” and “fasten” “t” is considered as a silent letter. So, all the students pronounced “listen” as it has to be done but only (12) students gave the correct pronunciation of the word “fasten”.

### 1-c- Results concerning the letters “ough”

Words	Number of students	Number of students with correct pronunciation	%	Number of students with incorrect pronunciation	%
Enough	60	39	65	21	35
Bough	60	00	00	60	100
Throughout	60	18	30	42	70
Thought	60	26	43,33	34	56,66
Though	60	13	21,66	47	78,33

**Table 3: Pronunciation of the letters “ough”**

As shown in table 3. The words “enough”, “bough”, “throughout”, “thought”, “though” contain the letters “ough” which are pronounced differently from one word to another, so we notice that (39) students found the correct pronunciation of the word “enough”, and there were no students who guessed the right pronunciation of the word “bow”. It is also seen that (18) (30%) of the students pronounced “throughout” correctly”. Concerning the

word “Thought”, it is observed that (26) students found the pronunciation of the sound “ough”, whereas only (13) of them pronounced the word “though” correctly.

### 1-d- Results Concerning the Pronunciation of some English Consonants

	Words	NS	NSCP	%	NSIP	%
Consonant 's'	This	60	26	43,33	34	56,66
	These	60	31	51,66	29	48,33
	Measure	60	39	65	21	35
	Sugar	60	60	100	00	00
Consonant 'd'	Drive	60	37	61,66	23	38,33
	Decision	60	60	100	00	00
Consonant 'ch'	Chemistry	60	18	71,66	17	28,33
	Architect	60	13	30	42	70
	Chicken	60	43	21,66	47	78,33

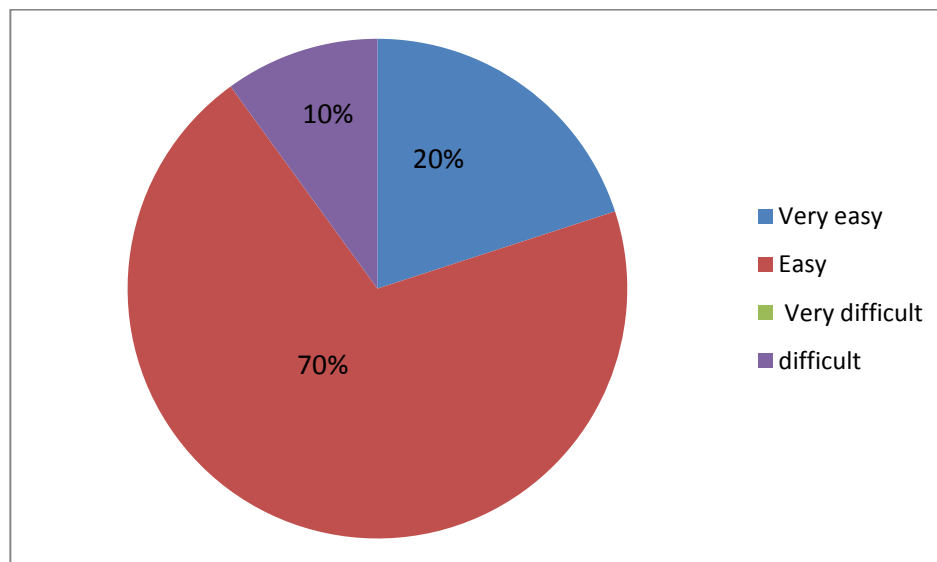
**Table 4: The Pronunciation of the Consonants 's', 'd', 'ch' :**

As seen from the table above, only (26) were able to pronounce the target sound 's' in the word 'this', In the Second word (these) the target sound is 'z' and it is noticed that only (31) of the students among the 60 students were able to pronounce the sound correctly. Also in the word (measure) there were (21) students who failed to pronounce the word correctly, but the word (sugar) was pronounced correctly by all the students. Concerning words with consonant 'd', there were (37) of the students didn't succeed to pronounce the sound /dz/ in the word drive. According to the results above, it could be said that, many students of English mispronounce the different sounds of the consonant 'ch' because there were (18) students who pronounced the /tʃ/ sound instead of /k/ in the word chemistry and (13) of them in the word architect. Then the word 'chicken' is well pronounced by the majority of students (43).

## 2. The Teachers' Questionnaire

### 2.1. General Questions

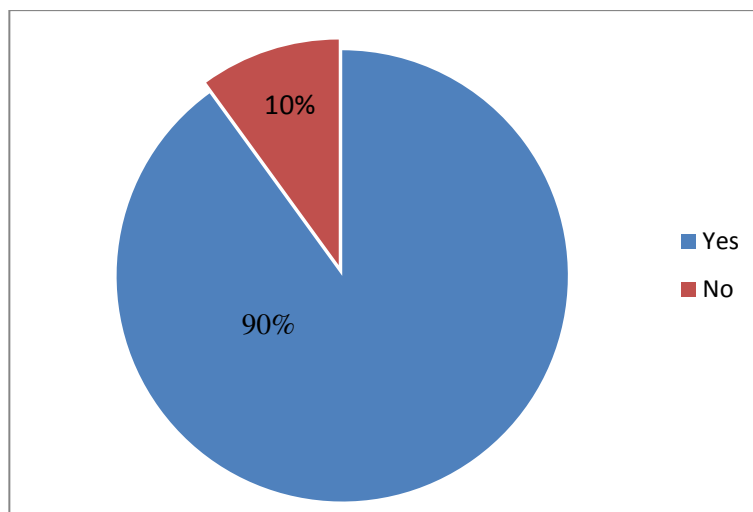
**Q1- How do you find teaching English pronunciation?**



**Diagram 1: Teachers' Views about Teaching Pronunciation**

The results clearly show that (70%) of teachers of English find that teaching English pronunciation is easy, and (20%) of them find it very easy; whereas, only (10%) of them find difficulties in teaching English pronunciation.

