

JIMMA UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE
MA in Teaching English as a Foreign Language
(TEFL)

Preparatory Students' Pronunciation Difficulty and Its Influence on their EFL Speaking Skills: Jimma Preparatory School Students in Focus

By

Muhammed Teshome

**A Thesis Submitted to the Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
Master of Arts in Teaching English as a Foreign Language**

(MA, in TEFL)

May 2018

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Declaration

I, the undersigned, declare that this thesis is my own work, not presented for any degree in any universities, and that all the sources used for it are duly acknowledged.

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Abstract

The overall purpose of this study was to examine the major pronunciation difficulties of preparatory students and the negative influences of these challenges on their global EFL speaking skills. Specifically, the study explored 1) some of the major pronunciation challenges that the students faced both at segmental (vowel and consonant sound) and suprasegmental (prosody) levels; 2) the negative influences of these (segmental and suprasegmental) difficulties on their EFL speaking skills, and 3) the attitude of students toward learning English pronunciation. To achieve the general and specific objectives of the study, the researcher devised three distinctive types of data gathering tools. These were: a) pronunciation and intelligibility tests which aimed to diagnose the students' speech production and comprehension difficulties on the target pronunciation items both at segmental and suprasegmental phonological features; c) questionnaires and d) guided interviews. The questionnaires and the guided interviews were used to investigate the needs analysis of the students' attitude toward learning pronunciation skills. For the manageability of the pronunciation and intelligibility tests, 25 grade eleven students whose NL was Amharic were purposefully selected since the researcher's mother tongue is Amharic, and since attitude is not affected by NL, 110 students from the same grade level whose mother tongue was homogeneous were recruited for questionnaire responses, and 12 students were randomly selected for the interview responses from Jimma Preparatory School grade eleven. To this end, the students faced the /θ/ and the /ð/ consonant sounds the most frequently mispronounced sounds; the long vowels such as /i:/, /ɜ:/, /ɔ:/, /ɑ:/, /u:/ were indistinguishably mispronounced as their short vowel counterparts /ɪ/, /ə/, /ʊ/, /ʌ/, /ʊ/ respectively; and /ʊə/, /ɪə/, and /eə/ diphthong vowel sounds were found to be the most problematic pronunciation difficulties at segmental levels. The students also encountered problems in using correct stresses and comprehending speeches in connection, meaning comprehensions from sentence stress and intonation at the suprasegmental features. However, they showed an enthusiasm to acquire and to have good pronunciation skills by different means. Finally, the researcher recommended that curriculum developers and syllabus designers incorporate pronunciation lessons in attainable and consistent ways for better Ethiopian EFL industry.

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List of Abbreviations

AmE: American English

BBC: British Broadcasting Corporation

BrE: British English

CLT: Communicative Language Teaching

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

ELT: English Language Teaching

ESL: English as a Second Language

FL: Foreign Language

GA: General American

IPA: International Phonetic Association/Alphabet/

L1: First Language

L2: Second Language

NL: Native Language

NNS: Non-Native Speaker

NS: Native Speaker

RP: Received Pronunciation

SPSS: Statistical Package for Social Sciences

TL: Target Language

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the Study

The concept of pronunciation is often defined in relation to its components. Ur (1989), for example, defines pronunciation as the sounds of the language (phonology) comprising vowels, consonants, stress, rhythm, and intonation and their combinations. Similarly, Richards and Renandya (2002) and Roach (2001) define pronunciation as the role of individual sounds and sound segments occurring in group or connected to each other and their combinations with supra segments such as tone, stress, rhythm, and intonation, etc.

The history of pronunciation teaching reveals that the development of different teaching methods and approaches in different times and the way it is taught. For example, the period between 1940s and 1960s was marked by the views of audio-lingual methodology developed in the U.S. and situational language teaching in Britain and was the time when pronunciation teaching was regarded as an important component of English language curricula aiming at achieving native-like pronunciation (Celce-Murcia, 1991). Between 1940 and 1960s, “Language learning was viewed”, as Morley (1991) explains, “as mastering ... rules , the building blocks of the language, along with the combining rules for phonemes, morphemes, words, phrases, sentences” in connection with suprasegmental features such as stress, rhythm and intonation through drills, imitation, memorization and dialogues.

Since the late 1960s- 1980s, pronunciation teaching was in almost a total neglect and negative impressions as most theorists and methodologists raised doubts and criticisms on its importance for instructional focus and immediately erased it from the curriculum (Morley, 1991). That was because as Anegagregn (2012) suggests, “The period marked scholars’ change of attitudes and growing dissatisfactions to the previous principles and practices” (p. 25).

Due to the introduction of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) method since the 1980s, language teaching was witnessed by empirical and anecdotal evidence which embraced the pronunciation as an important aspect of spoken language (Morley,1991). CLT introduced a focus on all aspects of language as considerable components of language which make up real life communication (Richards and Rogers, 2001).

Regarding to the importance of teaching pronunciation for learners of EFL, Harmer (2001) suggests that being familiar with pronunciation features helps learners improve their global language skills in a better way. “Being made aware of pronunciation issues will be of immense benefits not only to their production but also to their own understanding of spoken English” (Harmer, 2001, p. 183). Furthermore, Dalton and Seidlhofer (1994) note the merits of pronunciation as it makes learners confident and highly motivated to speak with any English speaker, natives or nonnatives, if they are made familiar with the target language pronunciation. Tench (1981) argues persuasively that the implications and importance of pronunciation that “the learners’ overall aim and the teachers’ overall tasks in the teaching-learning process should embrace all aspects that impinge up on day to day communication” (p. 2). Learners, therefore, should be equipped with all features and skills of the language such as grammar, vocabulary, spelling, pronunciation, listening, speaking, reading and writing as far as they are intending to attain communicative competence. According to Tench (1981), communication in a new language involves all linguistic factors and if anyone of these is impaired, communication fails and in pronunciation, an utterance may well become unintelligible or mean something other than we intend.

Moreover, concerning to the significance of pronunciation teaching in EFL/ESL instruction, Stern (1992) notifies that, “The value of pronunciation for learning a language is pervasive, and the teaching of pronunciation under any circumstances cannot be regarded as a luxury one can easily dispense with” (p.116). Almost similarly, Porter and Grant (1992) explain that constant pronunciation practice is worthy of receiving an essential part in EFL/ESL instruction in facilitating the learning of grammar, lexicon, discourse, and the improvement of speaking and listening skills which all make use of phoneme distinctions including allophones, stress, rhythm, intonation, elision and contractions. Pronunciation is also seen from its affective component in smoothing the learning of a new language. Stern (1992) states that “adjusting emotionally to the strangeness of the target sound system helps for easy learning of other aspects in L2 such as grammar, vocabulary, writing system, etc” (p.115). For this reason, the teaching of pronunciation is equally important as other aspects of language like grammar, vocabulary, and discourse.

Pertaining to this, with the advent of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), the primary focus of language teaching is achieving communicative interaction and functional use in a new language, i.e. communicative competence (Richards and Rodgers, 2001; Brown, 1994). Following the development of CLT, considerable attention was given to all features which constitute real life communication (ibid). Therefore, learners should be trained and well equipped with skills and knowledge of phonetics and phonology. Unlike the traditional teaching methods which focused on native-like principle, the communicative approaches of the contemporary era target that pronunciation teaching is for achieving comfortable intelligibility for effective communication (Kenworthy, 1987). Morley (1991) points out the significance of pronunciation as, “A growing premium on oral comprehensibility makes it of critical importance to provide instruction that enables students not perfect pronouncers of English, but intelligible, communicative, confident users of spoken English to whatever purposes they need.”(p. 489).

The rationale for this growing interest on pronunciation has been recognized with ‘a new look and basic premise’ introduced to the field: ‘*Intelligible pronunciation is essential component of communicative competence*’ (Morley, 1991; p. 488). More fundamentally, as Levis (2005) and Jenkins (2004) observe recent developments, renewed interest in L2 phonological acquisition research has enabled pronunciation teaching and learning to re-emerge as relevant language experience, though as a more flexible phenomenon largely influenced by principles of the importance of context and differential importance corresponding to the learners’ needs.

However, although many scholars, for example, Roach, 1998; O’Connor, 1980; Kenworthy, 1987, Brown, 1994, and Dalton and Seidlhofer, 1994; and most research findings point to the positive influence of pronunciation on the oral and aural language, EFL learners do not express themselves in utterances that are relevant, easily comprehensible, and of an acceptable level of pronunciation and little attention is given to the teaching of pronunciation. Or, most English as a Foreign Language (EFL) preparatory students in Jimma still face a difficulty in English pronunciation at segmental and suprasegmental features. In addition, little attention has been given to the investigation of this area of language in relation to the spoken language/skills and a teacher’s familiarity with this skill in the theoretical and practical knowledge of English phonetics and phonology.

Identifying the major problems of English pronunciation, in EFL/ESL instructions, a great deal of researches have been carried out both in the overseas and some in local (in Ethiopia) on the pronunciation problems of EFL/ESL learners. Although a number of researches are conducted on the speaking skills of Ethiopian learners, almost all seem to be interested in the oral skill with no considerations of the pronunciation aspect- which is succinctly a major element in speaking and listening skills. Anegagregn (2012) reports that only in some researches has the issue of pronunciation been discussed such as Geremew (2003); Anegagregn (2007); Tewodros (2008); Tafere (2008). “Although they have realized that Ethiopian learners’ characteristic pronunciation difficulties should be identified and treated in the curriculum” Anegagregn (2012) also reports that , “they preferred (in their studies) to survey only attitudinal issues (teachers and students on the importance of pronunciation) and the attention and focus given in text books” (pp. 11-12).

On the area of pronunciation in Ethiopia, only Anegagregn (2012) has conducted a practical and comprehensive investigation on Ethiopian learners in general and Amharic native speakers in particular regarding pronunciation difficulties and intelligibility. To my knowledge, other researchers, other than Anegagregn (2012), did not empirically verify segmental and suprasegmental pronunciation difficulties in terms of actual use and intelligibility. What has not Anegagregn (2012) considered was that he didn’t examine the role of pronunciation problems at allophonic and phonetic levels in the learners’ perception and production, and intelligibility as well.

The purpose of this study is, therefore, to examine intermediate learners’ oral/aural difficulties with English pronunciation both at segmental and suprasegmental with the consideration of allophones and phonetic features of NL and FL (English) and its influence on the intelligibility of learners’ EFL spoken English. Such type of research has not yet been carried out in Ethiopia.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

Since the past few decades, due to the emergence of Communicative Approaches, which took hold since the 1980s and is currently dominant in language teaching, the primary purpose of language is communication, using language to communicate should be central in all classroom language instruction. This focus on language as communication brings renewed urgency to the teaching of pronunciation, since both empirical and anecdotal evidence indicates that there is a threshold level of pronunciation for nonnative speakers of English; if they fall below this threshold level, they will have oral communication problems no matter how excellent and extensive their control of English grammar and vocabulary might be (Celce- Murcia, 1996).

Currently, however, "...pronunciation has come of age and is unlikely to remain on the margins of language teaching as it did for much of the final part of the twentieth century" (Jenkins, 2004: 126). Today's approaches to L2 teaching generally distinguish pronunciation as having a key role in the achievement of successful communication and to teach it effectively relative to other language areas as a way of ensuring learners' global communicative efficiency.

Regarding pronunciation problems, a large number of experimental studies reveal that the main pronunciation problem of EFL/ESL arises from the mother tongue or phonological transfer influence. Factors like age, motivation, exposure, environment, and phonetic ability are also other potential problems in the English pronunciation (Kenworthy, 1987; O'Connor, 1980). Undesirable, careless, inconsistent, and a neglect of pronunciation teaching is also a major challenge of English pronunciation. Pertaining to this, Harmer(2001); Roach (1998); Morley (1991); and Tench (1981) exclaim that pronunciation teaching is not popular all the time with teachers and language teaching theorists and is still undermined by many and not equal attention has been given to it as compared to other language components. As Anegagregn (2012) points out, "Low level of emphasis to pronunciation is said to have resulted mainly from the assumption that pronunciation is an extra element for the language learner to study" (p. 28).

Harmer (2001) asserts that the importance of teaching pronunciation is still undermined by many and not equal attention has been offered to it as compared with the teaching of other aspects. Pertaining to the above notion, Anegagregn (2012), reports, "Low level of emphasis to pronunciation is said to have resulted mainly from the assumption that pronunciation is an extra

element for the language learner” (p.29). Furthermore, many teachers are nervous of dealing with pronunciation aspects because they lack the basic knowledge to teach their students.

Similarly, Dalton and Seidlhofer (1994) noted that teachers feel that they have too much to do and believe that pronunciation teaching is time-consuming or will only make things worse. On the other hand, many teachers are anxious of dealing with sounds and intonation because they lack the basic knowledge to help their students (Harmer, 1981).

As far as this study is concerned, perhaps, observations also substantiate the problem that pronunciation difficulty for most Ethiopian learners as a negative factor in their day to day spoken communication. Just to witness from personal experience, my own interactions, particularly with native speakers, and listening to international media reveals enormous problem to understand easily and efficiently, which is probably related to pronunciation more than anything else (Anegagregn, 2012). For many times, many of us wonder why the news is so difficult for us to understand in foreign media, radio and television, while we had no such problem in the newspapers, magazines, etc. As an English language teacher interested in the issues of pronunciation, the present researcher has good account of observation in which students, and many of Ethiopians fail to follow native English speakers and other non-native speakers in actual interactions, media broadcasts, movies, plasma TV instruction, conferences, etc.

A similar account that could question our non-native speech ease of intelligibility is an observation in many occasions in which natives and others frequently ask for repetition and clarification; or crosscheck by paraphrasing whether or not they catch the right information.

Obviously, these strategies are naturally part of communication in any kind of interaction, yet frequent use of them undoubtedly indicates that communication is not smooth for some reasons, and perhaps in our case pronunciation sounding responsible more than grammar or vocabulary.

In the Ethiopian context, pronunciation teaching problem is as Anegagregn, 2012 reports “The Ethiopian English language teaching seems to have some important flaws in the teaching of pronunciation component with regard to attitude, focus and coverage”(p. 28). He further exemplifies that pronunciation teaching in Ethiopia at all levels is almost in a total neglect with only very few lessons that are unrealistic, undesirable, inconsistent, and only segment-based. The

teaching of pronunciation in the Ethiopian primary and secondary schools gets worse conditions and neglect through various reasons such as negative attitudes and lack of commitment up on the teachers, teachers' belief for lack of detailed knowledge of English Phonetics and Phonology. Consequently, assisting the learner as a speech (pronunciation) model seems to be limited in some Ethiopian schools (Anegagregn, 2007, and Geremew, 2003 as cited in Anegagregn, 2012).

For this reason, the researcher is interested to examine English pronunciation problems that our students encounter as it obscures intelligibility and distorts meaning in the oral/aural communication and the researcher needs to accomplish predicting major pronunciation problems through investigation and provide an outlook toward the teaching of pronunciation in the language classroom. Moreover, students were observed when fail express themselves using English because of the fear of mistakes and lack of lexical knowledge. Based on this anecdotal and other empirical evidence, the researcher is inspired to conduct a study on the students' pronunciation difficulty and its influence on their EFL speaking skills.

The purpose of this study was, therefore, to investigate intermediate learners' pronunciation difficulty and its influence on the intelligibility of learners' EFL speaking skills. The researcher declares that such type of study is not still carried out in Ethiopia.

1.3. Objectives of the Study

1.3.1. General Objective

The overall objective of this study was to examine preparatory students' pronunciation difficulty and its influence on the intelligibility of their spoken English.

1.3.2. Specific Objectives

The specific objectives of this study are to:

1. Identify the major English pronunciation difficulties of the students both at segmental and suprasegmental levels.
2. Examine the extent to which these pronunciation difficulties negatively influence on the students' speaking skills.
3. Examine the students' attitudes toward learning English pronunciation skills.

1.4. Research Questions

In order to achieve the objectives of this study, the following questions are designed to answer:

1. What are some of the major challenges in pronunciation both at segmental and suprasegmental levels?
2. To what extent are these pronunciation difficulties negatively influence students' speaking skills?
3. What are the students' attitudes toward learning pronunciation skills?

1.5 Significances of the Study

Language is a medium of instruction we human beings can cooperate. And, much of our communication relies on production (speaking) and perception (listening) of a speech or an utterance. Pertaining to this, English as an international language and as a lingua franca all over the world has great role for the daily lives of the global community in communication with native and non-native users of it at different social, academic, economic, political and cultural circumstances, which all need comfortably intelligible English pronunciation for successful communication (Kenworthy, 1987).

For this reason, this study may contribute to the pronunciation of English and its intelligibility in the following areas. It may:

- ✚ Introduce the nature and aspects of English pronunciation;
- ✚ Make understanding of pronunciation problems and its role in communication at segmental and suprasegmental levels in relation to learners' NL and English;
- ✚ Imply the major pronunciation areas to teach and to focus;
- ✚ Make some pedagogical recommendations as regards teaching English pronunciation as an EFL by showing the importance of the basic knowledge of English phonetics and phonology;
- ✚ Put forward our insights towards the understanding and importance of pronunciation teaching in the Ethiopian curriculum for pedagogical purposes;
- ✚ Serve to initiate other researchers to conduct similar studies in a number of dimensions regarding to pronunciation difficulties in local NL backgrounds.

1.6. Limitations of the Study.

There were potential weaknesses which were unmanageable and or impossible to minimize during conducting this study. To begin with, the study was conducted only on Amharic NS students in the school; it did not incorporate pronunciation challenges of NS of other local language users so that it is not generalizable to all preparatory school students. This was because the researcher is native to Amharic. Again, the researcher threats that whether the sample size (25 subjects for test instruments) would suffice to generalize for the whole (110 Amharic NS of students in the school and the grade level). Secondly, the test items of pronunciation and intelligibility tests were conducted on a decontextualized forms, not contextualized like through recording of free conversations. Moreover, the test types were evaluated on the basis of subjectivity, i.e. through recordings of read aloud of scripted texts which made students very anxious and induced spelling pronunciation or spelling interference. If the tests were *objective* test of spontaneous speech which learners are doing in the outside world, the reliability and validity of the instruments could yield better result. Also, in data analysis, the researcher did not use more inferential statistics such as analysis of variance (ANOVA), multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA), factor analysis and the like to determine the relationships of items and variables in a dependable fashion. Finally, all of the pronunciation and intelligibility tests of the study were native speaking audio recordings of British English and American English speakers, not a face to face speech and not other English varieties were used..