**Q2- Do learners of English language find difficulties in pronunciation when they read from a given passage?**

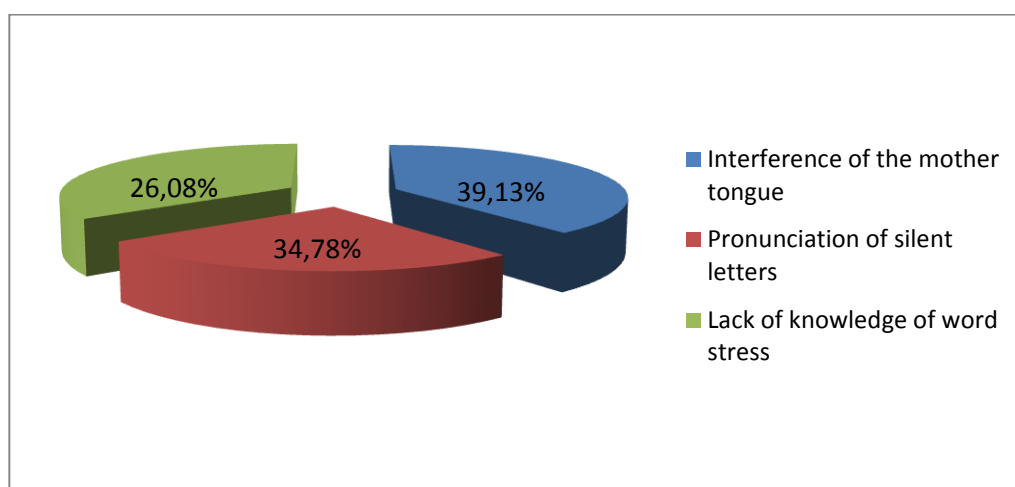


**Diagram 2: Percentage of Teachers who Agreed that Learners find difficulties of Pronunciation when they Read**

As highlighted in the second diagram, (90%) of teachers of English language at MMUTO agreed that learners find difficulties to pronounce when they read from a given passage. Whereas, only (10%) of them agreed that learners can read a written passage without any difficulties of pronunciation.

## 2.2. Language Learning and Pronunciation Problems

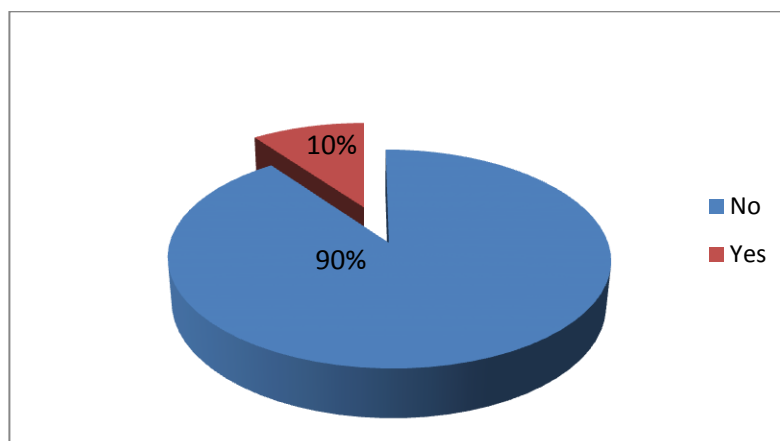
**Q3- What is the cause behind pronunciation errors?**



**Diagram 3: The causes behind pronunciation errors**

The third diagram shows us the answers of teachers of English concerning the causes of pronunciation errors in which English learners fall. As we see, (39,13%) of the teachers of English answered that learners interfered by their mother tongue (MT), (26,08%) of them answered that English learners do not master word stress, and (34,78%) of teachers of English said that learners pronounce silent letters. We can notice that more than one cause can be found in the same student. Some participants provided us with other errors causes such as: language deficiencies, mispronunciation of some sounds because a single sound can have different pronunciations, for example the letter “o” can be pronounced in three different ways in the following words: food /fu:d/, good /gʊd/, blood /blʌd/.

**Q4- Can learners of English language easily make the difference between the following sounds: /ʃ/\_tʃ/ /ai/\_ei/ /s/\_z/ /i: /\_i/, when they read from a given text?**



**Diagram 4: Mastery of English sounds by learners of English**

It is clearly shown in the above diagram that the majority of learners of English at MMUTO (90%) cannot easily distinguish between some sounds when they read, for example: /ʃ\_tʃ/ /ai\_ei/ /s\_z/ /i:\_i/.

**Q5- As an EFL teacher, how can you diagnose the sources of pronunciation errors?**

Some participants agreed that as an EFL teacher one should concentrate on the

pronunciation system of the target language (TL) to sort out the sources of errors. Other participants said that playing dialogues, group work, and oral presentations play an important role in observing learners' errors and knowing the areas which need reinforcement.

**Q6- After diagnosing the sources of pronunciation problems, how can you avoid English learners' errors of pronunciation?**

The answers given by teachers of English concerning the avoidance of learners' errors of pronunciation varied from one to another: some participants insisted on Audio Lingual Method techniques (for example: drills) as the best way to teach pronunciation. Other participants said that by correcting learners' errors and giving them points of reference to be kept in mind in order not to be mistaken in the coming lessons, i.e. giving examples from other languages like Arabic. Some others argued on doing a lot of exercises of phonetics with the learners and ask them to check the correct pronunciation each time in the dictionary. Teachers also can advise learners to watch serials in order to know more about the correct pronunciation.

**Q7- According to your experience in teaching English, do you see that Kabyle accent is often present when learners speak English?**

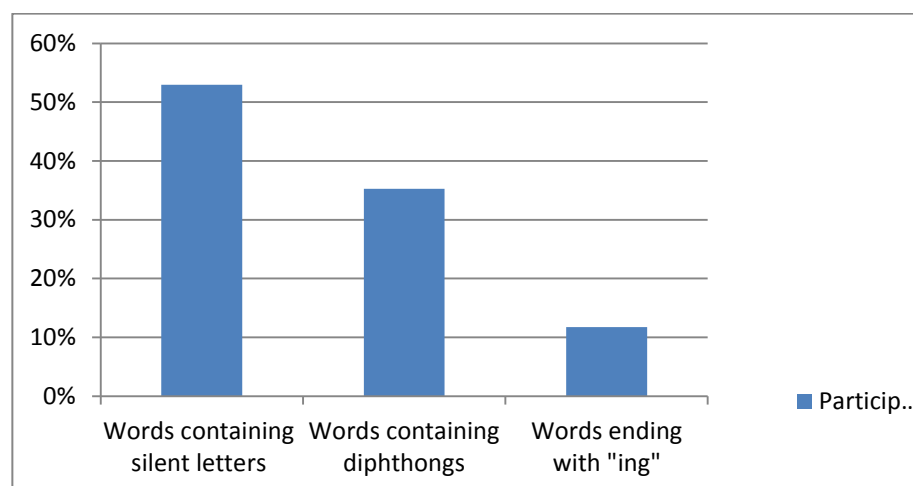
Number of teachers	Number of teachers who answered " Yes"	Number of teachers who answered "No"
10	09	01

**Table 05: The use of Kabyle accent by English learners**

This table clearly shows that 90% of learners of English use Kabyle accent when they speak English during the lessons. Only (10%) of them speak using the English accent.

## 2.3. Pronunciation Errors and Spelling

**Q8- In which kind of words learners find more difficulties to pronounce? (When the words are spelled)**



**Diagram 05: Learners' difficulties of pronunciation**

The above diagram clearly shows that the majority of learners of English (52,94%) at MMUTO pronounce silent letters when they speak or read, (35,29%) of them find difficulties to pronounce words containing diphthongs or triphthongs, and (11,76%) of English learners pronounce final “ing”. Some participants added that unknown words are pronounced in French, because most of the time, EFL learners do not distinguish between French and English.

**Q9- How often do learners of English apply the rules of Kabyle language on English?**

	Always	Sometimes	Rarely
Participants	0	10	0
Percentage (%)	0%	100%	0%

**Table 06: Application of Kabyle rules on English language**

As shown in the above table, all of the participants (100%), agreed that Kabyle rules

are sometimes applied on English language by learners while learning English as a foreign language.

**Q10- How can spelling play an important role in a good pronunciation?**

The majority of participants told us that teachers should always teach spelling in relation to pronunciation. They should also show “especially to beginners” the way a word is written and how it is pronounced in order to make learners in touch with the way in which natives speak English. Whereas, some participants told us that the spelling form of a word has nothing to do with its pronunciation.

**Q11- “The pronunciation errors of learners of English at MMUTO are due to the differences in the sound systems of English and their mother tongue” Do you agree?**

	Number of participants	Percentage
Yes, I agree	10	100%
No, I disagree	0	0%

**Table 07: Differences of the sound systems of English and Kabyle**

The results of this table show that all of the participants (100%) agreed about sound system differentiations between English and Kabyle, which lead to errors of pronunciation.

**Conclusion**

This chapter has dealt with the results of our research concerning learners’ errors of pronunciation with relation to the written form. The results of this chapter are conducted through a questionnaire delivered to teachers of English and a recording test for learners of English. The presentation of the results is in form of (histograms, tables, and pie charts).The results provided in this chapter are going to be discussed and analyzed in the next chapter.