1.7. Delimitations of the Study

This study is delimited to only students at Jimma Preparatory School in Jimma town. It was more narrowed to grade eleven students; it did not include grade twelve students because of the age and academic maturity differences of the students would affect the validity and reliability of the study outcomes. It was again delimited to students whose mother tongue was Amharic. As far as this study is concerned, it was scoped to Jimma Preparatory School students who were native to Amharic: to consider other languages is unmanageable for the researcher. As Brown (1994) states, "If you are familiar with the sound system of the learners' native language, you will be better able to diagnose their pronunciation difficulty" (p. 261). Moreover, this was also because as (Kenworthy, 1987) claims, it is impossible to find one study as an outstanding research for all

pronunciation difficulties in a multilingual nation [like Ethiopia]. Because of the different native language backgrounds, the influence of NL phonology transfer differs.

Put simply, the results and the findings of this study were delimited to Jimma Preparatory School grade 11 Amharic NS; the study did not subsume other study populations and areas.

Organization of the Research

This research paper is organized in five consecutive chapters. In the first part of this paper, the researcher considers the general background of English pronunciation, statement of the problem, objectives of the study, significance of the study, the research questions, the limitations and delimitations of the study. In the second part, the reviews of related literature are grasped. In the third chapter, the methodology section is discussed in a reasonably detailed way. In the fourth section, the findings and discussion are presented in tables and textual narrations on the basis of data analysis. In the fifth chapter, the researcher discusses the summary, conclusions and recommendations for further study.

1.8. Definition of Key Terms

1. Accent

This word is used (rather confusingly) in two different senses:

1. Accent may refer to prominence given to a syllable, usually by the use of pitch. For example, in the word ‘potato’ the middle syllable is the most prominent; if you say the word on its own you will probably produce a fall in pitch on the middle syllable, making that syllable accented. In this sense, *accent* is distinguished from the more general term stress, which is more often used to refer to all sorts of prominence (including prominence resulting from increased loudness, length or sound quality), or to refer to the effort made by the speaker in producing a stressed syllable.
2. Accent also refers to a particular way of pronouncing: for example, you might find a number of English speakers who all share the same grammar and vocabulary, but pronounce what they say with different accents such as Scots or Cockney, or BBC pronunciation. The word accent in this sense is distinguished from dialect, which usually refers to a variety of a language that differs from other varieties in grammar and/or vocabulary (Roach, 2011).

2. BBC Pronunciation

The British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) is looked up to by many people in Britain and abroad as a ‘*custodian*’ of good English; this attitude is normally only in respect of certain broadcasters who represent the formal style of the Corporation, such as newsreaders and announcers, and does not apply to the more informal voices of people such as disc-jockeys and chat-show presenters (who may speak as they please). The high status given to the BBC’s voices relates both to pronunciation and to grammar, and there are listeners who write angry letters to the BBC or the newspapers to complain about “incorrect” pronunciations such as “loranorder” for “law and order”. Although the attitude that the BBC has a responsibility to preserve some imaginary pure form of English for posterity is extreme, there is much to be said for using the “formal” BBC accent as a model for foreign learners wishing to acquire an English accent (Roach, 2011).

3. General American (GA)

Often abbreviated as GA, this accent is usually held to be the “standard” accent of American English; it is interesting to note that the standard that was for a long time used in the description of British English pronunciation (Received Pronunciation, or RP) is only spoken by a small minority of the British population, whereas GA is the accent of the majority of Americans. It is traditionally identified as the accent spoken throughout the USA except in the north-east (roughly the Boston and New England area) and the southeastern states. Since it is widely used in broadcasting it is also known as “Network English” (Roach, 2011).

4. Intelligibility

Intelligibility may be broadly defined as “the extent to which a speaker’s message is actually understood by a listener” (Munro & Derwing 1999, p. 289). This implies that successfully articulating of words (production) and understanding a native speaker’s intended meaning (perception).

5. International Phonetic Association and Alphabet (IPA)

The International Phonetic Association was established in 1886 as a forum for teachers who were inspired by the idea of using phonetics to improve the teaching of the spoken language to foreign learners. As well as laying the foundations for the modern science of phonetics, the Association had a revolutionary impact on the language classroom in the early decades of its existence, where previously the concentration had been on proficiency in the written form of the language being learned. The Association is still a major international learned society, though the crusading spirit of the pronunciation teachers of the early part of the century is not so evident nowadays. The Association only rarely holds official meetings, but contact among the members is maintained by the Association’s Journal, which has been in publication more or less continuously since the foundation of the Association, with occasional changes of name. Since its beginning, the Association has taken the responsibility for maintaining a standard set of phonetic symbols for use in practical phonetics, presented in the form of a chart.

The set of symbols is usually known as the International Phonetic Alphabet (and the initials IPA are therefore ambiguous). The alphabet is revised from time to time to take account of new discoveries and changes in phonetic theory (Roach, 2011).

6. Native Speaker (NS)

A term used in linguistics to refer to someone for whom a particular language is a first language or mother-tongue. As Crystal (2008) describes the traditional implication of the native speaker of a language, ‘having been acquired naturally during childhood’, a native language is ‘the one about which a speaker will have the most reliable intuitions, and whose judgments about the way the language is used can therefore be trusted’ (321). It is also often believed that ‘in investigating a language, one is wise to try to obtain information from native-speaking informants, rather than from those who may have learned it as a second or foreign language (even if they are highly proficient)’ (ibid. p. 322). In this study, two groups of native speakers are involved: Native Amharic speakers and Native English speaker(s).

7. Pronunciation Difficulty

According to Flege (2002), when people learn a foreign language or a second language, they often substitute sounds or features of the native language for sounds that are needed in the target language mainly due to the influence from the native language phonological system on production of the target language vowels and consonants, stress, rhythm and intonation. As in speaking the same thing happens in listening; when the foreign listener hears the new sounds which are not similar to the sounds in his native language, he hears them as the nearest sounds corresponding in his native stock (O’Connor, 1980).

8. Received Pronunciation (RP)

RP has been used for centuries as the accent of British English usually chosen for the purposes of description and teaching, in spite of the fact that it is only spoken by a small minority of the population; it is also known as the “public school” accent, and as “BBC pronunciation”.

There are clear historical reasons for the adoption of RP as the model accent: in the first half of the twentieth century virtually any English person qualified to teach in a university and write textbooks would have been educated at private schools: RP was (and to a considerable extent still is) mainly the accent of the privately educated. It would therefore have been a bizarre decision at that time to choose to teach any other accent to foreign learners. It survived as the model accent for various reasons: one was its widespread use in “prestige” broadcasting, such as news-reading; secondly, it was claimed to belong to no particular region, being found in all parts of Britain (though in reality it was very much more widespread in London and the south-east of England than anywhere else); and thirdly, it became accepted as a common currency – an accent that (it was claimed) everyone in Britain knows and understands.

Some detailed descriptions of RP have suggested that it is possible to identify different varieties within RP, such as “advanced”, or “conservative”. Another suggestion is that there is an exaggerated version that can be called “hyper-RP”. But these sub-species do not appear to be easy to identify reliably. My own opinion is that RP was a convenient fiction, but one which had regrettable associations with high social class and privilege. I prefer to treat the BBC accent as the best model for the description of English, and to consign “Received Pronunciation” to history.

9. Varieties of English Pronunciation

People in different regions speak differently even in the same country in the same language. A regional variety of a language differing from the standard language is called a dialect when it is distinguished by differences at several linguistic levels, e.g. in pronunciation, grammar and vocabulary. When there are no differences in grammar and vocabulary but only the pronunciation (including the rhythm and melody) differs, the language variety is called an accent. Specifically, accent refers to a variety of a language which is distinguished from others exclusively in terms of pronunciation (Roach, 2001). Generally, English language has two major accent varieties known as native (the speech of English as a mother tongue) and non-native (the speech of English as a second or foreign language).

CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1. Pronunciation: Conceptual and Theoretical Framework

Pronunciation can globally be perceived as an aspect of oral/aural communication which is different from written language. Roach (2011), defines pronunciation as “the act of producing the sounds of a language” (p.71). The concept of pronunciation is also often defined in relation to its segmental (phonemes) and suprasegmentals (stress, rhythm, intonation) components. Jones (2002) also defines it as “Pronunciation (also known as phonology) includes the role of individual sounds and sound segments, that is, features at segmental level, as well as suprasegmental features such as stress, rhythm, and intonation” (p.175). In the same way, Ur(1989), refers to pronunciation as the phonology of the language consisting of consonants, vowels, syllables, stress, rhythm, intonation, and their combinations. In almost a similar vein, Richards and Renandya (2002), describe pronunciation as the role of individual phonemes and phoneme segments appearing in group or connected to each other and their combinations with suprasegmentals such as tone, stress, rhythm, intonation and connected speech.

As far as the aspects of pronunciation is concerned, O’ Connor (1980: 101), explains what it is when we speak and listen to an English sentence ‘*He was always asking awkward questions*’ and possible meanings that can be made out in a context including fluency. Basically, there are vowel and consonant phonemes in this sentence performing different functions at the level of syllable having them either as ‘optional’ or ‘compulsory’ element or as ‘central’ or ‘surrounding’ element. Sounds appear in group and sometimes two or more consonants come together as in the end of the word ‘*questions*’ forming two consonant cluster or combination of sounds.

2.2. Historical Account of Pronunciation Teaching

The history of pronunciation teaching reveals that different language teaching methods and approaches introduced to the field at different times reacted quite differently to the importance of teaching pronunciation and the way it should be taught. The components of pronunciation in language teaching varies due to the different methods and approaches in different periods at different teaching curricula. Jones (2002: p.178), for example, explains the reactions of pronunciation teaching as, “ The fortunes of pronunciation have waxed and waned” to point out

consecutive changes in favor of or against its teaching scope. The history of pronunciation in English language teaching is described as “ a study in extremes ; some approaches to teaching... elevated pronunciation to a pinnacle of importance, while other approaches to ... mostly ignored pronunciation” (Levis, 2005:369 as cited in Anegagregn, 2012).

Since the 1880s, therefore, due to the ‘*Reform Movement*’, the discipline of linguistics particularly phonetics was revitalized (Richards and Rodgers, 2001). The ‘*Reform Movement*’ was led by great intellects and practical minded linguists such as Henry Sweet of England, Wilhelm Vietor of Germany and Paul Passy of France founding an association entitled the ‘*International Phonetic Association (IPA)*’ in 1886, and its International Phonetic Alphabet (also abbreviated as IPA) to enable the sounds of any language to be accurately transcribed and pronounced (Richards and Rodgers, 2001). One of the earliest goals of the association was to improve the teaching of modern languages through the advocacy of the study of the spoken language by the help of phonetic training in order to establish good pronunciation habits (Celce-Murcia, 1996; Richards and Rodgers, 2001).

Following the Reform Movement, pronunciation teaching grew in prominence at the turn of the 19th century and the period between 1940s and 1960s was marked by the views of audio-lingual methodology developed in the U.S. and situational language teaching in Britain and was the time when pronunciation teaching was regarded as an important component of English language curricula aiming at achieving native-like pronunciation (Celce-Murcia, 1991). Between 1940-1960s, “Language learning was viewed”, as Morley (1991) explains, “as mastering ... rules , the building blocks of the language, along with the combining rules for phonemes, morphemes, words, phrases, sentences” in connection with suprasegmental features such as stress, rhythm and intonation through drills, imitation, memorization and dialogues.

Since the late 1960s- 1980s, pronunciation teaching was in almost a total neglect and negative impressions as most theorists and methodologists raised doubts and criticisms on its importance for instructional focus and immediately erased it from the curriculum (Morley, 1991). That was because as Anegagregn (2012) suggests, “The period marked scholars’ change of attitudes and growing dissatisfactions to the previous principles and practices” (p. 25).

Since the early 1980s up to date, with the ascendance of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and the Natural Approach, pronunciation teaching is found to be in a new resurgence fuelled largely by the increasing awareness of the communicative function of suprasegmental features in spoken discourse (Richards and Renandya, 2002; Krashen, 1982).

In connection with this, (Morley, 1991) states that language teaching was witnessed by empirical and anecdotal evidence which embraced the pronunciation as an important aspect as CLT introduced a focus on all aspects of language as considerable components of language which make up real life communication. Tench (1981) also suggests about the implications and importance of this approach that “the learners’ overall aim and the teachers’ overall tasks in the teaching-learning process should embrace all aspects that impinge up on day to day communication” (p. 2). Learners, therefore, should be equipped with all features and skills of the language such as grammar, vocabulary, spelling, pronunciation, listening, speaking, reading and writing as far as they are intending to attain communicative competence according to the CLT approach.

2.3. English Phonetics and Phonology

Phonetics and phonology are the two sub disciplines of linguistics that can take great account for English pronunciation. Phonetics and phonology are inseparable that one of them cannot stand without the other.

If so, what is the clear distinction between phonetics and phonology? Roach (2011) & Crystal (2008) state that phonetics is about the discovery of how speech sounds are produced, how they are used in spoken language, how we can record speech sounds with written symbols and how we hear and recognize different sounds and phonology, on the other hand, includes sounds(phonemes), syllable, stress, rhythm and intonation. In the same vein, Brown (1992) defines “Phonetics deals with the description of speech sounds- how they are produced by the vocal apparatus. Phonology deals with the way that speech sounds work together in the sound system of a language”(p.7).For this reason, both phonetics and phonology have their own areas of study though they are inseparable from one another.

Experimental research is carried out in all fields of phonetics: in the articulatory phonetics, we measure and study how speech is produced including how each phoneme in a language is

articulated in terms of its manner of articulation, place of articulation and voicing (Roach, 2011). For example, the English consonant sound [θ] is described as inter-dental, voiceless and fricative. Acoustic phonetics studies the physical characteristics of sound waves, whereas, auditory phonetics studies how speech sounds are perceived via human's ears.

Phonology, on the other hand, studies sound combinations and their correct use of pronunciation aspects like phoneme articulation in separable and in combination, stress, rhythm, intonation and connected speeches.

2.4. Pronunciation Aspects: Segments and Supra segments

2.4.1. Segmental Phonology (Pronunciation)

Phonemes or speech sounds in any language are often broadly classified into two main categories of sounds, namely consonants and vowels. Although there are slight differences in how individuals articulate sounds, linguists still describe reasonably 'accurately' how each sound in a language produced and segments/phonemes are the basic constituents of supra segments or longer utterances. The RP English, a social accent rather than a geographical accent, has a total of 44 sounds, i.e. 24 consonant sounds and 20 vowel sounds (Roach, 1998 & O'Connor, 1980).

2.4.1.1. Consonants

Phoneticians define consonants as sounds that are articulated with obstructing the flow of enough air to produce friction noise. Consonants of all language have in common that they obstruct the flow of air through the vocal tract. English consonant sounds are 24 in number in the RP accent (the most fully recommended accent for a foreign learner) and all consonants could be described based on three criteria: vocal cord vibration (voicing), place of articulation and the manner of articulation (O'Connor (1980) and Roach (1998)). These sounds are symbolized as /p, t, k, b, d, g, m, n, ŋ, f, θ, s, ʃ, v, z, ʒ, w, r, j, l, tʃ, dʒ, h/ in British English IPA transcription. IPA shows us how to pronounce words instead of how to spell them. Using IPA can be tricky at first, but when you are good at it, your pronunciation will improve. It is very useful to learn IPA, as you can find the pronunciation of any word [whether it is vowel or consonant sound in words] in a dictionary (<http://www.anenglishaccent.com/freeaudio.zip>).

As a result, the 24 English consonant sounds are also transcribed in the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English, 8th Edition for correct pronunciation of words as follows:

- /p/ as in peak /pi:k/ /z/ as in zebra /zebrə/
- /t/ as in tight /taɪt/ /ð/ as in there /ðeə/
- /k/ as in quite /kwaɪt/ /θ/ as in think /θɪŋk/
- /b/ as in bee /bi:/ /h/ as in hoof /hu:f/
- /d/ dog /dɒg/ /w/ as in white /waɪt/
- /g/ as in gang /gæŋ/ /j/ as in yes /jes/
- /f/ as in food /fu:d/ /m/ as in mother /mʌðə/
- /v/ as in vow /vaʊ/ /n/ as in nation /neɪʃn/
- /s/ as in salient /seɪlɪənt/ /ŋ/ as in wing /wɪŋ/
- /ʃ/ as in ship /ʃɪp/ /l/ as in little /lɪtl/
- /tʃ/ as in cheque /tʃek/ /r/ as in wring /rɪŋ/
- /dʒ/ as in judge /dʒʌdʒ/ /ʒ/ as in garage /gæra:ʒ/
-

(Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English, 8th Edition)

The vocal cords represent a key element in the articulation of speech sounds. If the cords vibrate when we produce a sound, the sound is voiced; on the contrary, if the sound is produced without vocal cord vibration, it is a voiceless sound. Manner of articulation categorizes consonants in terms of how the obstruction is achieved; from this we have plosives, fricatives, affricatives, nasals, liquids, and glides. Place of articulation takes into account where that obstruction takes place, that is, the name of the organs involved in the articulation; from this we have labials, dentals, alveolar, palatal, velar and glottal (Anegagreg, 2012).