## **Introduction**

The present chapter discusses the results of the study in relation to the research questions. The findings obtained from the teachers' questionnaire and the recording test are analyzed and discussed together because of the relationship that exists between the outcomes collected from the two research tools. A total of ten(10) teachers were questioned, and sixty (60) students from licence levels were chosen randomly and recorded in order to analyze the learners' errors of pronunciation and determine the major causes of these errors. This section is divided into three parts, in each part we try to answer the research questions and confirm or reject the already given hypotheses. In this chapter, Error Analysis Theory (EAT) is adopted along with QCA to explain, analyze, and interpret the collected outcomes.

### **4-1- Discussion of the Major Sources of Pronunciation Problems of EFL Learners at MMUTO**

After analyzing the results obtained from the teachers' questionnaire which was delivered to ten teachers of English, and the recording test that we did with learners of English, and when trying to answer the first research question that is already asked in the General Introduction; we concluded that interference of the MT and other languages, and the lack of knowledge of TL rules, are the major causes behind learners' errors of pronunciation.

#### **• Errors due to Interference of MT and other language systems**

According to the results of the questionnaire and the recording test, the majority of English language learners find difficulties of pronunciation when they read from a given

passage because their MT interfere with the learning of the TL. This finding; therefore, confirms Mourtaga's (2000) view that English learners are poor readers, and often demonstrate exceptional difficulties reading in English.

Firstly, what has been noted during the recording test is the great presence of Kabyle accent in the learners' speech when they speak English, knowing that "*accent is a certain form of a language spoken by a subgroup of speakers of that language*". This can be clearly seen through the results shown in table (05) since (90%) of teachers agreed that learners of English speak this FL with a Kabyle accent. We come to the conclusion that the majority of learners of English language at MMUTO speak English with a Kabyle accent, especially, when they read long paragraphs and texts. For example, the use of Kabyle expressions like: "eehhh, eemmm,..." when the learner does not know the correct pronunciation of a given word or expression.

From the results of the questionnaire, we observed that some teachers considered the learners' accent, which is "*the prominent manifestation of the interlingual transfer*" (Moyer 2013), as an issue and that some of the learners of English may not be understood especially by English native speakers. The learners' accent follows the Arabic /Berber sound systems, intonation and rhythmic patterns inherited from MT learning as old habits formation. Skinner theory of accent: Whiten W (2004) psychology themes and variations.

In order to overcome all the learners' problems when speaking, teachers of English said that they did their best to help their learners improve their pronunciation skills by offering them the opportunities to take part in classroom discussions in order to express themselves freely. In fact, the teachers encourage their learners to be active participants and this can be realized through expressing their opinions in the TL, sharing their ideas,

participating in different tasks, especially the speaking ones like dialogues and oral sessions. In this respect, Baygat (1987:1) claims that *“speaking is the medium through which much language is learnt, and which for many is particularly conducive for learning”*.

In his book *“Error and Interlanguage”* Pit Corder stated that various classifications of error systems have been developed by Error Analysis researchers [...] *“Interference errors are caused by the influence of the native language, in presumably those areas where the languages differ markedly”*. [...]

Secondly, pronunciation errors are due to the fact that most of English learners are good speakers of French language. In fact, many students use French instead of English when they find difficulties in pronouncing some English words, especially complex ones (i.e. French language interfere on learners of English ). In this context, Contrastive Analysis hypothesis claimed that the principal barrier to Second Language Acquisition (SLA) is the interference of the first language system with the second language one.

In addition, because French and English resemble to each other. In the written form, we can see that both languages are, to some extent, similar to each other, but not in the spoken form. The two languages differ in the pronunciation of their sounds. In many cases we find words that have the same spelling and same meaning in English and French, but with a completely different pronunciation, e.g. the following words:

- Muscle→ in French, it is pronounced /muskl/, whereas, in English it is /mʌsl/
- Psychology→ in French, it is pronounced /psikologi/, whereas, in English it is /saikɒlədʒi/
- Decision→ in French, it is pronounced /désizion/, whereas, in English it is /disiʒn/

When we recorded learners of the department of English, we noticed that learners apply the rules of their MT and even those of other languages like French and Arabic to the Target Language. Learners apply rules of other languages in the pronunciation of some words and phrases on the basis of what they already know from other languages and even from some English rules that learners already know, e.g. applying the rule of final “ed” for the past simple of the regular verb “speak”, so the learner in this case says “speaked” instead of “spoke “.

This result goes hand in hand with Richards’s citation that “*overgeneralization is one of the contributory factors*”, and therefore confirms it. Richards also explains that “*Overgeneralization covers instances where the learner creates deviant structure on the basis of his experience of other structures in the target language.*” Richards (1974, 174)

These above results therefore confirm the hypothesis which has been already advanced in the General Introduction and which posits that most of learners’ errors of pronunciation are due to interference. By analyzing these results, we can also refer to Corder’s classification of errors, more specifically to Interlingual Errors (IE). According to Corder, IE are due to the negative influence of the native language. This happens because the learners’L1 habit (system and rules) interferes with the learner’s L2 to some extent like acquiring the rules and patterns of the L2 (Corder 1971:147).

The answers of the teachers of English to question (04) of the distributed questionnaire indicate that they are not satisfied with their learners’ pronunciation of English language. They said that learners of English focus more on pronouncing consonants rather than vowel sounds, and that, learners of English most of the time, use French language in case they do not know how to pronounce a word in English. In fact, learners do not think in English, but their

thinking is based more on the language systems they already knew before English language. Here also, we can refer to Interlingual Errors (IE) of Corder's classification of errors.

The results obtained in this case confirm the hypothesis which has been already advanced in the General Introduction which claims that the learners' errors of pronunciation are due to the interference of their mother tongue, and also the interference of other languages they already learned before English.

- **Errors due to the Complexity of Language and Lack of Knowledge of TL Rules**

From the obtained results we can clearly see that silent letters are one of the major causes of pronunciation errors. The teachers' questionnaire and recording test have revealed that the majority of learners of English pronounce silent letters when they read, e.g.

- The word "knife" is pronounced /knaif/ instead of /naif/
- The word "knee" is pronounced /kni:/ instead of /ni:/

This is due to the fact that most of English students are passive learners, who suffice of what is given by their teachers; they do not make efforts to improve their pronunciation skills and know more about how such a FL is correctly pronounced.

Another point is that in English, the written form does not always resemble the spoken form as in other languages. One of the most confusing bits in English language is silent letters: (r, l, b, h, k, n, p, s, t, and w) these letters are most of the time silent. So, this is a problem for English learners, especially beginners, because they may find difficulties distinguishing between the silent letters and the pronounced ones. There are also letters that can be pronounced in different ways e.g. /s/ is pronounced as /z/ in the word "case", whereas, in the word "slim" it is

pronounced as /s/. The letter 't' can be pronounced in at least five ways, e.g. in the word "time" →/taim/ it is pronounced, whereas in the word "whistle"→/wisl/ it is silent. An 'n' can become /m/ or /ŋ/ in the words "damn"→/dæm/ and /lisniŋ/, and that's just for consonant sounds.

English vowel sounds, present another difficulty for learners of English. The complexity of language is also caused by the complexity of the vowel sounds. In many cases we find that the same English vowel is pronounced differently even if the spelling is the same. For example the words: 'good', 'food' and 'blood' are all spelled with double 'o', but they all contain different vowel sounds: /gʊd/, /fu:d/ and /blʌd/. The analysis and interpretation of the recording test and the teachers' questionnaire revealed many facts. The results displayed in diagram (04) and table (01) clearly shows that the majority of English learners at MMUTO do not pronounce English vowels correctly (including diphthongs and triphthongs).

Students also, most of the time cannot easily make the difference between some English vowels, like short and long vowels. We also noticed that English learners mix-up between different vowel sounds by generalizing pronunciation patterns they already knew in their L1, and they substitute the vowel sounds that don't exist in L1, with other sounds which are close to them, for example: the sounds /i/, / i: / are generally pronounced in a wrong way in the word "service" →learners most of the time pronounce it /servais/ instead of /sɜ:vis/. Whereas, in the word "lead" most of learners are influenced by French language, so they say /lɛd/ instead of /li:d/. From these results we can refer to Corder's Intralingual Errors (IE), that is to say, those errors caused by the complexity of the target language. (Corder, 1971:147).

The obtained results confirm the hypothesis which has already been supposed in the General Introduction, which claims that the pronunciation of silent letters is one of the major causes of pronunciation errors.

What has been also noticed after the analysis of the findings is that many learners of English (26,08%) do not master word and sentence stress. According to Harmer “*stress is important in individual words, in phrases, and in sentences*”. (2001:187). Stress is important because it can change the meaning of what is intended to be meant, that is to say, if the learner does not stress the right word or sentence, meaning will be different. In order to see whether learners apply the rule of word and sentence stress when they speak, we asked some learners of English to pronounce the following example: “she gave me a flower” by focusing on different aspects:

1-Who gave me the flower? → **She** gave me a flower (the stress should be put on the word “she”)

2-To whom does she gave the flower? → She gave **me** a flower (the stress should be put on the word “me”)

3- What does she gave to me? → She gave me a **flower** (the stress should be put on the word “flower”)

The majority of those learners have not succeeded to pronounce the sentences in the right way, which means that English learners have not the habit to apply the rule of stress when they speak the English language. Harmer (1993) claims that students have to be sure about what they want to say because, at the meaning level, some words are given more prominence than others. Consequently, the position of stress can change the meaning or even the function of the words.

Therefore, the hypotheses which claimed that lack of knowledge of word and sentence stress can be a cause for errors of pronunciation, is confirmed.

#### **4-2- Discussion of the Ways with which Teachers of English Deal with their Learners' Pronunciation Errors**

After we have analyzed the results obtained from the teachers' questionnaire which has been distributed in the MMUTO department of English, we noted that most of the teachers of English were not satisfied with their learners' pronunciation level. Teachers said that the learners of English commit many and different pronunciation errors such as pronunciation of silent letters and ignorance of word stress patterns, especially when they read from passages (that is to say when the pronunciation is related to the written form learners commit a lot of errors). For that pronunciation should be taught in relation to spelling. Here the third research question may be to some extent answered, that is to say: there is a relationship between pronunciation and spelling, and therefore the concerned hypothesis is confirmed.