Table 1: The Manners of Articulation of English Consonant Sounds

PLOSIVES	[p] [b] [t] [d] [k] [g]
FRICATIVES	[f] [v] [θ] [ð] [h] [s] [z] [ʃ] [ʒ]
NASALS	[m] [n] [ŋ]]
APPROXIMANT	[w] [j]
TRILL	[r]
LATERAL	[l]

Table 2: The Place of Articulation of English Consonants

BILABIAL	[m], [p], [b]
INTERDENTAL	[θ], [ð]
ALVEOLAR	[t], [d], [n], [s], [z], [r], [l]
PALATOALVEOLAR	[ʃ], [ʒ]
PALATAL	[j], [tʃ], [dʒ]
LABIOVELAR	[w]
VELAR	[k], [g], [ŋ]
GLOTTAL	[h]

2.4.2. Allophones

Central to the concept of the phoneme is the idea that it may be pronounced in many different ways. In English (BBC pronunciation) we take it for granted that the r sounds in ‘ray’ and ‘tray’ are “the same sound” (i.e. the same phoneme), but in reality the two sounds are very different –

the r in ‘ray’ is voiced and non-fricative, while the r sound in ‘tray’ is voiceless and fricative. In phonemic transcription we use the same symbol r for both, but we know that the allophones of r include the voiced non-fricative sound ɹ and the voiceless fricative one ʃ.

In theory a phoneme can have an infinite number of allophones, but in practice for descriptive purposes we tend to concentrate on a small number that occur most regularly (Roach, 2011).

Allophones are found in complementary distribution when one occurs under condition A but never B, while the other occurs under condition B but never A. That is, the allophonic variation is predictable from the environment. Look at the following examples:

[ambəssa] “lion”
[aŋgət] “neck”
[nəbɪr] “tiger”
[kəmɸər] “lip”

The sounds [m], [ŋ], [n] and [ɱ] in the above examples are different realizations of the Amharic phoneme /n/. Thus, the four sounds are allophones of the same phoneme /n/. It is easy to predict when the /n/ will be [m], [ŋ], [ɱ] or just [n].

- i. If /n/ comes before bilabial sound, it will be realized as [m], as in [ambəssa].
- ii. If /n/ comes before a velar sound, it will be realized as [ŋ], as in [aŋgət].
- iii. If /n/ comes before a labiodental sound, it will be realized as [ɱ], as in [kəmɸər].
- iv. In other contexts, /n/ will be realized as [n].

These four statements show the allophonic rules. The rules show the environments or the contexts in which the allophone occur. No two allophones occur in the same environment.

If sounds can be found in the same environment but do not bring any difference in meaning, they are said to be in free variation. For example, in Amharic words [tinant] vs [tilant], the phonemes /n/ and /l/ are in free variation. Likewise, in Oromo words [bo:he] and [bo:ye], the phonemes [h] and [y] are in free variation (Eba,2016).

2.4.1.2. Vowels

Though there is no agreed upon definition given for vowels, most linguists define vowels as the class of sounds which make the least obstruction to the flow of air. They are almost always found at the centre of a syllable although they rarely appear at the initial position as in the word art/a:t/ and final position as in the word lecturer/lektʃərə/. There is also rare to find any sound other than

a vowel which is able to stand alone as a whole syllable as in the word ‘hour’ /aʊə/, ‘air’/ eɪə/, and so on. In phonetic terms, each vowel has a number of properties that distinguish it from other vowels. These include the shape of the lips, which may be rounded (as for an u: vowel), neutral (as for ə) or spread (as in smile, or an i: vowel....Secondly, the front, the middle or the back of the tongue may be raised, giving different vowel qualities, the descriptions and classifications of vowels based on the movement of the tongue and shape of the lip (O,Connor, 1980, Roach, 2011).

In order for a phoneme to be a vowel, it should meet certain criteria: the degree of openness of the oral cavity, the degree of tension or laxity of the vocal tract muscles, and amount of duration or length of articulation. The chief characteristic of vowels is the freedom with which the airstream, once out of the glottis, passes through the speech organs. In the RP accent there are 20 vowel phonemes (12 monophthongs and 8 diphthongs) as identified by O’Connor(1980) and Roach (1998). These vowel sounds are / i: ɪ e æ eɪ ɔɪ aɪ ə ɜ: ʌ ɑ: əʊ aʊ u: ʊ ɔ: ɒ ɪə eə ʊə/ in British English IPA transcription. / i: ɪ e æ ə ɜ: ʌ ɑ: u: ʊ ɔ: ɒ/ are monophthongs, and /eɪ ɔɪ aɪ əʊ aʊ ɪə eə ʊə/are diphthongs. These sounds are further transcribed and pronounced as follows as used in IPA in the *Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary of Current English, 8th Edition*:

Monophthongs	Diphthongs	Triphthongs
/i:/ as in sheep / ʃi:p /	/ʊə/ as in poor / pʊə /	/aʊə/ as in power/ paʊə /
/ɪ/as in hit / hɪt /	/ɔɪ/ as in boy / bɔɪ /	/aɪə/ as in higher / haɪə /
/e/ as in hen / hen /	/ɪə/ as in here / hɪə /	/eɪə/ as in player / pleɪə /
/ɜ:/ as in fur / fɜ:/	/əʊ/ as in know / nəʊ /	/ɔɪə/ as in royal / rɔɪə /
/ə/ as in banana / bə'na:nə /	/eɪ/as in day / deɪ /	/əʊə/ as in lower / ləʊə /
/ɔ:/ as in four / fɔ:/	/aʊ/ as in cow / kaʊ /	
/ɒ/ as in hot / hɒt /	/aɪ/ as in mile / maɪ /	
/ɑ:/ as in car / kɑ:/	/eə/ as in air / eə /	

/ʌ/ as in bus /bʌs/

/æ/ as in hat /hæt/

/u:/ as in boot /bu:t/

/ʊ/ as in book/bʊk/

(Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English, 8th Edition)

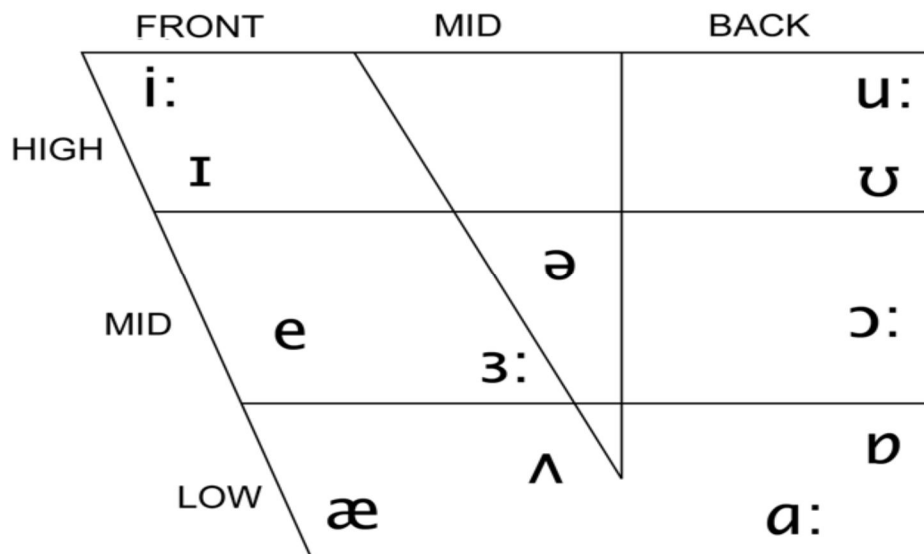


Figure 1: The Diagram of Cardinal Vowels of English Scanned from Roach's 'English Phonetics and Phonology' Book

Students may also be asked to deal with particular sound(s) in order to realize how this/these sound(s) is/are made in their mouth and how it/they can be spelled. There are many ways how the individual sound(s) can be trained through identifying the particular sound(s) in the words as in the words *bird, word, worm, curl, heard, first, lurch* (Harmer 2005, 187).

2.4.3. Suprasegmental Phonology (Pronunciation)

The term suprasegmental is invented to refer to aspects of sound such as stress, rhythm, and intonation. These are features of speech which generally apply to groups of segments, or phonemes. Other features such as ‘pitch’, ‘loudness’, ‘tempo’, and ‘voice quality’ are also constitute suprasegmental aspects. The study of these features is called ‘prosody’ which bases for especially important functions [oral interaction] (Roach, 2011).

2.4.3.1. Stress

It is almost certainly true that many world languages have some syllables which are in some sense stronger than other syllables; these are syllables that have the potential to be described as stressed (Roach, 2011). In English, for example, the middle syllable of the word ‘*tomato*’ is clearly stronger than the first and the last syllables, and hence the middle syllable is called stressed (O’Connor, 1980). The syllable(s) that stand out, or said more prominently than others by length or loudness is called stressed; while a syllable which receives a noticeable distinct pitch is called ‘accented’ (Roach, 2001). Languages also vary as to the position of the word which receives the stress. In Amharic, (Anegagreg, 2012 as cited in Alemayehu, 1987), for example, the stress falls on the penultimate (before the final) syllable, while in French, it is usual for stress to fall on the final syllable of the word. On the other hand, English has ‘free stress pattern’ in the sense that some words are accented on the first syllable, some on the second syllable, others on the third, and so on as opposed to ‘fixed stress patterns’ in many other languages (Roach, 2001). As a general rule, in English, it is the picture words (nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs) which are stressed, the words which give us the picture or provide most of the information. However, all these potentially stressed words have different stress rules based on the class of a word and the number of syllable(s) in that word, monosyllabic, disyllabic or poly syllabic word. On the contrary, there are weak/unstressed syllables in English. O’Connor, 1980 and Roach, 1998, state that 35 English words are usually pronounced as unstressed. These unstressed words are purely grammatical words such as articles, helping verbs and short prepositions though they are rarely and functionally stressed.

Most phoneticians agree that if easy intelligibility is to be achieved in English, it is extremely important to give words their correct stress because wrong syllable stress spoils the shape of the word for an English listener and he/she may have difficulty in recognizing the word (O’Connor,

1980). In English, for example, the position of stress can change the meaning of a word, as in the case of ‘import’ (noun), and ‘import’ (verb) and so forms part of the phonological composition of the world (Roach, 2011: 83). Following Tennant (2007, 2), practicing word stress is regarded more important than practicing individual sounds as it may completely change desirable meaning. As English words do not give the same stress to all the syllables they mention, a great number of speakers suffer acquiring the stress pattern which is different than that one of their mother tongue. In addition to this, putting stress on the wrong syllable may cause a lot of trouble as well as the shifted word category can change the meaning of a word (e.g. the word *present* as a *noun* or as a *verb*). Training stress in phrases and sentences meets a great importance as well. Misused stress in a sentence can cause communication breakdowns, not only in terms of productive skills (speaking) but also in terms of receptive skills (listening).

2.4.3.2.Rhythm

Kenworthy (1987) defines rhythm as the alternation of strong and weak syllables in the sense that stressed words are foregrounded through their occurrence on a strong beat, and unstressed words are back grounded by their occurrence on a weak beat. She verifies this definition by giving example as: D is for duck, with spots on his back, who lives in the water, and always says, quack.

In rhythm, there is a rhythm unit, one stressed syllable which may have unstressed syllables before and/or after it, or the stressed syllable and any syllable(s) which follow it. As in the sentence ‘ I’m *going home today*’. A stressed syllable followed by any unstressed syllable(s) forms a stress group. O’ Connor (1980) clearly explains the basic rhythm rule of English as, “each stress group within a word group is given the same amount of time” (p. 98). Consequently, any unstressed syllable in a rhythm unit is said very quickly and does not affect the length of syllables before it and any unstressed syllable after the stressed syllable is part of the stress group and shares the available time with the other syllables of the stress group. For example, in ‘ *both of them left early*’, the three syllables of ‘*both of them*’ and the two syllables of ‘*early*’ are said in the same amount of time as the single syllable ‘*left*’ (O’Connor, 1980, pp.98-99).

It is often claimed that in some languages of the world, syllables constituting utterances, whether stressed or unstressed, tend to occur at equal time intervals. The time taken from one stressed syllable to the next can be proportionate to the number of unstressed syllables between them.

Such languages are said to have ‘syllable-timed’ rhythm. Some other languages of the world are ‘stress-timed’ rhythm. In these languages, stressed syllables have a tendency to occur at approximately equal intervals of time, irrespective of the number of unstressed syllables intervening between one stressed syllable and the next (Dalton and Seidlhofer, 1994; Roach, 2001). English, for example, belongs to stress-timed rhythm (ibid). This is as Roach(2001:36) points out that, “unstressed syllables between the stressed syllables are squeezed into the time available, with the result that they may become very short”.

Kenworthy (1987), and Dalton and Seidlhofer (1994) claim that learners of English as a second or as foreign language especially those from languages of syllable-timed back ground tend to face difficulty in English rhythm. Phoneticians and phonologists suggest that adequate practice on this area is important and to ignore it is to neglect vital aspect of English pronunciation which leads to loss of intelligibility(ibid).

2.4.3.3. Intonation

Though writers sometimes refer to intonation as the most difficult to define, they describe it as ‘the melody of speech’, and associate it with ‘variations in pitch (tune)’ belonging to a word group of an utterance (Roach, 2001; Dalton and Seidlhofer, 1994; O’Conner, 1980). The term intonation often refers to the way the voice goes up and down in pitch when speaking. Intonation, therefore, may be defined as a pitch contour that characterizes an entire utterance. This is often referred to as what makes intonation different from ‘tone’ (Gimson, 1975; Radford, 2009).

Focusing students’ attention to activities practicing intonation can strengthen their ability to convey meaning, mood and the ideas they are claiming (Harmer 2005, 194).

Here are some of the ways for training the intonation:

Different meanings

1. Students may be asked to practice intonation on just one particular word in order to realize the different ways how it can be said. Students are, for example, asked to question their teacher *yes/no question*. The teacher, by giving only the positive answers, shows his/her own feelings. So, for a question *Are you happy?* The teacher may give a neutral answer, an answer which expresses a surprise for being asked and so on.

2. Students may be also questioned to match the intonation to a picture expressing various emotions, according to what the teacher's intonation means this time (Harmer 2005, 194).

Falling and rising intonation

First, students listen to the same sentence with the aim to recognize its different intonation patterns. Afterwards, in the next part of listening, they are asked to distinguish whether the conversations sound friendly or unfriendly, formal or informal. (Bowler and Parminter 1992, 24).

2.4.3.4. Connected Speech

Speech is normally produced in a continuous, connected stream of sounds, except when we pause. Roach (2001) notes that it is very rare in normal speech to find cases where a speaker makes a single segment in isolation with no sound preceding or following it. Thus, the usual situation is 'for segments to fit closely together with each other' (ibid: 53). As we have seen previously, phonetics tends to look on speech as a sequence of segments as discrete and independent of each other and such description is not enough as 'in every language we find that segments have a strong effect on other segments which are close to them' (ibid:53). Such patterns in a language are another part of the study of phonology and part of the phonological processes of a language.

Speakers in a language often use several kinds of connected speech which phonologists refer to as 'assimilation', 'elision', 'linking and intrusion' (i.e. insertion of an extra sound initially in a word: epenthesis), 'juncture' (i.e. phonetic boundary demarcating grammatical units), and 'contraction', etc. Kelly (2000) notes that these features are usually more evident in rapid and everyday speech, while speakers tend to use them less in more careful or formal speech. Certain features may also be more or less related to 'accent varieties' of a language, and even with personal habits and preferences of an individual speaker.

2.5. Factors Influencing Pronunciation Intelligibility

A couple of reasons contribute as a roadblock for English intelligible pronunciation. O'Connor(1980) explains this as “The main problem of English pronunciation is to build a new set of boxes corresponding the sounds of English, and to break down the arrangement of boxes which the habits of our native language have so strongly built up”(p. 3). This implies that the extent and area of pronunciation difficulties vary greatly with speakers of different first languages varying their pronunciation under the influence of their native language phonology. A great number of researches reveal that the mother tongue, among other things, is the most influential factor affecting the intelligibility of English pronunciation. Some other potential factors can also affect acquiring intelligible pronunciation skills prosperously (Mikulastikova, 2012).

Dalton and Seidlhofer (1994) and Shoebottom (2012) distinguish two main groups of factors – internal factors that are incorporated into students’ individual language and external factors characterizing the particular language learning situation. The factors that can affect pronunciation intelligibility into students’ personal language are age, personality, motivation, experiences, cognitive and native language itself (ibid). Regarding to age, almost all linguists, O’Connor 1980, Dalton and Seidlhofer (1994), for example, believe that a child of ten years or less can better achieve native like pronunciation and learn any language perfectly no matter where it was born and whoever its parents are than adults as their mother tongue sound memory is strongly built up in the course of life and in the passage of time and difficult to break it. Very few adults and adolescents, however, are able to cope with a native accent because they are either naturally talented, or they live long in the English speech community speaking the language (Dalton and Seidlhofer, 1994 and Mikulastikova, 2012, O’Connor,1980).

Attitude and identity are also strong determiners of the acquisition of accurate pronunciation of a foreign language. We human beings express ourselves and relate to others, either consciously or unconsciously to depict our identity. Language is used not only to communicate, but also to establish a sense of solidarity. Consequently, we need to ask ourselves to what extent learners need, or indeed want to join the native speaker community (British English accent [RP/BBC], American English or other English accents as a model). A foreign accent can place the learner

outside the power game in the native –speaker community, and may therefore be an asset rather than a handicap (Dalton and Seidlhofer, 1994, pp.3-7).

In the same vein, Kenworthy (1987:8) adds the following:

In many studies of attitude and motivation in language learning, it has been shown that those learners who show positive feelings towards the speakers of the new language tend to develop more accurate, native-like accents. These positive feelings have been related to their ‘integrative motivation’; the language learner is willing to be integrated into the new speech community and is genuinely interested both in the speakers and their culture.

Conversely, if the learner has little or no positive attitude and a sense of solidarity to at least one native English accent, he/she acquires less pronunciation skill and his/her English pronunciation becomes impaired and communication fails.

Another important factor determining the acquisition of English pronunciation is motivation and concern for pronunciation. According to Kenworthy (1987), learners who are more intrinsically motivated and hard working to acquire a foreign accent have high achievement and those who are less motivated and unconcerned learners are resulting in pronunciation difficulty, irritation or misunderstanding for the listener.