Teachers of English said that the best way to teach pronunciation is the use of drills, in order to make it easy for the learners to take the correct pronunciation of the TL words. According to Kelly (2000:16), drilling is one of the strategies of teaching pronunciation. For him, drilling is the main way of pronunciation practice in the classroom. The basic form of drilling involves the teacher saying a word or structure, and getting students to repeat it. Its aim is to help students achieve better pronunciation of language items, and help them remember new items. That is to say, the teacher provides his learners with a good listening model to imitate and the learners repeat what has been said by their teacher until they memorize the correct spoken form. This may make things easier for the learners and help

them to speak without hesitating. For example: the use of drilling in dialogues and oral conversations.

Teachers said also that they use Audio-Lingual Method practices to face learners' errors. According to them, learners' speaking errors should be corrected in order to overcome the learners' problems of pronunciation because in many cases, once the learner is corrected the rule will be memorized in his mind. They said that they tried to do their best to help their learners by offering them the opportunities to practice and show their capacities in the English language. In other words, the teachers encourage their learners to be active participants by correcting learners' errors and giving them points of reference to be kept in mind in order not to be mistaken later on. This can also be realized through giving learners the chance to express their opinions, share their ideas, and participate in different speaking tasks in English language.

Therefore, teachers of English at the MMUTO came up with different solutions to overcome the learners' difficulties with English pronunciation like, playing roles and dialogues, doing a lot of exercises with learners and asking them each time to check the meaning and transcription of new words in the dictionary, encouraging learners to speak and write in English and read books, novels, and short stories. In this interest, we can, to some extent, confirm the hypothesis claiming that there is a relationship between pronunciation and spelling.

Teachers, for the same purpose, insisted on the use of only the English system of pronunciation, without comparing to other language systems. Learners should make more efforts and do their best to understand the English language rules and structure in order to be in touch with the similarities and differences between languages, especially the ones which belong to the same language families, like English and French. Teachers also suggested some

solutions to overcome the learners' English speaking difficulties, and to be fluent speakers of English language. According to them, the learners should have more English vocabulary. This will be achieved by reading books, watch English TV channels and programs, listen to English songs. They also suggested to the learners to express themselves freely without hesitation or interruption even if they make errors. In this respect (Ferris, 1998) said that: *“teachers should encourage their students to speak and avoid any kind of interruptions when they communicate with their classmates as this will motivate them to participate frequently inside the classroom”*.

### **4-3- Discussion of the Ways by which Spelling Can Influence on Learners' Pronunciation**

It is noticed that many learners make errors in the pronunciation test due to the spelling system. When analyzing the results obtained from the recording test, in which the students were asked to pronounce the words with letter « ough » loudly, we concluded that most of them were unable to pronounce the orthographic « ough » which represents different sounds in each word in: (Enough= /i'nʌf/), (Bough=/baʊ/), (Throughout =/θru:'aʊt/), (Thought =/θɔ:t/), (Though = /ðəʊ/). This problem is due to the spelling system of English language. Unlike Kabyle and Arabic languages, English words contain some letters that stand for different sounds, for this the majority of learners face difficulties and problems to produce a correct pronunciation. In English there are words that have letters, which are not pronounced and each letter can have different sounds and one sound can be spelt with many letters (Yule, 2001). From this, we can say that it is difficult to distinguish between the orthography (spelling) and the phonology (pronunciation).

Therefore, during our listening to the learners' pronunciation, we observed that all the students failed to pronounce the target sound /baʊ/ correctly because this word is unknown

for them, so the learners predict the pronunciation from its spelling. In this context, (O'Connor, 2003) argued that *“the learner, who still doesn't have the mastery of pronunciation of such words, pronounce each of them by looking at its spelling, and he is expected to mispronounce them “*.

In addition, in our analysis of the questionnaire, teachers affirmed that the foreign language learners face difficulties while they attempt to pronounce some English words, especially words that contain more than two syllables like the word: (Thoroughfare), this problem is due to the complexity of English spelling system and the limited knowledge of English learners about the rules of the target language. In some cases, the way in which words are spelled can lead to error making in the pronunciation system because of many reasons such as, the existence of a letter (consonant/vowel) that represents many or different sounds, also the fact that English language contains letters that are present in the written form without being translated into sounds during the pronunciation (silent letters) like in the words; « letter », « muscle ». This can be an argument or a justification for the participants who told us that the spelling form has nothing to do with its pronunciation. However, the teachers who agreed that spelling and pronunciation are related to each other, said that these two systems should be learned together, according to them, spelling should be learned in relation to pronunciation; teachers should show the way a word is spelled then, how it is pronounced in order to make learners aware about English difficulties and to provide them with a mastery of English rules concerning spelling and pronunciation in order to be good speakers of English.

It was also observed that learners did not make a difference between some vowel sounds which have more than one way of pronunciation and they refer to their knowledge of how English alphabet are pronounced in a single situation for instance « a » is pronounced /ei/, « i » is pronounced /ai/ so, they ignore pronouncing it in the contextual

situation, this means that, a vowel can be pronounced differently from one word to another according to its situation in a word. Examples:

/i/ = women

/i/ = passage

/i/ = service

In the example above the speech sound /i/ relates to different letters of the alphabet (e, a, i).