The phonetic ability of a learner has also an influence on the pronunciation of English. Some learners are better listeners of English and have good ‘aptitude for oral mimicry’, ‘phonetic coding ability’, or ‘auditory discrimination ability’. Learners’ innate ability enables them to exploit all the opportunities to compare what they are doing with the model presented and ‘poor discriminators’ do not seem to benefit from drills very much. All learners, however, have the ‘basic equipment’ and provide a variety of tasks so that something will suit the needs and abilities of each learner (Kenworthy, 1987).

2.6. World Englishes and Model Accent

It is important to clear up the concept of the many varieties of English language. According to Seidlhofer (2005, 339), there are many terms that refer to this perception, e.g. English as an International Language (EIL), English as a World Language, English as a Global Language,

English as a Lingua Franca, World Englishes and many others. Following Farrell and Martin (1989,) world Englishes comprise all the varieties of English language that exist around the world, with all their cultural and language diversities.

In connection with the nature of world English varieties and having a model accent, O'Connor (1980) judiciously asserts the following:

In one sense there are as many different kinds of English as there are speakers of it; no two people speak exactly alike. We can always hear differences between them and the pronunciation of English varies a great deal in different geographical areas. How do we decide what sort of English to use as a model? This is not a question which can be decided in the same way for all foreign learners of English. If you live in a part of the world like India or West Africa, where there is a tradition of speaking English for general communication purposes, you should aim to acquire a good variety of the pronunciation of this area; such varieties of Indian English or African English and the like are to be respected and used as a model by all those who will need their English mainly for the purpose of communication with their fellows in these areas. It would be a mistake in these circumstances to use as a model B.B.C. English or anything of the sort.

On the other hand, if you live in an area where there is no traditional use of English and no body of people who speak it for general communication purposes, then you must take as your model some form of native English pronunciation, and which form you choose does not very much matter. The most sensible thing to do is to take as your model the sort of English which you can hear most often. If you have gramophone records of English speech based on, let us say, an American pronunciation, make American your model; if you can listen regularly to the B.B.C., use that kind of English. But whatever you choose to do, remember this: all these different accents of English have a great deal in common, they have far more similarities than differences, so don't worry too much what sort of English you are listening to provided it is English (O'Connor, 1980, p.5).

Following Ur (1989, 2-5), teachers of ESL have the following ways to choose from in order to introduce a teaching model in their classroom:

- 1) Teachers can base their English lessons on the *Standard English model* which includes comprehensible and acceptable features recognizable worldwide. It is usually based on one or two predominant native varieties (British English, American English). Introducing only the Standard form, however, eliminates the possibility to encounter the great number of idioms, vocabulary, grammar and spellings that are included in many English varieties.
- 2) Teachers can also decide for a *native model* which is favored by many students and teachers as it is well defined and codified. The question is which variety of native model to choose from as there are many native model varieties around the world.
- 3) Another option to elect from is the *diverse model*, which enables to teach also some of the local variations. This model is probably the most ideologically embraceable, even though it requires some kind of codification. As this way presents a very flexible way of teaching, it is difficult to design a syllabus for it.
- 4) In order to improve student's intelligibility, teachers can introduce so called *common core model* into the classroom. This method should be universally comprehensible and easily achievable. However, it is not proved whether this model includes all the most common language features used worldwide or not. (Ur , 1989, 2-5).

To sum up, most phoneticians recommend to choose the British English and American English for a foreign learner of English, because these are the most important kinds of English in the world in media, politics, trade and tourism. And, the British English (the BBC accent, traditionally the RP) is the most fully recommended native English accent for a foreign learner (Roach, 2011; O'Connor, 1980).

2.7. Research in L2 Phonological Acquisition

One such factor that distinguishes L2 acquisition from L1 acquisition is the fact that the second language learner comes to the task of acquisition already knowing a language. Most current theories on L2 acquisition, in fact, assume that the native language of the learner plays a significant role in acquiring a new language. Although researchers generally agree that learner's existing linguistic knowledge exerts the most important influence on the learning of L2 phonology, there is considerable consensus that there are a range of other processes and factors

(i.e. what is generally known as inter language factors) interacting with the role that the native language plays. Moreover, existing research suggests that the influence of the native grammar is not absolute: some aspects of the NL seem to prevent successful acquisition of particular L2 structures, whereas other properties of the L2 are acquired with little or no interference from the native grammar (Brown, 1997).

The first branch of research on ‘contrastive analysis framework’ demonstrates how L2 learners’ native phonological structure restricts learners’ sensitivity to non-native phonetic and phonological aspects which are lacking in the learners’ NL. The second line of phonological theory and ‘inter language-based’ research approach make use of how the continued operation of L2 learners existing phonological structure establishes its own phonological system or ‘inter language’, and constrains acquisition of subtle differences between the NL and the target language. By isolating and characterizing those phonological properties of the NL that impinge upon L2 acquisition, it offers an explanation for why learners face difficulties in perceiving and discriminating L2 sounds which are also shared by the NL and in what ways they are capable of acquiring successfully. Also, by demonstrating how the NL grammar can both facilitate and hinder acquisition, the findings provide an account of why differential success among speakers of different NLs can occur in acquiring a given non-native pronunciation; it also accounts for the differential success that speakers with the same NL have in acquiring various aspects of non-native pronunciation. Thirdly, by forging a link between phonological interference and other inter lingual processes, further lines of research demonstrate how learners’ individual, social, and psychological factors interact with the complex processes of NL transfer and, thereby impinge L2 phonological acquisition; signifying learning new pronunciation is not just a linguistic matter (Jones, 2002).

CHAPTER THREE: THE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The purpose of the study is to identify difficulties of English pronunciation that preparatory students were experiencing and the impact of these difficulties on their global communication. To achieve this, chapter three first deals with the research design, methodological steps and procedures that were used to conduct this study. It also describes the participants, data collection instruments, procedures and methods of data analysis that were employed in the investigation.

3.1. The Research Design

The present study used mixed method design since it was more than simply collecting and analyzing both kinds of data; it also involves the use of both approaches in tandem so that the overall strength of a study is greater than either quantitative or qualitative research (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007). In addition, in mixed methods design, —the researcher may embed one smaller form of data within another larger data collection in order to analyze different types of questions (Creswell, 2009, p. 15) The study, therefore, made use of qualitative data types of tests and interviews as they were used to narrate the final report with contextual description and direct quotations from the research participants (Lichtman,2006).

On the other hand, the researcher also used quantitative descriptive methods such as questionnaires the attitudes of the students toward learning pronunciation skills and to diagnose a range of possible problems that the students encountered with regard to English phonetic and phonological forms which are lacking in their NL, and identify specific characteristic difficulties the learners actually experienced in spoken English.

Descriptive research design was used to provide descriptive information (i.e. dealing with naturally existing phenomena) about the subjects of enquiry deductively with predefined focus of investigation using quantitative (numeric) measures of data (Johnson & Christensen, 2008). For this reason, the research design of this study was also relied on quantitative descriptive method as it examined the already existing pronunciation challenges of preparatory students by focusing on the English Phonology areas strange for the students' native language phonology. In some cases, however, along with descriptive methods of the quantitative data, qualitative method of

analysis were made on the data that were textual in nature or incidental in type depicting a particular occurrence or event using interview.

3.2. Study Population and Sampling

3.2.1. School Selection

Depending on the population size and diversity, the researcher used a purposive sampling to select three preparatory schools to avoid bias and give equal chance for all schools. Consequently, Jimma Preparatory School, Community Preparatory School and Beteseb Academy Preparatory School (private-owned) for the sample study. The researcher, then, used purposive sampling method to select Jimma Preparatory School as a target school for the study other than the two. The reason why the researcher selected this school was to get more number of students whose NL is Amharic than the private schools in the town.

3.2.2. Population Sampling

The target population of this study were grade 11 students of Jimma Preparatory School, a public school in Jimma town. In exploring pronunciation difficulties of a certain group of population, many researches have asserted that the influence of mother tongue in acquiring the pronunciation of a foreign language is inevitable (O'Connor, 1980; Kenworthy, 1987; Roach, 1998 & Jones, 2002). Consequently, the total number of students in grade 11 was 915 in the 2017/2018 academic year enrollment whose NL was diverse in local languages and most of them were native in Afan Oromo and 110 of them were native in Amharic. In conjunction with this, while saying preparatory school students' pronunciation difficulty, the researcher did not include grade eleven students whose NL was other than Amharic as he is a monolingual person and grade twelve students since the age and academic maturity of learners can affect the acquisition of L2 (pronunciation here). For this reason, since the researcher's NL is Amharic, he used a purposive sampling method as the issue of mother tongue was critical as a preselecting criterion for selecting study subjects. The main reason to conduct this study on preparatory level was that from the researcher's experience that Ethiopian students do not begin correct pronunciation acquisition from their childhood academic courses. So was the fact that they pronounce imitating directly from their classroom teachers who were not proficient enough in pronunciation. As a

result, to trigger those intermediate learners toward their actual pronunciation challenges so that they can be aware of these difficulties and get ready to fix them in practice.

Consequently, the researcher devised purposive sampling method to select 110 students of grade 11 whose mother tongue was Amharic from the total number of students at the same grade level in general and screened 25 of them randomly for quota sampling technique in particular to get valid data in the pronunciation and intelligibility tests. As a result, the samples for the pronunciation and intelligibility tests of this study were 25 students out of the total 110 students from grade 11 whose NL was Amharic to gather about exact pronunciation difficulties of learners' of preparatory program in a bit detailed investigation.

While the matter of NL was critical to examine the pronunciation challenges of the target subjects, the number of subjects (samples) having the same NL (Amharic) varied across the research question and data collection tools in this study to conduct the study manageably, validly and reliably. For this reason, 25 students were sampled for the pronunciation and intelligibility tests which aimed to investigate the major pronunciation difficulties of the students both at segment and suprasegment features. For the questionnaires, all of the students (110) were included, i.e. no sampling technique was used and for the interview part, twelve of the total subjects were randomly selected and interviewed as both the questionnaires and the interviews were used to examine the students' attitudes toward learning pronunciation skills.

3.3. Data Collection Instruments

3.3.1. Piloting of the Instruments

The pilot test was dedicated for about six days (from January 15-21/2018) on pronunciation areas to establish the content validity of the instruments and to improve the quality of the overall research. The pilot test was conducted on the basis of The BBC Learning English audio recordings to test the applicability of the pronunciation and intelligibility test instruments used for this study. This was speech production of the pilot subjects and meaning comprehension, and intelligibility test. Their production and comprehension score was rated by the researcher since the materials for the tests were composed in native audio recording and textual transcriptions. Eleven voluntary participants were involved and 5 among of the students were speaking Amharic as a NL. In light of what the pilot test revealed, some procedures and the analysis used were

revised before they became fully operational in the main study. As to the questionnaires and guided interviews, all (11) students participated

3.3.1.1. Pronunciation and Intelligibility Tests of the Pilot

To assess the pilot subjects' production and comprehension difficulties for selected segmental and discourse aspects of English pronunciation, a group of five Amharic native speakers who were grade 11 students in Jimma town listened to native speaker recordings and read aloud (produced speech) which was rated in contrast with the native voice. The materials were applicable for intermediate proficiency level and predicted to fit grade eleven students.

The audio materials were downloaded along with the textual (word transcriptions) forms from O'Connor's (1980) '*Better English Pronunciation*' audio material, and the general website of 'bbclearningenglish.com :The English We Speak' and particularly from the following websites:

http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/learningenglish/language/wordsinthenews/2014/09/140912_witn_ozone.shtml

http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/learningenglish/language/wordsinthenews/2014/09/140922_witn_ants.shtml

http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/learningenglish/language/wordsinthenews/2014/09/140915_witn_cycling.shtml

http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/learningenglish/language/wordsinthenews/2014/09/140919_witn_scotland.shtml

http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/learningenglish/general/sixminute/2014/09/140911_6min_underwater_living.shtml

The pronunciation and intelligibility tests elicited via PC based loud audio containing target pronunciation items included in the audio stimulus included segmental and suprasegmental phonological features which are lacking in the subjects' native language_ Amharic. Under phonemic aspects, dental fricative consonants /θ/ and /ð/; mid central pure vowels /æ/ and /ə/; all long and short vowels and three diphthongs (ɪə, eə, ʊə) were incorporated in words and phrases.

An additional set longer extract of a speech was presented to test the samples' recognition and comprehension of prominence conveyed through word stress, sentence stress, intonation and connected speech. All the samples were required to listen to each item of the dictation and then to write down what they heard word for word or to answer some point identification questions.

The speech production test was done exposing the students to read aloud the scripted texts and , and measuring their performance on how much they score correct and incorrect sound production, word stress, and use of connected speeches performance was measured based on correct transcription or point identification.

The composite of scores of the subjects' correct recognition and comprehension of words and sentences with pre-defined phonemic and phonological aspects of pronunciation provided an account of the subjects' receptive ability or difficulty with strange pronunciation items in the native language phonological system. However, the listen and write technique of the dictation tests used seemed less satisfactory approach to exemplify the samples' receptive problems for a particular pronunciation item because it did not assure if performance was not linked to other factors such as spelling, word knowledge, or phonetic and phonological properties of the whole word or sentence.

For segmental level assessment, each speech utterance was phonemically transcribed by the researcher and compared with the original phonemic transcription and error scores were given for phonemic mismatches on target sounds. On the other hand, prosodic errors were examined by comparing the acoustic measures of sample speeches of the pilot subjects with that of native English speaker recording and textual forms. The greater error scores measured showed the researcher to conduct a similar task on larger subjects for the main study.

3.3.1.2. Questionnaires

The aim of devising questionnaires was to investigate the attitudes of the students toward learning English pronunciation skills in conjunction with the potential problems pronunciation challenges. The questionnaires were designed for all (11) participants. The responses for almost

all, i.e. 10(approximately 90%) had the desire to learn pronunciation skills. This implication helped the researcher to diagnose the needs analysis of the students in the main study.

3.3.1.3. Interviews

In-depth interviews were conducted with all (11) pilot subjects to probe their attitude and problems in pronunciation and to triangulate it with their questionnaire responses. As a general sense, almost all the subjected expressed that they were enthusiastic to acquire good pronunciation proficiency by different means such as by listening to native recordings, watching English films, dramas, or by speaking with their friends and foreigners. Along with this, they also expressed the many problems the face in pronunciation. Stemming from this the researcher used guided interviews to probe the students' attitude toward learning English pronunciation for the main study.

3.3.2. Instruments of the Study

The overall objective of this study is to investigate preparatory level students' pronunciation difficulties of English and its influence on their EFL speaking skills. The study, therefore, devised three instruments to investigate pronunciation difficulty areas and their influences on EFL learners' spoken English:

1. Pronunciation tests and Intelligibility assessment
2. Questionnaires
3. Interviews

As the instruments were piloted, the results showed that these instruments were valid and dependable to examine the student' pronunciation difficulties and their needs analysis toward learning pronunciation skills. Moreover, it was evident that the first interrelated test instruments have been used by Anegagregn (2012) while he was diagnosing Ethiopian learners' pronunciation difficulties, and the second and the third were used by Yang (2010) when she studied attitudes of Chinese college students toward learning English and Gashaw (2012) when he examined attitudes of students toward Gamogna, Amharic and English languages. Overall, the results and the findings yielded from the aforementioned instruments were applicable in the previous (listed) studies and so did for the present study.

3.3.2. 1. Pronunciation and Intelligibility tests

Pronunciation tests and intelligibility tests were designed to answer the first research question, i.e. about some of the major challenges in pronunciation both at segmental and suprasegmental levels. To test the subjects' detection and recognition of English pronunciation in the TL input, independent tasks were designed; each aiming at a particular pronunciation target: 1) word discrimination for vowels and consonants; 2) listen and write (transcription) for word stress, and connected speeches; and 3) meaning recognition for sentence stress and intonation.

Intelligibility in this study is defined as the extent to which an utterance is actually recognized by a native English listener. To this end, the intelligibility of the students' NL speakers was assessed subjectively by asking native speaker participant to listen and transcribe (by standard orthography), and point out pronunciation problems from the recording of the students' read aloud text in the evaluation checklist

In L2 phonological acquisition theory, acquisition of the relevant phonological structure is triggered by the learner's detection that a sound is used distinctively or contrastively with another one in the language (Brown , 1997 as cited in Anegagreg, 2012). In order to predict potential problematic areas of English pronunciation, there will be a phonological contrast between English and Amharic segments and suprasegments. Speech perception, production and intelligibility tests were administered to collect data on major English pronunciation difficulties that the learners were to give high priority.

In the pronunciation test, Anegagreg (2012: 129, as cited in Brown, 1997) notifies, "successful acquisition of the new phonological representations requires accurate perception of distinctive phonemes and their contrasts in TL input". This is because the discrimination of utterances in relation to L2 phonology enables a learner for a better learning of the target language pronunciation (Anegagreg, 2012: 129).

3.3.2.2. Questionnaires

The role of the questionnaire is to elicit the information that is required to enable the researcher to achieve the objectives of the research (Brace, 2004). To do this, the questionnaire should not only "collect the data required, but collect the data in the most accurate way possible" (p.7).

Hence, to answer and triangulate research question three which was about the students' attitude toward learning pronunciation, the researcher used questionnaires as they enabled him to gather information regarding stipulations how feel about pronunciation in learning EFL and if the students had a desire to have intelligible pronunciation.

Fifteen questions which seek the learners' feeling toward learning pronunciation skills have been designed and distributed to all (110) NS of Amharic in grade 11.

3.3.2.3. Interviews

Structured and guided interviews were used as a set of predetermined questions with audio recordings to probe the students' attitude in-depth which allowed the researcher obtain extended information. Even though the questionnaires were established, they may not address all the research questions and accommodate unexpected issues that arise from the diverse English learning experience of the students. Also, the participants were not elaborate as much because of the restricted form of questionnaires. These weaknesses were overcome with another data collection method: face-to-face interviews. The interviews were exploratory in nature, in order to provide in-depth understanding about the students' attitude toward learning English pronunciation and to provide qualitative data for triangulation with the quantitative survey data gathered by the questionnaires (Kothari, 2004). For this reason, 12 students from the 25 subjects who participated in the pronunciation tests were randomly selected and interviewed.

(see Appendix D.2).

3.4. Data Collection Procedures

The data collection procedures for this study stemmed from good ethical conduct with the school administration and staff members and the target population under investigation and the native speakers. The researcher collected data utilizing three varied instruments: pronunciation and intelligibility tests, questionnaires and interviews. The data collection ran for about ten days, i.e. from March 12-22/2018. More specifically, the pronunciation and intelligibility tests were done in four different times of students break times from March 12-16. Then, the researcher also distributed questionnaires for students to fill them in relaxed times during weekend days (March 17 &18) and collected them March 19 and 20. Student face-to-face interviews were conducted

on Wednesday, March 21 and translated into English, because the interviews expressed their attitude by Amharic, on Thursday, March 22 in cooperation with department head of English in the school.

1. Pronunciation and Intelligibility Tests (students)

1.1. Pronunciation Test

The pronunciation tests/ tasks include a series of tasks which can investigate the students' comprehension of English pronunciation in the target areas of English pronunciation. All the tasks were administered in in four different sessions of students' break times which in sum took about an hour, with a short break between tasks. These tasks were the following types:

a. Word discrimination/Identification : It subjected to discriminating or identifying words from a pair of words differing or contrasting in only one phoneme (minimal pairs).

b. Transcription (Listen and Write): This task is aimed to collect the students' comprehension word with their correct stress pattern connected speech in a bit longer utterances..

c. Sentence stress identification and comprehension tasks: This aimed to identify meaning from the sentences

d. Intonation identification and comprehension task: This was designed to assess the ability to identify differences in pitch between utterances and distinguish meaning based on two main glides of rising and falling of intonation that affect the comprehension of the tone and the meaning as well.

1.2. Intelligibility test

Before the native American English speaker listened a session of the intelligibility stimulus starts, booklets with numbered spaces for transcription of each of the utterances and evaluation checklist was handed to him. The listener was told to listen carefully to each utterance and then

write out in standard orthography (spelling) exactly what he heard. He was told to make guesses or leave a space for the words he may not hear.

The stimulus was played using PC-based audio player. Each word utterance was presented only once to the listener. After the orthographic transcription task, the listener completed an open-ended questionnaire on his personal background and opinions on the students' English pronunciation.

The listener's booklets were collected at the end. Then, the listener's transcription for all the speeches of the stimulus and the evaluation checklist were compared with the original transcription providing the intended utterances. Scores were then given according to the exact word matches between the two. The mean score of the listener's transcriptions were used as objective indices for determining the intelligibility of utterances. Additionally, these intelligibility data were used to investigate whether the listener was affected by the tendency of the subjects' segmental and suprasegmental pronunciation in this study.

2. Questionnaires

In this study, questionnaires were used for students. The respondents, therefore, were asked their time of convenience to answer and return the questionnaires. Consequently, the questionnaires were distributed on Friday, March 16/2018 as the students needed to answer the questionnaires in the weekend time, i.e. 17-18/2018. After completing the questionnaires, the students handed them to the researcher till March 20/2018.

3. Interviews

Since the purpose for the interview was to obtain additional data to complement, refine, and contextualize the results from the questionnaire data, the interview questions were developed in accordance with the themes in the questionnaires and mainly to answer the third research question which posed the students' attitude towards pronunciation learning. The interviews were conducted at the end the data collection session, i.e. March 21/2018 with twelve interviewees. Interviews responses of the students were delivered by Amharic to let the interviewees express more in their NL. The randomly and voluntarily selected of those students were interviewed in a quiet place in the school compound, and their interview responses were recorded. Finally, for the

reliability and clarity of interpretation and analysis, the recorded voices of the interviewees were translated into English in cooperation with the department head of English in the school in March, 22/2018.

3.5. Methods of Data Analysis

So far, the raw data were gathered using different tools according to the research questions to be answered. For example, pronunciation and intelligibility tests were gathered via loud PC based audio recordings of both the students' and the English NS voice at different times and places aiming to explore pronunciation challenges of the students at segment and suprasegment level and its impact on their EFL speaking skills. Then, the data for research question 3, which was about the students' feeling/attitude toward learning pronunciation skills, were gathered by employing questionnaires and guided interviews.

For the ease and reliability of the statistical analysis of the data, all the raw data were computed with the use of version 20.0 SPSS statistical package. Since the pronunciation and intelligibility tests were qualitative types of data, they were analyzed by frequency, percentage, means, standard deviation, ranges, minimum and maximum results and sum scores. Tests of significance were also used between different pairs of prosodic features at the statistical analysis of .05 level of significance. For concise output, the students responses were coded as '*1= Error score and 2= correct*'. The responses of the questionnaires were also coded in numbers for short word choices as presented in tables in Appendix C.2.

Generally, for the analysis of the raw data, different methods of analyses were used according to the research questions and the instruments devised as presented below.

1.The responses to research question one, regarding major pronunciation difficulties of the students, were analyzed by computing descriptive statistics including frequency, percentage, means, standard deviation, ranges, minimum and maximum results and sum scores were computed to predict the students' English pronunciation problems each pronunciation test category. Moreover, Pearson- correlation coefficients were computed whether there was or no significant correlation existed between paired suprasegment features of pronunciation. The results of the tests in question one also answered research question two, which was about the

extent of segmental and suprasegmental pronunciation difficulties on students' global communication matter.

2. Frequencies and percentages were computed for the responses of questionnaires (in question three) which was about the students' attitude toward learning pronunciation accompanied with textual presentation of direct quotes of the interviewees through triangulation. The interview responses were used for triangulating the questionnaire response as they were exploratory in nature.

3.6. Ethical considerations

For the formality and legality of data collection, a letter of cooperation from Jimma University, Department of English Language and Literature has been written to the concerned administrative bodies as a certification as approval. The researcher then spent a day consulting to Jimma Preparatory School administration and the English department head of the school explaining the objectives of the study for mutual understanding and legal permission.

Before the researcher began to devise research tools with the participants, the English language department head of the school recruited target research participants (Amharic NS) on the basis of their written voluntary consent forms by informing them first about the objectives of the study. The research participants were informed by Amharic language as a medium of instruction since all students can understand. They were told that they were free from coercion or undue inducement to participate by anybody.

In addition to this, the participants of the study were informed to give their appropriate and genuine responses for the research tests and questions based on their informed consent. Considering all these issues, the researcher, then, has introduced the participants under the study with adequate information about the research purpose and objectives that helps him to collect necessary information about their pronunciation difficulties and its influences on their EFL speaking skills.

Furthermore, the participants of the study were informed how to complete the pronunciation test booklets and how to read intelligibility texts, and how long they may take. As the pronunciation and intelligibility tests take 40-50 minutes, the researcher utilized four different days break times

so as not to consume their academic classes. As a token of appreciation, the researcher invited the study participants' packets of biscuits and tea glasses of tea.

In conjunction with this, the participants were also informed they had a right to discontinue participation in the study for any reason without fear of any form of physical or psychological repercussions to them, and that their dignity is respected. Again, they were told that their audio recordings and written responses are confidentially kept to the researcher and only used for the purpose of the study. All of the audio-recordings of the students were also from the permission of the subjects.

As to native speaker participants, a written consent form was provided to them by informing the objective of the study. They were told that their participation was entirely voluntary and they had the right to give up. They were informed that the intelligibility test rated by them was done at the time and place of their convenience and the test sessions will last 40-50 minutes. And, they were informed that their recorded voice is completely confidential and there is no way to identify them by name. Moreover, the contact address of the researcher and his supervisors was given to them for availability.

Apparently, the present study is carried out on the basis of Jimma preparatory school administration approval and permission and the entire willingness of the participants (Amharic NS of students and English NS). Pertaining to the professional ethical standard, the works of other authors used in this study are duly acknowledged; the data for the study were collected from the right (target) place and population and were analyzed reliably by the help of the statistical analysis software (SPSS) so as not to distort data. Finally, the researcher claims that the findings of this study were the results from the data collection tools devised and were not tilted towards the researcher's interests.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. FINDINGS

The overall purpose of this study was to explore the major pronunciation challenges that students face and its negative impacts on their oral/aural communication skills. To this end, the findings to the study are resulted from the research questions and specific objectives with the aid of instruments (pronunciation and intelligibility tests, questionnaires and guided interviews). Pronunciation tests and intelligibility tests were designed to answer the first research question, i.e. about some of the major challenges in pronunciation both at segmental and suprasegmental levels. In connection with this, the second question which stresses on the negative impacts of these (segmental and suprasegmental features) on the students' global speaking skills shares both pronunciation tests, intelligibility tests and questionnaires. The third research question is best answered by questionnaires and in-depth interviews as it probes students' attitude toward learning pronunciation skills. Accordingly, with this regard, the findings of the study run from the first research question to the third in tabular and graphical representations accompanied by the salient textual narrations. For the ease and dependability of the data analysis, version 20 SPSS statistical package was used, one of the professional application software utilized by researchers.

Research Questions:

1. What are some of the major challenges in pronunciation both at segmental and suprasegmental levels?
2. To what extent are these pronunciation difficulties negatively influence students' speaking and listening skills?
3. What are the students' attitudes toward learning pronunciation skills?

Research Question1: What are some of the major challenges in pronunciation both at segmental and suprasegmental levels?

1. Pronunciation Test

The speech perception test of the study investigated students' perception of selected areas of English pronunciation which are foreign to their language phonology and thus predicted as potential problems. The problem areas of English pronunciation of the test targeted comprised both segmental and suprasegmental features including consonants /θ, ð/; short vowels /æ, ʌ, ʊ, ɒ/; long vowels /i:, a:, ɔ:, u:, ɜ:/; three of the diphthongs /ɪə, eə, ʊə/; word stress, sentence stress, intonation patterns (rising and falling pitches) and connected speeches. To test the subjects' detection and recognition of English pronunciation in the TL input, independent tasks were designed; each aiming at a particular pronunciation target: 1) word discrimination for vowels and consonants; 2) listen and write (transcription) for word stress, and connected speeches; and 3) meaning recognition for sentence stress and intonation. For this purpose, a total of 56 native English speaker recorded utterances (taken from live and audio materials for English pronunciation) was used. The global test items designed for this study contained 55 distinct items with total responses of 1375 (25 subjects x 55 items). The segments comprise 21 items (525 responses) which accounted approximately 38.2% of the total pronunciation test and the suprasegmentals consist 34 items (850 responses) with a larger proportion of the test, i.e. 61.8%. For the ease and reliability of the statistical analysis of the data, all the raw data were computed with the use of version 20 SPSS statistical package.

4.1.1. Segments

The segmental pronunciation test was intended to explore the potential pronunciation challenges on the target sounds. The principal segmental areas incorporated under this category are distinguishing target consonants, long and short vowels and three target diphthongs in five different items.

A total of 21 target items (525) responses from 25 subjects presented in the audio recording was coded for error score and correct responses and tabulated separately per each item for statistical analysis. The segments were grouped $8 \times 25 = 200$ responses of consonants, $5 \times 25 = 125$ responses of long vowels, $3 \times 25 = 75$ responses of short vowels and $5 \times 25 = 125$ responses of diphthongs.

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics for Total Error Scores on Each Segment

		Total Error of Target Consonants (8 items)	Total Error Score of Long Vowels (5 items)	Total Error Score of Short Vowels (3 items)	Total Error Score of Diphthongs (5 items)
N	Valid	25	25	25	25
	Missing	1	1	1	1
	Std. Deviation	.707	.507	.781	1.000
	Variance	.500	.257	.610	1.000
	Skewness	.000	-.257	.220	.435
	Std. Error of Skewness	.464	.464	.464	.464
	Range	3	1	2	4
	Minimum	3	3	1	1
	Maximum	6	4	3	5
	Sum	115	89	47	70

As can be seen in table 3, the total misidentification scores computed under each segmental category shows not equal level of difficulty the subjects had in discriminating target sounds. Total error score for the long vowels accounted 89 error scores (71.2%) which is greater than the total error score of consonants 115(57.5%) and the mean error scores for the two types of vowels 59.3%; short vowels 47 error scores (62.6%) and diphthongs 70 error scores (56%). In comparison, among the three types of vowels, long vowels received larger error score than that

of diphthongs and short vowels. The mean percentage results the subjects received shows the learners found long vowels more difficult to perceive than the remaining target segments.

4.1.1.1 Consonant Sounds

Table 4: Total Error Score in Each Target Consonant Sound

Minimal Pairs	Target Sound (/θ/ and /ð/)	Error Sum (N= 25)	Percent
1. sort/sɔ:t/ = thought /θɔ:t/	/θ/ in thought /θɔ:t/	21	84
2. sin/sɪn/ = thin /θɪn/	/s/ in sin/sɪn/	5	20
3. breeze/bri:z/ = breathe /bri:ð/	/ð/ in breathe /bri:ð/	22	88
4. force /fɔ:s/ = forth /fɔ:θ/	/s/ in force /fɔ:s/	6	24
5. sink/sɪŋk/ = think /θɪŋk/	/θ/think /θɪŋk/	21	84
6. tank /tæŋk/ = thank /θæŋk/	/t/ in tank /tæŋk/	11	44
7. sing /sɪŋ/ = thing /θɪŋ/	/θ/ in thing /θɪŋ/	22	88
8. mouse /maʊs/ = mouth /maʊθ	/s/ in mouse /maʊs/	7	28

N = Total Number of Subjects

The /θ/ and /ð/ target sounds are misperceived, and they are inversely mispronounced by the subjects as tabulated above. The perception challenges differ across the minimal pairs as presented in the above table. For instance, the /θ/ sound is perceived as /s/ as in sort/thought and sink/think with 84% error score each, and sing/thing with 88% error score. In a similar account, the /ð/ sound is recognized as /z/ as in breeze/breathe with 88% error score.

See Appendix A.2 (2.1.1)

4.1.1.2 Vowels

A. Long and Short Vowels in minimal pairs

Table 5: Total Error Score Per Target Long Vowel Items

Minimal Pairs	Target Vowel	Error Sum (N = 25)	Percent (%)
cheek/ʧi:k/ = chick/ʧɪk/	/i:/ in cheek/ʧi:k/	17	68
duck /dʌk/ = dark /dɑ:k/	/ɑ:/ in dark/dɑ:k/	17	68
heard/hɜ:d/ = hard/hɑ:d/	/ɑ:/ in hard/hɑ:d/	18	72
cod /kɒd/ = cord /kɔ:d/	/ɔ:/ in cord /kɔ:d/	18	72
ship/ʃɪp/ = sheep/ʃi:p /	/i:/ in sheep/ʃi:p/	19	76

As presented in table 5, the difficulty in recognizing the long vowels from their short vowel counterparts is found to be apparent. To begin with, the students perceived the /i:/ sound as /ɪ/ in cheek/chick scoring 68% errors and in ship/sheep with 76% error score. On the other hand, /ɑ:/ is perceived as /ʌ/ as in duck/dark with 68% error, and /ɜ:/ as in heard/hard with 72% error score. Similarly, the /ɔ:/vowel is heard as/ɒ/ as in cod/cord with the error score of 72%.

Table 6: Total Error Score Per Target Short Vowel Items

Minimal Pairs	Target Vowel	Error Sum(N = 25)	Percent (%)
tin/tɪn/ = teen /ti:n/	/ɪ/ in tin/tɪn/	17	68
bad/bæd/ = bud /bʌd/	/ʌ/ in bud /bʌd/	15	60
pull/pʊl/ = pool /pu:l/	/ʊ/ in pull /pʊl/	15	60

As presented in the table above, students seemed to commit errors using short vowels as in the long ones. Consequently, potential misidentifications are observed perceiving /ɪ/ as /i:/ with the error score of 68% as in tin/teen. The /ʌ/ is also misunderstood by 15 (60%) of the subjects incapable of identifying it from its short vowel counterpart, i.e, /æ/. On the other hand, the /ʊ/ sound is perceived as/u:/ in pull/pool with error score of 60%. **See Appendix A.2 (2.1.2)**

B. Diphthong Vowel Sounds

The subjects heard a total of 5 words consisting three target diphthong vowel sounds (/ʊə/, /ɪə/, /eə/) so that the subjects dictated the words and transcribed in the test booklet. Then the errors they made are transcribed in **appendix A.2 (2.1.3)**. These sounds exist in the RP (Received Pronunciation) and are predicted as challenging sounds for foreign learners as the /r/ sound becomes silent at the end of a word unless that word is followed by another word beginning with a vowel sound in spoken discourse.

Table 7: Global Error Score per the Target Diphthong Vowel Sounds (/ʊə/, /ɪə/, /eə/)

Word	Target Diphthong Vowel	Total Error (N = 25)	Percent (%)
1. premier /premiə/	/ɪə/	23	92
2. clear /klɪə/	/ɪə/	22	88
3. air /eə/	/eə/	4	16
4. pure /pjʊə/	/ʊə/	5	20
5. beer /biə/	/ɪə/	16	64

The error scores, as can be seen in table 7, difficulties are varied as the diphthong type in a given item. For example, the largest amount of errors are committed for /ɪə/ as in premier 92%, clear 88% and beer 64%. The misrecognition for /eə/ as in air with the least error of 16% and /ʊə/ as in pure with 20% error score reveals that the items (words) are well understood by the students as

not /ɪə/. As a result, though there are difficulties in these target diphthong sounds, the /ɪə/ sound is found to be the most problematic of the remaining two. **See Appendix A.2 (2.1.3).**

4.1.2 Suprasegmentals

This part of pronunciation test provided data to explore the ability of the subjects in identifying English suprasegmentals and distinguishing their meanings and to analyze the probabilities of the subjects' difficulties to English prosody. The focusing areas under this pronunciation area consists of four sets of suprasegmentals; namely word stress, sentence stress, intonation (rising and falling) and connected speeches collected from separate perception tasks the subjects completed: listen and write (transcription), listen and identify, and listen and distinguish meaning as pronunciation naturally goes hand-in –hand with listening comprehension.