O'Connor, (2003) argued that it is not simple to know the exact sounds the letters stand for or present in a certain word. For instance, in the words city /siti/, busy /bizi/, women/wimin/, pretty /priti/, village /vilidʒ/. The letters y, u, o, a, e all of them stand for the same vowel sound /i/.

Sometimes, learners made interference with French vowel pronunciation mainly in the case of words which are shared in both English and French languages. The recording test showed clearly that some learners pronounced the vowels « o » and « e » in the words (pronunciation) and (experience) like they are pronounced in a French language. Some words are spelt in the same way and pronounced differently. For example, lead can be pronounced as /li:d/ and /led/.

The correspondences between orthography and phonology make the students able to predict the pronunciation of a word by looking to its spelling. For this, if the learner ignores the relationship between sound and spelling, he certainly would mispronounce those words (Carter; Nunan, 2001). For example in our research work, the students were asked to pronounce the words knee, knife, talk, calm so, those who know that before the « n » the « k » is silent, they succeeded in their pronunciation whereas, those who ignore this rule, failed in the task. Also, the same thing with the words (talk and calm); the students who know that “L”

is often not pronounced before “M” and “K”, they gave the appropriate pronunciation and others pronounced them with L sound.

According to Gimson (1978) : a form of a written word in English is an imperfect representation of a sound in the spoken language then, it is true to say that there is no necessity to a complete correspondence between the sound and spelling systems. Thus, learners of English as a target language should be aware about its complexity and difficulties, as they must know that English system differs from Arabic and Kabyle system, for example, in the English language some letters like (S, D, CH) are related to different sounds.

S = /S/ this

/Z/ these

/ʒ/ measure

/ʃ/ sugar

D = /d/ decision

/dʒ/ drive

Ch = /K/ chemistry, architect

= /tʃ/ chicken

In the example above, the consonants (s, d, ch) shows that one letter can be used to represent different sounds (/S/, /Z/, /ʒ/, /ʃ/), (/d/, /dʒ/), (/K/, /tʃ/).

From this, we can answer the second and third research questions asked in the General Introduction, and confirm the hypothesis postulating that there is a relationship between pronunciation’s errors and spelling. It is also confirmed that spelling influences the

way in which learners pronounce English sounds, mainly this influence is negative because it guides the learners to make errors. Pronunciation is affected by the way in which a word is written, at the same time spelling can be changed according to the changes that happened in the pronunciation system.

## **Conclusion**

The fourth and the last chapter of our research is concerned with the interpretation and the explanation of the findings. This section confirms that English language learners at MMUTO commit various errors of pronunciation when they read. This is due to the MT interference, lack of knowledge of TL rules, and complexity of the language itself. The data collected from teachers' responses to the distributed questionnaire and the learners' recording test, have answered all the questions that were asked in the general introduction. Learners of English face difficulties to achieve the way in which natives speak the TL because of different factors.

To sum up, after our analysis to the obtained results we came to the conclusion that learners of English who make pronunciation errors are not able to communicate and express themselves in English as native speakers do because of deficiencies in acquiring the needed level of proficiency in English. In order to face the difficulties caused by the lack of knowledge of English language rules, learners always rely on their previous knowledge of the native language. Therefore, these learners should be helped to improve their pronunciation skills, and achieve the proficiency level of English native speakers by focusing more on language practice inside and outside the classroom. According to teachers then, to research and analyze the errors' sources and to look for solutions by guiding their students to be aware of all these sources of errors and try to avoid them. Finally, learners need more practice and

being aware of the linguistic differences in order to achieve the proficiency of native speakers,  
and to speak the English language correctly.

Foreign language learners often make errors while pronouncing the sounds of the TL, this is due either to their limited knowledge of the target language or to the interference from other languages. The present study shows that 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> year English language learners at MMUTO face such difficulties or problems of pronunciation.

Therefore, this work aims to investigate how errors of pronunciation made by learners of English are related to spelling, as we seek to investigate the sources and causes of those errors. This study has been conducted relying on EA theory in order to find out what type of errors the learners make in their pronunciation of the target language, and to sort out the causes that lead to error-making.

Our research is an attempt to show that EA is a useful technique to deal with students' errors, as it argues that errors do not only occur as a result of negative transfer from the mother tongue as the CA posits, but also from other factors which are due to the complexity of the target language itself. The lack of one to one correspondence between the letters in the written form and the phonetic symbols, and the existence of same spellings that stand for different sounds or different spellings that represent the same sounds are also other factors. According to Corder, those errors resulted from the complexity of the target language itself are known as intralingual errors.

In order to gather the needed data, we have used two research tools, a questionnaire distributed to 10 teachers in the department of English at MMUTO, and a recording test for 60 students from 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> year in the department of English. To conduct the research, we have adopted a mixed method research that combines both the quantitative and the qualitative methods for data collection and data Analysis. For the quantitative method, we have adopted a descriptive statistical method to gather statistical data from the obtained numbers of students with correct or incorrect pronunciation as it is shown in the tables. For

the qualitative method, we have used Qualitative Content Analysis in order to interpret and analyze the data that resulted from the questionnaire and the recording test.