Eight hundred and fifty (850) responses from the 25 subjects for 34 target items presented in the audio stimuli was coded for error score and correct responses and tabulated separately per each item for statistical analysis. The total suprasegmental tests comprise 850 responses, i.e. $13 \times 25 = 325$ responses of word stress, $4 \times 25 = 100$ responses of sentence stress, $10 \times 25 = 250$ responses of intonation, and $7 \times 25 = 175$ responses of connected speeches. The following table presents the distribution of the total incorrect score and the scores for each target feature under considerations.

Table 8: Descriptive Statistics for Total Error Scores on Each Suprasegment

	Total Word Stress Error Score	Total Sentence Stress Error Score	Total Intonation Error Scores	Total Connected Speech Error Score
<i>N</i> Valid	25	25	25	25
Missing	1	1	1	1
Mean	7.04	2.08	6.36	4.32
Median	7.00	2.00	6.00	4.00
Std. Deviation	1.399	.862	1.729	.900
Skewness	-.176	-.586	-.190	-.713
Std. Error of Skewness	.464	.464	.464	.464
Minimum	4	0	3	2
Maximum	10	4	9	6
Sum	176	52	159	108

As can be seen in table 4.6, the greater amounts of error scores are computed for intonation 159 (63.6%), followed by the difficulty in connected speech 108 (61.7%). The error score for all the tests revealed that there was a high pronunciation challenges in scoring errors above the standard threshold (50%) which can make lose of a native listener(s) patience.

4.1.2.1 Word Stress

Table 9: Total Error Scores and Percentage of the Individual Words

Word	Error sum (N = 25)	Percent (%)	Word	Error Sum (N = 25)	Percent (%)
1. father	18	72	8. about	10	40
2. any	-	-	9. before	14	56
3. steady	16	64	10. attractive	12	48
4. gathering	14	56	11. beginning	13	52
5. excellent	13	52	12. intelligent	17	68
6. obstinacy	20	80	13. magnificent	12	48
7. reasonable	17	68			

As can be seen in the table above, 176 (54.15%) responses, out of the total 325 responses, are computed as error scores. This implies us the mean percentage of the 13(54.15%) words' stress pattern misrecognition is still there is a potential source of problem of pronunciation on stress placements that can be either on the first syllable if a word is a monosyllabic and disyllabic content word; second, third syllable and the like if a word is a polysyllabic content word. To come to our data, the word '*obstinacy*' received the greatest stress and recognition difficulty in 80% followed by the word '*father*' received the error score of 18 (72%). The third round stress recognition problems are as presented in the table is for the words '*reasonable*' and '*intelligent*' 68% each. Fortunately, the word '*any*' is not missed by any of the students which might be since the word is a monosyllabic or the most familiar one. The other words like '*steady*' 64%, '*gathering*' and '*before*' 56% each, '*excellent*' and '*beginning*' 52% each. Even though there are

still recognition difficulties among word stress, the remaining words relatively received less error scores which is below the standard threshold (50%). See Appendix A.2 (A 2.1.4)

4.1.2.2 Sentence Stress

In English, at times speakers change their tone of voice in their pronunciation to highlight one word as most ‘attention focusing or important’ as opposed to the rest of the words in a sentence. As far as the use of sentence stress is emphasizing to a particular word to code meaning, a listener decodes it as delivered or else meaning negotiation fails. As a result, students’ test results is presented below from an AmE NS audio recording.

Table 10: Total Error Scores and Percentage in Each Utterance

Utterance	Total Error (N = 25)	Percentage (%)
1. This is your English dictionary. //ðɪs ɪz jɔr ɪŋɡlɪʃ dɪkʃənri //	16	64
2. This is your English dictionary. //ðɪsɪz jɔr ɪŋɡlɪʃ dɪkʃənri //	13	52
3. 3.This is your English dictionary. //ðɪs ɪz jɔr ɪŋɡlɪʃ dɪkʃənri //	12	48
4. 4. This is your English dictionary. ðɪs ɪz jɔrɪŋɡlɪʃ dɪkʃənri //	11	44

As presented in the table above, the greater error score was computed in misunderstanding //ðɪs ɪz jɔr ɪŋɡlɪʃ dɪkʃənri // ,i.e. 64% which is greater than the mean error score of the four sentences when the NS emphasized on the word ‘English’ from the rest of the words in the sentence - meaning not other languages’ dictionary, but a dictionary of English language. Although there were potential difficulties of misunderstanding the meaning of the sentences

said by the native speaker, this section of the pronunciation test was relatively better understood by the subjects.

4.1.2.3 Intonation

Table 11: Total Error Score and Mean Percentage in each Intonation Discourse

Discourse (Intonation)	Error Sum (N = 25)	Percentage (%)
1. Richard phoned (F)	15	60
2. Richard phoned (R)	16	64
3. You can't go (R)	16	64
4. You can't go (F)	18	72
5. Good Heavens (R)	15	60
6. Good Heavens (F)	16	64
7. How extraordinary (F)	14	56
8. How extraordinary (R)	15	60
9. (He's forty-five) Forty six (Fall-Rise)	18	72
10. (He's forty-five) Forty-six (Rise)	16	64

R- Rising tune F- Falling tune

As can be shown in the table above, a greater challenge is observed in identifying meaning from the alteration of voice, i.e. the up and down of pitch. The error score for each utterance is above the standard threshold ranging from 56%-72%. The total mean of the error score (63.6%) reveal that there is a great difficulty of pronunciation at the spoken discourse of English among other things.

4.1.2.4 Connected Speech

Table 12: Total Error Scores in Each Stretch of Connected Utterances

Speech	Error Sum (N = 25)	Percent (%)
1. I'm here.	14	56
2. Get some of that soap.	19	76
3. You must go to on the right place.	14	56
4. They've bought a black box.	13	52
5. Let him take it.	15	60
6. That's a nice suit. I haven't seen it before, have I?	14	56
7. I'm very comfortable, thank you.	19	76

As presented in table 12 above, the error score per each utterance shows greater difficulty of comprehending discourse in connected forms, i.e. incapable of identifying weak and strong syllables that ranges from 52%-76%. The mean error score for this prosody level (61.7%) was found to be the second problematic pronunciation area of the students next to intonation (63.6%).

Table 13: Correlation between Sentence stress and Intonation

	Total Sentence Stress Error Score (4)	Total Intonation Error Scores (10)
Pearson Correlation	1	.432*
Sig. (2-tailed)		.031
N	25	25
Pearson Correlation	.432*	1
Sig. (2-tailed)	.031	
N	25	25

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

As presented in the table above, sentence stress and intonation error scores are proportional in relation. Their correlation is significant at .031 which is $p > 0.05$ level of significance. This is because that these prosodic features merge at a focal point in pitch which negotiate meaning in discourse level.

2. Intelligibility Test

Intelligibility in this study is defined as the extent to which an utterance is actually recognized by a native English listener. To this end, the intelligibility of the students' NL speakers was assessed subjectively by asking native speaker participant to listen and transcribe (by standard orthography), and point out pronunciation problems from the recording of the students' read aloud text in the evaluation checklist.

Whether or not the listener heard a different word or exactly the same one from what the subjects aimed to say was determined based on word to word matches between the transcriptions made by the listeners and the speeches made by the subjects.

Accordingly, as discussed in the stimuli preparation stage earlier, the intelligibility stimulus, which was designed from a recording of a read aloud passage, comprised a total of speech excerpts representing 1 speaker rater. This transcription represented the intended utterances by the speakers and used as the original reference text to assign transcription scores to the listeners. Being segmented at locations of natural pauses in the original utterances, the final stimulus set of these 22 speech samples varied in length, 14 were individual words (word stress) and the other 8 were connected speeches. The other intelligibility test was aimed to assess the pronunciation difficulties of the subjects in the read aloud paragraphs rated by the same AmE NS.

Before the native's listening session of the intelligibility stimulus started, booklets with numbered spaces for transcriptions of each of the 22 utterances were handed to the listener. The listener was told, as a general direction, to listen carefully to each utterance and then write out in standard orthography exactly what he would hear. He was also told to make guesses or leave a space for the words he may not hear. Appendix B.3 (B.3.1, B.3.2, B.3.3) present native listener's booklet and evaluation checklist used for this purpose. The stimulus was presented individually in a quiet room at a restaurant. The stimulus was played using PC-based loud audio player. Each sample item was presented only once to the listener. At the outset of each session, the NS was first introduced using a different speech sample to illustrate how he would go through the task and to assure his comfortable listening volume.

On each trial, the listener heard the sentences and then orthographically wrote this responses on the work sheet prepared for the 22 speech samples. As for the evaluation checklist, the NS first read the two paragraphs for himself and predicted which items would be mispronounced by the students both at phoneme and word stress levels in both paragraphs. Then, the audio recording of the students was listened to him with a guide of evaluation checklist for rating the potential pronunciation difficulties of each student in sounds and stress placements.

A. Native's Perception and Dictation of Scripted Words

Target Words	Comfortable	Refuse	entertain	Paper	Protect	disconnect	detest
NS's Transcription	Comfortable	-	-	-	Protect	disconnect	Ditest
Target Words	Disaster	productivity	profession	Design	Apply	proverbial	Reflexive
NS's Transcription	Disaster	Activity	revision	Design	Factory	-	-

As can be seen in the above table, from the total 14 words presented for listen and write test for the assessment of intelligibility, an AmE native speaker misrecognized 9 words (64.28%); he skipped five words and misrecognized the rest four words. Most of the words were dictated wrongly or skipped because of the source of unintelligibility- miscomprehension. This implies, as Kenworthy (1987) stated, that not the challenge was arisen from the NS, but from our students in a sense that if a non-native speaker produces a word with the wrong stress pattern or overstressing the stressed syllable, an English listener may have great difficulty in understanding the word, even if most of the individual sounds have been well pronounced. **See appendix B.3 (B.3.1).**

B. Connected Speech

From the 25 students' audio recordings, one was randomly selected and rated by the AmE native speaker rater. It was unfair to *sound* all the students' voices for the NS as he can have written all the utterances correctly through repetition of speeches. The test must be as what is occurring in the real life situation, i.e. we listen to a speaker once or two times or we seek and ask him/her clarification. Consequently, due to space requirements, we presented the transcription test in **appendix B.3 (B.3.2)**. In the test, out of the total 8 stretch of utterances said by the students, the NS miscomprehended four sentences (50%) having weak and stressed syllables in a stretch of utterance. According to his oral opinion, he tried to catch the correct transcription of the remaining 4(50%) of the sentences by the help of context, not from an intelligible pronunciation of the students. Furthermore, the NS added that not the content words were stressed correctly, and the weak forms were not used in their natural phonological production, and the contractions weren't said properly. "Unless context helped me," he said " I would miss almost all the given utterances."

C. Read Aloud Texts Read by Students and Rated by an AmE NS

The detailed information on the pronunciation challenges of the students rated by AmE NS is placed in **appendix B.3 (B.3.3)**. However, we here describe the most frequently mispronounced phonological aspects on the basis of the native's evaluation/rating checklist and his recorded oral explanations. To begin with, the /θ/ and /ð/ were found to be the most problematic consonant sounds that were mispronounced by all the students. These sounds were substituted by /s/, /z/ or /t/ as for example, /ð/ by /z/ in **the** /ðə/ in both paragraphs, /θ/ by /s/ in **three**/θri:/ in paragraph two, /θ/ by /z/ in **health**, / helθ/ in paragraph two, and the like at the segment level.

On the other hand, a lot of word stress difficulties were also identified by the rater in both paragraphs: some words were stressed wrongly (their stress fell in a wrong position), and some others were overstressed while the natural English stress needs a slightly louder accent (stress here). For example, almost all the subjects used two over weights and one extra wrong stress placement in the word 'equipment'; they produced e*qui*pm̩nt, but /ɪ*kwɪpm̩nt/ in paragraph 1, and they said 'before' without giving stress pattern, but it has a stress on the second syllable /br*fɔ:r/ in the same paragraph, and almost all of the students produced the word 'letterhead'

placing the stress on /d/ sound (letterhea*d), but it should have been said /*letər hed/ in paragraph 1. As to paragraph 2, the word ‘*pilates*’ was wrongly stressed by all the subjects, but it must be pronounced as /pɪ*la:ti:z/ putting its stress on the second syllable. In the same paragraph (par.2), the word ‘*heart-thumping*’ was stressed by most of the subjects as ‘*heart-thum*ping*’, but it could be said /hɑ:.*θʌmpɪŋ/ forming regressive assimilation and stressing the first syllable the second word in this compound word. The word ‘*transformation*’ was also pronounced without any stress placement, but it has the primary stress on the third syllable as we must say /trænsfə*meɪʃn/ in paragraph two and many other difficulties were listed. These all mentioned pronunciation problems rated by the native speaker here are to list the few from the enormous for the sake of concise narration, but for the extended reading, an alerted person can see **appendix B.3 (B.3.3)**.

Apparently speaking, the students faced a lot of pronunciation challenges both at segmental and suprasegmental features as rated by the native American English speaker. The intelligibility tests transcribed and rated by the NS significantly substantiated the pronunciation difficulties of the students at segmental and suprasegmental levels which were carried out in the pronunciation tests earlier. Overall, both of the tests (pronunciation tests and intelligibility tests rated by the NS) were the basic tools to identify pronunciation difficulties of the subjected subjects both at sound and prosody levels. All the tests comprised both production (speaking) and perception (listening) items as pronunciation is inevitably inseparable of the two language skills and urges a bidirectional way of communication; one speaks and the other(s) listen and the vice versa. Pronunciation is not mono directional – one way communication; it is not only speaking rather it also adds listening, too.

Research Question 2: To what extent are these (segmentals and suprasegmentals) pronunciation difficulties negatively influence students’ speaking and listening skills?

This question of the research is answered on the basis of the test results of research question 1 since it diagnosed the predicted tenacious pronunciation difficulties of students both at some of the major segmental and suprasegmental features. Consequently, the overall results of the tests showed that learners had great difficulties of pronunciation, i.e. speech production and perception which hampered communication flow between NS and NNS. More specifically, let’s look at the following.

A. Segments

The results of this study confirm what had been hypothesized in inter language phonology, that all non-target phonemes do not exert equal amount of difficulty to the learners (Brown, 1997)..., This study yielded that the two consonant sounds /ð/ and /θ/ are the most persistently mispronounced and misperceived consonant sounds of English among students. Students use these sounds as /z/, /s/, or /t/ as in three/θri:/, they use /s/, and /z/ in health/helθ/, and again /z/ in the /ðə/. Even though such sound substitutions may not always obscure intelligibility, they sometimes cause confusion for native listeners unless they use context as in the distinction between ‘tin and ‘thin’.

As to the vowels, a similar account was computed for four long vowels /ɔ:/, /u:/, /a:/, and /i:/ (from 6 in total). These sounds are found to be used as short vowel counterparts like /ɪ/, /ʌ/, /ʊ/, and /ɒ/. Therefore, while students were producing words containing long vowels, the words were confusingly heard by native ears whether which of the words was used as ‘sheep/fi:p/’ pronounced as *ship* /ʃip/.

The third negatively impacting segmental pronunciation area in this study is the misuse of three diphthongs /=/ɔə/, /ɪə/, /eə/ / (from 8 in total). As the consonant /r/ at the end of words in the RP/BBC accent, a prestigious social accent of English, is not pronounced unless it is followed by a word beginning with a vowel sound, it is found to be the mispronunciation and misperception words silencing this sound in diphthongs. In this part, even familiar words become confusing for the students because of these three diphthongs such as ‘premier/premɪə/, clear/klɪə/, pure/pjʊə/, beer/bɪə/, students failed to pronounce and perceive in such words silencing /r/ sound and using these diphthongs in their spoken English.

B. Suprasegments

A total of 58.2%% error scores the suprasegmental group as a whole received implies that the subjects faced a considerable problem from English prosody included in this study. By far the most difficult task (mean score of 63.6% incorrect) was marking intonation of sentences. The other three aspects, identifying connected speech (61.7%), distinguishing word stress (54.1%), and identifying sentence focus based on nuclear stress (52%) were the next most problematic. Identifying the meaning of a sentence based on its intonation, was the most difficult for most

students. For this reason, in comparison with the segmental phonology difficulties (61.1% total error score mean), suprasegmentals received the lower proportion with total error score mean of 58.2%. Although the figure for prosodic areas is slightly lower than that of the individual sounds, the main part of communication part is relied on the suprasegmentals. In both groups of pronunciation areas, however, there were potential problems of pronunciation aspects. So is the fact that we must take high precedence over these challenging areas as they negatively affect communication (pronunciation).

Research Question 3: What are the students' attitudes toward learning pronunciation skills?

3. Questionnaires and Guided Interviews Results

In connection with the major pronunciation challenges and its negative influences on the students' speaking skills, they also need to develop a concern for pronunciation. "They must recognize that poor, unintelligible speech will make attempts", Kenworthy (1987: 27) pointed out, "at conversing frustrating and unpleasant for themselves and for their listeners."

To this end, to explore the attitudes of learners toward the learning of English pronunciation, the researcher devised two data collecting tools; these were attitudinal questionnaires and interviews. The questionnaires were distributed to all the subjects selected for the former pronunciation tests and the remaining 85 students whose NL was Amharic, too. The response results ranged to 1650 responses (110 respondents x 15 questions) of Jimma Preparatory School Grade eleven students. In-depth interviews were conducted for twelve students to explore their views and attitudes in regard to pronunciation. These students were identified via a pronunciation and intelligibility tests that were part of the first and the second phase of the study respectively. From the total subjects of the study, 12 students were invited for the interview (5 females and 7 males).

Questionnaire responses are analyzed in frequencies and percentages via the statistical application software of SPSS by coding choices of the variables (questions here). As a result, the outcomes revealed the '*how much time*' or the frequency of a given choice of a question is responded by more than two students, and the higher the frequency there was means the more students responded it. The higher and the lower frequency results are discussed under this section

of the paper as the researcher needs to show the attitudinal degree of the respondents at a particular attitudinal question. Due to space requirements, however, the detailed information of the questionnaires (statistical evidence) is placed in **appendix C.2**. On the other hand, the guided interviews by no means were used to triangulate the attitudes of the students' responses in the questionnaires. The extended interview responses of the subjects is found in **appendix B.2**. For this reason, the third research question is analyzed and answered by both the questionnaires and interview responses (questionnaire responses first and seconded by interview ones when needed) as follow.

Questionnaire and Interview Results

1. Imagine you are talking in your own language with a foreigner. The person doesn't speak your language very well and is very difficult to understand. What do you do?

From the total respondents, 74 (67.3%) of the respondents ask a foreigner to repeat what he/she has been saying and 25 (22.7%) respondents would try to pretend even when they don't understand. On the contrary, 11 (10%) of the respondents answered that they would get away when there was a difficulty with a foreigner during speech interaction.

2. What do you say when a foreign speaker apologizes for his/her poor accent?

For a foreigner who apologizes for his/her poor accent, 69(62.7%) of the subjects answered that they would say him/her that his/her accent is still very bad and he/she needs to improve his/her accent through more hard working. Only 12(11%) responded that a foreigner's accent is very good even not, and 29(26.4%) responded that their poor accent didn't matter them.

3. How do you feel when a foreigner pronounces your name wrongly?

Fifty-five of the respondents (50%) answered that they bother a little for a foreigner pronouncing their name in a wrong accent, and 10(9.1%) didn't bother at all. The rest 23 (approximately 21%) would bother a lot, and 22 (20%) would be very angry of them.

4. How do you feel when you meet a foreigner who speaks your language with a very good accent?

For a foreigner who speaks their language with a very good accent as 45 (approximately 41%) of the subjects responded that they would be surprised and 33 (30%) were more admiring of him/her.

5. In the future, who will you speak English to?

Regarding to using English in the future, all subjects showed an enthusiasm in speaking English. Fifty-four (49.1%) of the subjects had the desire to speak English to English speaking people like Englishes, Canadians, Americans, Welshes and the like. Twenty-nine (26.4%) of the subjects had the demand to use English with people visiting their country and the remaining 24.5% with non English people.

6. What do you think about learning English pronunciation?

Learning the pronunciation of English was found to be very essential for 94 (85.5%) of the respondents. This very large percentage revealed that almost all the students had a great desire to learn and acquire pronunciation skills. Only 4 (3.6%) responded that learning pronunciation is unnecessary reasoning that pronunciation did not hamper communication.

Interviewee 1: Learning English is very essential, but we face many challenges in it. The problem is not only from the students but from the teachers themselves. Teachers must shape their pronunciation skills first and should teach their students.

Interviewee 2: In my opinion, it is better to learn English pronunciation as the four language skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing). The problem, however, is that the teachers do not teach even listening lessons in the textbook effectively and efficiently.

Interviewee 3: I admire people who speak in a nice pronunciation. But, for most of us, there are potential challenges for not acquiring good pronunciation proficiency. One is our classroom language teachers do not enunciate words and utterances whom we directly imitate from them.

Interviewee 5: --- Consequently, learning pronunciation is very decisive and equally important as other language skills. ---

Interviewee 7: I have a desire to have good pronunciation skills for I wish to run business abroad. I need to communicate with foreigners comfortably in better pronunciation.

Therefore, learning the pronunciation of English was found to be the interesting in their EFL classroom and practicing it in the outside world.

7. Who do you think of when you hear the term —English speakers?

In this questionnaire, the subjects seemed to have the awareness of World Englishes (different English varieties across the globe) though they didn't know their actual distinctions. For this reason, 56 (approximately 51%) respondents expressed that their mind was alerted to the Englishes when hearing English speakers. Thirty-two (29.1%) students responded Americans and 4 (3.6%) all native English speakers.

8. Which English accent you want to learn as a model accent?

From the widely spoken varieties of English over the globe, the British English was preferred as a model accent by 64 (58.2%) respondents. Thirty-six (32.7%) of the respondents had an interest toward American pronunciation. The remaining choices of Canadian and Indian accents received 6 (5.5%) and 4 (3.6%) respectively.

9. What are your thoughts on the English pronunciation in your school?

Sixty-seven (approximately 61%) of the subjects responded that the pronunciation of English in their school language class was Ethiopian languages accented, mainly Amharic and Afan Oromo accented. Unbelievably, only 3 (2.7%) of the respondents said that the English pronunciation used by language teachers in the school he was learning was a native-like accent.

Interviewee 6: ...And, our teachers are not a good model of English pronunciation; what we hear the English in the media from natives and from our classroom teachers is much more different.

10. Do you need to have a good English pronunciation skill?

Almost all the subjects, i.e, 106 (96.4%) had a desire to have a good pronunciation skills.

Interviewee 2: In my opinion, it is better to learn English pronunciation as the four language skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing).

Interviewee 3: We have a great desire to learn and to have good pronunciation skills. However, teachers focus on teaching grammar.

Interviewee 4: As far as pronunciation goes, we need to have better English pronunciation skill.

Interviewee 7: I have a desire to have good pronunciation skills for I wish to run business abroad. I need to communicate with foreigners comfortably in better pronunciation.

Interviewee 8: Pronunciation learning is very much important; it helps us to communicate with natives and non-natives confidently and effectively.

Interviewee 9: ...I wish I had good pronunciation skill, too....

Interviewee 10: Good pronunciation is significant in mutual communication, so I hope everyone needs to have clear pronunciation skill.

Here, students need to acquire good pronunciation skills for their own personal intentions, but for better communication in common.

11. Are you satisfied with your English language pronunciation proficiency?

Most of the respondents; 89 (approximately 81%) were not satisfied in their English language pronunciation proficiency. The rest 21 students answered that they were satisfied by their pronunciation skills, but they also need to improve their pronunciation yet as they responded in question 12 below.

12. How do you need to improve your pronunciation skills?

The questionnaire response revealed that all of the respondents needed to improve their pronunciation skills either by one or two or by more means. Consequently, 47(42.7%) of the respondents wanted to improve their pronunciation proficiency by watching TV/movies, listening to the English recordings like the BBC, and by speaking with natives and foreigners, i.e. by different means. Twenty-eight (25.5%) of the the respondents showed their interest toward only to the English recordings to improve their pronunciation skills. The others need to improve through speaking with other people and by watching English movies, films, dramas, etc.

13. Do your parents believe learning English pronunciation is important?

The students' parents had almost equal desire toward the importance of learning English pronunciation. As mailed back from the parents, 97(88.2%) of them believe that learning English pronunciation is desirable while the rest 11.8% neglected it.

14. What negative influences you faced in your unintelligible speech/spoken English?

According to the subjects' responses, all the subjects were facing a negative influence on their EFL speaking skill because of the difficulty in pronunciation. Forty-three (39.1%) respondent answered that they had many difficulties/impacts in their EFL speaking skills such as they couldn't understand while natives were speaking both in person and electronic media or they fail to talk confidently to NS. Thirty-four (approximately 31%) subjects responded that they

experienced misunderstanding while listening a native voice so that they faced communication breakdown.

Interviewee 6: ... This makes us less- confident when speaking because we feel ashamed of errors in our poor pronunciation skill and lexical knowledge. ...

Interviewee 7: ...As a result, I feel frustrated while I'm speaking even with non-native users of English.

Interviewee 8: ...Because of such impacts, we fail and fear speaking English. ...

Interviewee 9: ...For myself, I can't even listen to natives clearly.

Interviewee 10: ...I have no frequent familiarization of native voice or face to face contact in conversations, and I imitate my classroom teachers' accent and fossilized it.

Interviewee 11: ...we feel anxious to speak English with people, especially with foreigners. So, this is a negative impact for our oral/aural communication.

So, both the questionnaire and interview responses reveal that the students express their views that their poor pronunciation skill hampers their oral skill because of fearing mistakes and they fail in listening native English voices clearly which by default causes communication breakdowns.

15. When is it most important to pronounce well? Put them in order of importance with a number if you want.

None of the respondents neglected the vitality of pronouncing well. But according to their own personal opinion and preferences, 58 (52.7%) subjects responded pronouncing very well is important when doing business as in banks, supermarkets, hotels, rail stations, airports, and 17(15.5%) preferred to have good pronunciation at parties. As a result, almost all the students had a desire and a positive attitude toward English pronunciation acquisition.

4.2. DISCUSSION

Learning the pronunciation of a foreign language is a very complex task. A great deal of researches revealed that the principal factor for not acquiring the accent of an FL in an effective way is the phonological transfer of one's NL or mother tongue. For most empirical and anecdotal evidence, the difficulties in the pronunciation of a foreign language are clearly observable both at sound(s) and prosody/spoken discourse level.

Apart from NL interference, a couple of factors can have the potential influence on the pronunciation of FL, such as language attitude, the age of a learner familiarity with NS, the amount of exposure, and the motivation of a learner (Kenworthy, 1987).

The pronunciation of an FL mainly comprises the two concurrently linking skills of speech production (speaking) and perception (listening) for which we humans interact orally/aurally more than we communicate through reading and writing.

Under this existing research, though the age and academic maturity of the learners' in this study vary with the subjects of Anegagregn (2012), the test results are substantiated that there are a wide range of pronunciation challenges being experienced by our students both at segmental and suprasegmental levels. According to Brown (1987), transfer errors or problems of phonology that SL/FL learners encounter can be categorized under different levels or types as phonemic, phonetic, allophonic, and distributional depending on the degree of contrast or similarity between the native language of the students and the target language. Among these, those problem areas which are totally lacking in the native language of the learners are assumed to be of the highest priority so far as their role in communication is concerned (ibid).

As writers frequently emphasize, those features of pronunciation which are not available in the learners' native language will exert far greater difficulty (Jenkins, 2000). On the other hand, those problem areas resulting from different phonetic or allophonic realization assume relatively lower status in their potential to hamper communication (Jenkins, 2000).

In the Ethiopian context, a few researches have been conducted on the area of English pronunciation, and most of these researches were interested either on attitudes or segment level

except Anegagregn's (2012) work that he extensively investigated the challenge areas both at segmental and suprasegmental levels in a reasonable amount.

According to Anegagregn (2012), the following segmental areas were high priority problem areas (HP) and use them as focal areas for investigating actual perceptions and productions in the subjects' interlanguage and their intelligibility status.

1. Interdental fricative consonants / θ / and / ð /
2. The low front vowel /æ/
3. The mid central vowel /ə/
4. The mid back vowel /ʌ/
5. The low back vowel /ɒ/
6. All English long vowels and diphthongs
7. Reduction of vowels in to schwa (weak forms)
8. Word and sentence stress patterns
9. Stress-timed rhythm
10. Accentual and attitudinal functions of intonation
11. Syllables with initial and final (more than 2 members) consonant clusters
(Anegagregn, 2012; p.160)

As a major focal area of investigation, the list above represent potential pronunciation problems predicted Amharic native learners would encounter when: 1) sounds in English are not found in the inventory of Amharic; 2) the rules of combining sounds into words in Amharic are different from those in English (i.e. different syllable types); and 3) when the characteristic pattern of stress and intonation in English, which determine the overall rhythm or melody of the language, are different from those in Amharic. The extent and nature of predicted problems, in fact, should be verified in the subjects' actual use of spoken English. The next chapter presents the results of the data stemming from perception, production, and intelligibility tests designed for this purpose (Anegagregn, 2012; p.160).

The common nexus between this and other locally done studies including Anegagregñ's (2012) is that the mispronunciation of the two inter dental fricative sounds: /θ/ and /ð/ as they are substituted by /s/,/z/ or /t/, and the misidentification of long and short vowel sounds since learners use both long and short vowel sounds as short vowels. Many other studies in the overseas also tried to explore the basic segmental pronunciation challenges in relation with their NL phonology. This is found to be that in their NL there are no some consonant sounds and long vowels, so is the fact that they couldn't pronounce or identify the sounds.

In comparison, Anegagregñ (2012) and many researchers in the overseas claimed that suprasegmentals are more nonnegotiable in pronunciation as they distort meaning during discourse.

The rationality to this study is that some of the major pronunciation problems are investigated both at segmental (consonants, long and short vowels and diphthong vowels), and suprasegmental (word stress, sentence stress, intonation and connected speech) with which word stress and connected speech were not addressed in other locally done studies. The study also tried to explore the major pronunciation challenges through native audio recording intelligibility tests in combination with the needs analysis of students toward the learning of pronunciation skills. This is because language (including pronunciation) is a social phenomenon, and the attitudes, needs and desires of learners play a significant role in the success of ELT. To this end, students responded that they had a great enthusiasm to pronunciation, but they claimed that there was a great gap between what they needed and what they were getting from their English classes.

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1. Summary

This section of the chapter summarizes the introduction, the problem statement and the research questions, the literature review, the methodology, and the findings of the study.

5.1.1. Purpose of the Study

Since the second half of the twentieth century, due to great expansion in science, technology and economy on the globe, English was regarded as a primary language for international communication. As part of a language, pronunciation has a great role in mutual understanding through production (speaking) and perception (listening) of speeches. Consequently, we perceive pronunciation as the role of vowel and consonant sounds and their combinations in tone, stress, rhythm, tempo, syllable, intonation and connected speeches in utterances (Richards & Renandya, 2002; Roach, 2001) .

Regarding to the historical background of pronunciation, there were wanes and waxes in the sense that the concern for pronunciation boomed once and layered in other times (Jones, 2002). The reason for these fluctuations was the different language teaching methods and approaches introduced in different times. For instance, the audio lingual and the situational language teaching methods extremely concerned the teaching of pronunciation aiming at achieving nativization principle in the 1950s and 1950s (Celce-Murcia, 1991). Inversely, as Morley (1991) explains, the period between 1960-1980, the teaching of pronunciation was neglected and erased from the curriculum since language methodologists and theorists raised criticisms on traditional teaching methods.

More recently, however, due to the emergence of CLT, pronunciation is fuelled by the awareness of communicative function of suprasegmentals in spoken discourse aiming as pronunciation is an essential component of communicative competence (Kenworthy, 1987; Morley, 1991; Richards & Renandya, 2002).

Pertaining to the statement of the research problem, while the emergence of CLT promotes the importance of pronunciation in language teaching, there are still problems of oral/aural communication breakdowns which fall below the threshold level (Celce-Murcia, 1996). There are a number of empirical and anecdotal evidence that the issue of pronunciation is not overcome. For instance, the findings of Anegagregn (2012) on Ethiopian learners' pronunciation difficulties is a lively scientific study that depict learners were facing pronunciation challenges both at sound and prosody levels. Anecdotal evidence also substantiate the existing problems as most of us fail to understand what NS of English are saying both in face-to-face communication and via electronic media. Regarding to this, a number of researches have been conducted locally on problems of speaking skills without emphasizing pronunciation aspects - which is inevitably a vital element in speaking and listening. As Anegagregn (2012) reports, there are few studies on pronunciation in Ethiopia which were interested only on segment level, attitude, attention and focus given in textbooks. The work of Anegagregn (2012), the present researcher witnesses that, is a comprehensive grasp of learners' pronunciation challenges both at segmental and suprasegmental features. What is rationale for this study is that the study incorporates some suprasegmental features such as sentence stress and connected speech in combination with the needs analysis of students toward learning pronunciation skills. For this reason, this study was aimed to examine preparatory students' pronunciation difficulty and its influence on the intelligibility of their spoken English.

In order to achieve the objective of this study, the following questions are designed to answer:

1. What are some of the major challenges in pronunciation both at segmental and suprasegmental levels?
2. To what extent are these pronunciation difficulties negatively influence students' speaking and listening skills?
3. What are the students' attitudes toward learning pronunciation skills?

Answering the above research questions, this study is hoped to:

- ✚ Introduce the nature and aspects of English pronunciation;
- ✚ Make understanding of pronunciation problems and its role in communication at segmental and suprasegmental levels in relation to learners' NL and English;
- ✚ Imply the major pronunciation areas to teach and to focus;
- ✚ Make some pedagogical recommendations as regards teaching English pronunciation as an EFL by showing the importance of the basic knowledge of English phonetics and phonology;
- ✚ Put forward our insights towards the understanding and importance of pronunciation teaching in the Ethiopian curriculum for pedagogical purposes;
- ✚ Serve to initiate other researchers to conduct similar studies in a number of dimensions regarding to pronunciation difficulties in local NL backgrounds.
- ✚ Diagnose the needs analysis of students' toward learning pronunciation skills.

5.1.2. The Review of Related Literature

Pronunciation is generally conceived as the oral/aural communication which includes the production and perception of individual sounds and their combinations with suprasegmentals such as stress, syllable, rhythm, intonation and connected speech (Jones, 2002; Richards & Renandya 2002, Roach, 2011.)

For the revitalization of pronunciation, a '*Reform Movement*' was established in 1886 founding an association of '*International Phonetic Association (IPA)*', and its International Phonetic Alphabet (also abbreviated as IPA) which shows how to pronounce words instead of how to spell them (Richards & Rodgers, 2001; Celce-Murcia, 1996).

In connection with this, as Morley (1991) explains, current teaching approaches and methods witnessed the importance of pronunciation as CLT, for example, introduced the a focus on all aspects of language as considerable components of language which make up real life communication. Tench (1981) as proponent of CLT also suggests that language learning is “ the learners' overall aim and the teachers' overall tasks tasks in the teaching-learning process should embrace all aspects that impinge up on day to day communication” (p. 2). Learners, therefore,

should be equipped with all features and skills of the language such as grammar, vocabulary, spelling, pronunciation, listening, speaking, reading and writing as far as they are intending to attain communicative competence according to the CLT approach.

For achieving good pronunciation teaching and learning, teachers of English mainly need to be well equipped with the basic knowledge of English Phonetics and Phonology. Roach (2011), Crystal (2008) state that phonetics is about the discovery of how speech sounds are produced, how they are used in spoken language, how we can record speech sounds with written symbols and how we hear and recognize different sounds and phonology, on the other hand, is about sounds(phonemes), syllable, stress, rhythm and intonation.

Pertaining to this, one needs to consider pronunciation aspects for understanding and practicing them. Most phoneticians group pronunciation features into two categories: segmentals and suprasegmentals.