From the results obtained from the research tools: teachers' questionnaire and recording test, we could answer the research questions asked in the General Introduction, that "most of the errors made by students of English in their pronunciation are due to lack of knowledge about the target language, learners' ignorance of the fact that some letters of the English alphabet are silent during pronunciation, in addition to the interference of the mother tongue, and the complexity of the target language. We also confirm the hypothesis postulating that "there is a relationship between pronunciation's errors and spelling" and refute the hypothesis which claims that "spelling doesn't influence the way in which learners pronounce English sounds" and therefore, answer the question whether "spelling influences the way in which learners pronounce English sounds".

It is a hope that this work will be beneficial for foreign language learners in order to be careful in their English pronunciation; it is also a hope that this study paves the way to future researchers who are interested in this area of study.

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## Appendix A

### Teachers' Questionnaire

**Dear teachers,**

We would greatly appreciate if you could give us some of your time, to answer this questionnaire which is designed to gather information about the relationship between English learners' errors of pronunciation and spelling. That is to say, the pronunciation' errors made by learners of English with regard to the written form. Your answers will be precious for the completion of this work and will be treated with great confidence. Please cross (X) in the appropriate answer, or give full answer where it is necessary.

**Thank you in advance for your cooperation**

#### **Section One: General Questions**

**1-** How do you find teaching English pronunciation?

**A.** Very easy

**B.** Easy

**C.** Difficult

**D.** Very difficult

**2-** Do learners of English language find difficulties in pronunciation when they read from a given passage?

**A.** Yes

**B.** No

## Section Two: Language learning and pronunciation problems

3- What is the cause behind pronunciation errors? (Here you can cross in different answers)

A. Interference of the mother tongue

B. pronunciation of silent letters

C. lack of knowledge of word stress

Others, please specify.....  
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4- Can learners of English language easily make the difference between the following sounds: /sh/\_tch/ /ai/\_ei/ /s/\_z/ /i:/\_i/, when they read from a given text?

A. Yes

B. No

suggestions.....  
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5- As an EFL teacher, how can you diagnose the sources of pronunciation errors?

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6- After diagnosing the sources of pronunciation problems, how can you avoid English

learners' errors of pronunciation? .....

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7- According to your experience in teaching English, do you see that Kabyle accent is often present when learners speak English?

A- Yes

B- No

### Section Three: pronunciation errors and spelling

8- In which kind of words learners find more difficulties to pronounce? (When the words are spelled)

A. Words containing silent letters

B. Words containing diphthongs

C. Words ending with "ing"

D. Others, please specify .....

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9- How often do learners of English apply the rules of Kabyle language on English?

A- Always

B- Sometimes

C- Rarely

D- If your answer is “always”, could you provide us with some examples?

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10- How can spelling play an important role in a good pronunciation?

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11- “The pronunciation errors of learners of English at MMUTO are due to the differences in the sound systems of English and their mother tongue” Do you agree?

A- Yes, I agree

B- No, I disagree

If yes, please explain why

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This space is devoted for further comments and suggestions

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**Thank you very much for answering**

## **Appendix B**

### **The Recording Test n° 1: (written by Bertrand Russell)**

#### **What I Haved Lived For**

Three passions, simple but overwhelmingly strong, have governed my life : the longing for love, the search for knowledge, and unbearable pity for the suffering of mankind.

I have sought love, first, because it brings ecstasy\_ ecstasy so great that I would often have sacrificed all the rest of life for a few hours of this joy. I have sought it, next, because it relieves loneliness. I have sought it, finally, because in the union of love, I have seen the vision of the heaven that saints and poets have imagined. That is what I have sought, and though it may seem too good for human life, this is what\_at\_last I have found.

With equal passion, I have sought knowledge. I have wished to understand the hearts of men. I have wished to know why the stars shine. And I have tried to understand the Pythagorean power by which numbers hold sway above the flu. A little of this, but not much, I have achieved.

Love and knowledge, so far as they were possible, led upward toward the heavens. But always pity brought me back to earth. Echoes of cries of pain reverberate in my heart. Children in famine, victims tortured by oppressors, helpless old people a hated burden to their sons, and the whole world of loneliness, poverty, and pain make a mockery of what human life should be. I long to alleviate the evil, but I cannot, and I too suffer.

This has been my life. I have found it worth living, and would gladly live it again if the chance were offered me.

## The Recording Test n°2

Items to be tested			
Pronunciation of words with vowels, Diphtongs, Vowel sequences.	Pronunciation of words with Silent Letters	Pronunciation of words with letters « ough »	Pronunciation of words with consonants (S, D, CH)
Pronunciation	Letter	Enough	This
Obstacle	Doctor	Bough	These
Service	Norms	Brought	Measure
Too	Storm	sought	Sugar
Passage	Comb	Throughout	Drive
Studio	Climb	Thought	Decision
Led	Muscle	Though	Chemistry
Lead	Wednesday		Architect
Weather	Knee		Chicken
Employ	Knife		Passion
Fear	Talk		
Annoy	Calm		
Riot	Salmon		
Lawyers	Autumn		
	Psychology		
	Pneumonia		
	Listen		
	Fasten		