The segmental aspects of pronunciation primarily concerns about the 44 English sounds (24 consonant sounds which are phonemically symbolized as /p, t, k, b, d, g, m, n, ŋ, f, θ, s, ʃ, v, d, z, ʒ, w, r, j, l, tʃ, dʒ, h and 20 vowel sounds- are / i: ɪ e æ eɪ ɔɪ aɪ ə ɜ: ʌ ɑ: əʊ aʊ u: ʊ ɔ: ɒ ɪ ə eə ʊə/).

The suprasegmental features are used at the spoken discourses of negotiating meaning which include stress, rhythm, intonation and connected speech (O'Connor, 1980; Roach, 1998, Kenworthy, 1987, Ladefoged, 2001). In particular, stress is perceived as a syllable said slightly louder than other syllable(s) so that it brings meaning change as in the word *present* as a *noun* or as a *verb*(Roach, 1998). Rhythm concerns the time taken from one stressed syllable to the next can be proportionated to the number of unstressed syllables between them in the sense that each stress group within a word group is given the same amount of time (O'Connor, 1980; Kenworthy, 1987). For example, in ' *both of them left early* ', the three syllables of ' *both of them* 'and the two syllables of ' *early* ' are said in the same amount of time as the single syllable ' *left* ' (O'Connor, 1980, pp.98-99). Intonation, on the other hand, is 'the melody of speech', and associate it with 'variations in pitch (tune)' belonging to a word group of an utterance (Roach, 2001; Dalton and Seidlhofer, 1994; O'Conner, 1980). The term intonation often refers to the way

the voice goes up and down in pitch when speaking. So for example, ‘*Richard phoned*’ with a falling tune is a statement and with a rising voice a question.

Nonetheless, there are many contributory factors that hamper segmental and suprasegmental pronunciation. Dalton and Seidlhofer (1994) and Shoebottom (2012) distinguish two main groups of factors – internal factors that are incorporated into students’ individual language and external factors characterizing the particular language learning situation. The factors that can affect pronunciation intelligibility into students’ personal language are age, personality, motivation, experiences, cognitive and native language itself (ibid)

While learning a foreign language how to pronounce, learners tend to deviate one or two of the English varieties to make it as their model accent. There are many geographically varied accents of English across the globe such as the RP/BBC English, the GA, Canadian English, Welsh English, Scottish English, Australian English, Indian English, etc. and EFL learners are freed to choose from their own model accent (O’Connor, 1980) .

5.1.3. The Research Methodology

The purpose of the study was to identify difficulties of English pronunciation that preparatory students might be experiencing and the impact of these difficulties in the learners’ global communication. To this end, the study, using quantitative descriptive methods diagnosed a range of possible problems that the learners experienced with regard to English phonetic and phonological forms which are lacking in their native language, and identify specific characteristic difficulties the learners actually experienced in spoken English.

Descriptive research method is a study designed to provide descriptive information (i.e. dealing with naturally existing phenomena) about the subjects of enquiry deductively with predefined focus of investigation using quantitative (numeric) measures of data (Anegagregn, 2012, as cited in Ellis,1997).

The target population of this study were grade 11 preparatory students of Jimma Preparatory School in Jimma town. The total number of students is 25 for the pronunciation and intelligibility tests. The main reason to select 25 students from grade 11 purposefully was to gather about exact pronunciation difficulties of learners’ of preparatory program in a bit detailed investigation.

The study, therefore, devised three instruments to investigate pronunciation difficulty areas and their influences on EFL learners' spoken English:

1. Pronunciation tests and intelligibility assessment
2. Questionnaire
3. Interviews

And, the data collection procedures for this study stemmed from good ethical conduct with the target population under investigation and the native speakers. Before the data were analyzed, the testing procedures ran from simple (segmental) up to complex (suprasegmental) levels.

The data were analysed quantitatively and qualitatively. After data gathering, the researcher checked the completeness of data that were gathered and then analyzed using descriptive statistics including frequency percentage, means, and standard deviation have been used to predict the students' English pronunciation problems.

5.1.4. Findings

The present study examined some of the major pronunciation difficulties of the students at preparatory level of grade eleven Amharic NS at segmental and suprasegmental aspects. Consequently, the very findings of the study were the difficulty in pronouncing and comprehending the two interdental consonants θ and δ are substituted by either /s/, /z/ or /t/ of Amharic sounds; long vowels were used as short vowel counterparts; words ending in /r/ sound in the RP accent were not well perceived and produced (three diphthongs- =/ʊə/, /ɪə/, /eə/) at segment level.

As to the prosody level, the subjects great difficulty in articulating words with correct stress patterns or they overstress a syllable in contrast to NS of English. Furthermore, the subjects were not impressive in meaning recognition of sentence stresses and intonation, and they failed to transcribe to dictate/transcribe a bit longer connected speeches of what they listened from native audio recording.

As far as the students' attitude toward English pronunciation skills was concerned, nearly almost all the subjects showed/expressed that they had a great desire to acquire better English pronunciation skills.

5.2. Conclusions

Three research questions were formulated to facilitate the investigation. The results and the interpretations of the research findings are presented below, by recapitulating each research question underlying the study, the procedures followed to collect the data, what evidence has been obtained in the study to formulate answers to the questions.

The analysis of the data gathered allowed the researcher to conclude that words and sentences containing contrastive-origin problem areas of English pronunciations are not very easy for the subjects to recognize and comprehend. Therefore, in this study it was found that target pronunciations of English which are lacking in the learners' NL really continue to hinder the subjects' listening comprehensibility. Meanwhile, the study has demonstrated that not all novel English pronunciation features caused equal amount of pronunciation problems for the subjects. The subjects had more difficulty perceiving some foreign areas of English pronunciation than they did others.

1. The major pronunciation challenges both at segmental and suprasegmental level and their impacts on students' oral/aural language.

The resultant lists of difficulty features include: 1) voiced inter dental fricative /ð/, 2) voiceless inter dental fricative /θ/, 3) all five long vowels: /i:/, /a:/, /ɔ:/, /u:/ and /ɜ:/, 4) three diphthongs: /ɪə/, /eə/ and /ʊə/, 5) word and sentence stress patterns, 6) accentual and attitudinal functions of intonation, and 7) connected speech.

Turning more specifically to the results found for segmental aspects, the performance of the Amharic speaking subjects in perceiving novel English sounds was generally not impressive. The students' ability to produce and comprehend non-native sounds exhibited different degree of difficulty depending on whether the sound belongs to consonant, short vowel, long vowel or diphthong (the former being more difficult). Among vowels, long vowels account for the most difficult vowel category followed by short vowels and diphthongs.

Interdental fricative consonants represent the first most difficult segmental sound for Amharic speaking subjects to pronounce. With more than 50% of mean error score, most misrecognitions for /ð/ and /θ/ occurred at word final positions where the subjects confused them with /z/ and /s/

respectively as in the words such as ‘breathe/breeze’, ‘mouse/mouth’. Even though the consonants /ð/ and /θ/ at word initial and medial positions were not as troublesome as word final position, there were still more than 50% of the subjects who made misidentifications on them. As indicated by Jenkins (2000) and Gimson (1980), these consonants are inherently difficult and the reason for them being difficult for Amharic speakers is not only they are not found in Amharic but also they are the most difficult sound to learn for almost all L2 speakers and native children themselves. Extensive training on these sounds with greater awareness on their difficult nature may benefit the learners to improve their pronunciation from perceptual point (Anegagreg, 2012).

A total of 58.2% error scores the suprasegmental group as a whole received implies that the subjects faced a considerable problem from English prosody included in this study. By far the most difficult task (mean score of 63.6% incorrect) was marking intonation of sentences. The other three aspects, identifying connected speech (61.7%), distinguishing word stress (54.1%), and identifying sentence focus based on nuclear stress (52%) were the next most problematic. Identifying the meaning of a sentence based on its intonation, was the most difficult for most students. For this reason, in comparison with the segmental phonology difficulties (61.1% total error score mean), suprasegmentals received the lower proportion with total error score mean of 58.2%. Although the figure for prosodic areas is slightly lower than that of the individual sounds, the main part of communication part is relied on the suprasegmentals. In both groups of pronunciation areas, however, there were potential problems of pronunciation aspects. So is the fact that we must take high precedence over these challenging areas as they are negatively affecting communication (pronunciation).

2.The attitudes of students toward learning pronunciation

Regarding to students’ attitude, the study finds that the students have positive attitudes toward the learning of English pronunciation. They are aware of different varieties of English and the majority of them tend to learn the British English as their model accent followed by American English.

Learning the pronunciation of English was found to be very essential for 94 (85.5%) of the respondents. This very large percentage revealed that almost all the students had a great desire to learn and acquire pronunciation skills. Only 4 (3.6%) responded that learning pronunciation is unnecessary reasoning that pronunciation didn't hamper communication.

Moreover, the students have a desire to improve their pronunciation proficiency by different means, i.e. by watching TV/movies, listening to the English recordings like the BBC, and by speaking with natives and foreigners.

According to the subjects' responses, all the subjects were facing a negative influence on their EFL speaking skill because of the difficulty in pronunciation. Forty-three (39.1%) respondents answered that they had many difficulties/impacts in their EFL speaking skills such as they couldn't understand while natives were speaking both in person and electronic media or they fail to talk confidently to NS. Thirty-four (approximately 31%) subjects responded that they experienced misunderstanding while listening a native voice so that they faced communication breakdown.

Most of the respondents; 89 (approximately 81%) were not satisfied in their English language pronunciation proficiency. The rest 21students answered that they were satisfied by their pronunciation skills.

5.3. Recommendations

As a general conception, the findings and results of this study yielded that the subjects under the study had a lot of fossilized pronunciation challenges both at segmental and prosodic levels. Experiencing these challenges, however, they showed their enthusiasm to learn English pronunciation skills. For this reason, to overcome the students' major pronunciation difficulties and to develop their favorable attitudes and to maximize the benefits of pronunciation in language education, the researcher forwards the following recommendations.

- ✚ Since there is no realistic, desirable and practical pronunciation lesson coverage as other aspects of language like grammar and vocabulary in course books and textbooks, curriculum developers and syllabus designers should incorporate pronunciation areas in attainable and achievable forms both in segments and suprasegments which is accompanied by native audio recordings for a better Ethiopian EFL education.
- ✚ Teachers of English should be equipped with the basic, theoretical and practical knowledge of English Phonetics and Phonology which by default play a decisive role for acquiring better English pronunciation in the teaching and learning of the language.
- ✚ As to this study, it was delimited to and conducted on the basis of the researcher's and the subjects' NL _ Amharic only in Jimma Preparatory School students. So is the fact that there can be pronunciation problems of other local language speakers while using English in their academic instruction. Consequently, interested researchers on this or related topics can explore pronunciation difficulties of native speakers of other Ethiopian languages.
- ✚ Since this study was done on preparatory school level, the researcher suggests that other researchers study pronunciation problems at elementary level learners as age is a contributory factor for acquiring pronunciation.

- ✚ This study incorporated only few of the possibly predicted pronunciation difficulties _ /θ/ and /ð/ consonant sounds, long and short vowels, three diphthongs- /ʊə/, /ɪə/, /eə/ at sound (segment) level and word stress, sentence stress, intonation and connected speech at prosodic (suprasegmental) level. The researcher, therefore, recommends interested researchers to incorporate other pronunciation aspects such as rhythm, syllable, voice quality, the 35 weak words of articles, pronouns and conjunctions, and the five triphthong sounds in the RP/BBC English..

- ✚ The pronunciation tests in this study were not contextualized; they were scripted words of recordings. It is, therefore, preferable to design a contextualized pronunciation tests like ‘*conversational forms*’ which may add a clue for meaning for the subjects under a study.

- ✚ The pronunciation and intelligibility tests of this study were ‘*subjective*’ and devised on the basis of recordings of read aloud texts which made students very anxious and induced spelling pronunciation or spelling interference. For this reason, for interested researchers, a similar study can be done within the same school that uses an ‘*objective*’ test of spontaneous speech to determine if changes over time become noticeable for what learners will be doing in the outside world.

- ✚ The researcher finally recommends anyone who wishes to have better English pronunciation skills be intrinsically motivated, learn English Phonetics and Phonology, listen and mimic recordings of popular native English accents such as the RP/BBC English and the GA.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Pronunciation Tests: Materials used for students

JIMMA UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

ID NO. =S-----

Dear students,

The purpose of the pronunciation tests is for an MA study intended to investigate issues related to English language teaching and learning, especially *pronunciation* in preparatory level. You are, thus, kindly requested to participate and attending to a short session in which you will (1) listen to native English speech extract and respond to some recognition and understanding questions, and (2) read aloud some given written texts for recording (Each script took approximately two minutes to read aloud). Your written responses and recordings are confidential and will only be used for the purpose of the research.

Thank You in Advance

Muhammed Teshome, the researcher

Please answer the following questions about yourself. Check (√) in the box, or fill in the space provided.

1. Name: _____ (optional)
2. Age: _____ years (optional)
3. Sex: male----- female-----
4. Place of birth _____
5. What language do you speak as a mother tongue? _____

6. What language(s) do you speak other than your mother tongue?

7. Provide information on the school and the town you learnt before preparatory program.

a. primary school (grade 1 – 8) _____

b. Secondary school (grade 9 & 10) _____

Thank You in Advance

Muhammed Teshome, the researcher

A.1 Perception, Production and Dictation

General Instruction: *You are about to hear seven different tapes consisting of groups of very short words and sentences. (Don't worry; they will last for few minutes). Please listen to each carefully and write down what you hear from the tape as directed. There will be pauses at some places in each tape and also in between the tapes. In the other case, you will produce words and read two different passages for recording.*

A.1.1 SEGMENTALS

1. Sounds

1.1 Contoids/Consonant Phonemes

Track 1

Direction 1: You will listen to words now. When you hear to the number, listen to the word and tick (✓) the one you hear from the two words given in the worksheet below. You will hear each item twice.

1. sort----- thought-----

2. Sin----- thin-----

3. breeze----- breathe-----

4. force----- forth-----

5. sink----- think-----

6. tank----- thank-----

7. sing----- thing-----

8. mouse----- mouth-----

(Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of 8th Edition)

1.2 Vocoids/Vowel Phonemes

Track 2

Direction 3 : You will listen to words containing monophthong sounds now. When you hear to the number, listen to the word and tick the one you heard from the two words given in the worksheet below. You will hear each item twice.

1. cheek----- chick-----

2. tin----- teen-----

3. bad----- bud-----

4. duck----- dark-----

5. pull----- pool-----

6. heard----- hard-----

7. cod----- cord-----

8. ship-----sheep-----

(Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of 8th Edition)

1.3 Vocoids/Vowel Phonemes

Track 3

Direction 4 : You will listen to words containing diphthong sounds now. When you hear to the number, listen to the word and write the word you heard from the extract. You will hear each word twice.

1. -----

2. -----

3. -----

4. -----

5. -----

(Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of 8th Edition)

A.1.2 SUPRASEGMENTALS

2. Prosody

2.1. Word Stress

Direction 1: Pronounce the following words with a predictable stress in one of the syllables in each word so that native speakers listen to your voice, write the words they listen and determine whether your word pronunciation is intelligible for them.

1. comfortable

9. productivity

2. refuse

10. profession

3. entertain

11. design

4. paper

12. apply

5. protect

13. proverbial

6. disconnect

14. reflexive

7. detest

8. disaster

Track 4

Direction 2: You are going to listen to native speakers producing words with the correct stress pattern. So, you will write the words as you listen to the extract and then put (') mark to the stressed syllable. Natives will say each word two times.

1. -----

9. -----

2. -----

10. -----

3. -----

11. -----

4. -----

12. -----

5. -----

13. -----

6. -----

7. -----

8. -----

(Extracted from O'Connor, 1980: 91; Better English Pronunciation, Track 5= 12:18)

2.2. Sentence Stress

Track 5

Direction 1: *In English, speakers change their tone of voice in their pronunciation to highlight one word as most 'attention focusing or important' as opposed to the rest of the words in a sentence. Listen to the utterances (1-4) below given on column 'A'. Match them to the possible meanings (A-D given on column 'B'. The words given particular emphasis by the speaker when pronouncing are underlined for you.*

A	B
Utterance	Possible meaning
1. This is your <u>English</u> dictionary.	A. Not textbook or course book or any other material other than dictionary
2. <u>This</u> is your English dictionary.	B. Only a dictionary of English language, not other language
3. This is your English <u>dictionary</u> .	C. The dictionary only belongs to you, not to others
4. This is <u>your</u> English dictionary.	D. Not that one

(Recorded from Native AmE Speaker)

2.3 Intonation

Track 6

Direction: Listen to the utterances (1-10) below. The speaker will say the same sentence two times changing their tone or voice on a different word across the sentence to give it particular emphasis as opposed to the rest. In the first play, underline the words given particular emphasis by the speaker when pronouncing the sentences. In the second play, write the intention or meaning you understand from the speaker's pronunciation as whether it is **a statement, question, exclamation(emotion), command, repeating for information, sarcasm, giving correction..**

1. Richard phoned (F)-----

2. Richard phoned (R)-----

3. You can't go (R)-----

4. You can't go (F)-----

5. Good Heavens (R)-----

6. Good Heavens (F)-----

7. How extraordinary (F)-----

8. How extraordinary (R)-----

9. (He's forty-five) Forty six (F-R)-----

10. (He's forty-five) Forty-six (R)-----

R- Rising tune F- Falling tune

(Recording of Native AmE Speaker)

2.4. Connected Speeches

Direction 1: Now, you will read the following texts/sentences for recording so that native speakers write the utterances you made while they are listening.

1. There was a fight at the party but nobody got hurt.
2. We can leave as soon as you get dressed.
3. Cattle are allowed to graze in the cemetery.
4. Extra police were drafted into the district.
5. People are always inquisitive.
6. Find a book on the wood work.
7. They couldn't afford to buy it.
8. My friend also helped.

Track 7

Direction 2: *You are now to hear seven stretch of speeches. Write the whole utterance said by the speaker in the spaces provided. You will hear each utterance twice. You can leave the word you will not hear.*

1. -----.

2. -----.

3. -----.
4. -----.
5. -----.
6. -----.
7. -----.

(Recording of Native AmE Speaker)

A.1.3 Intelligibility Test

3. Read Aloud Texts

Direction: *You (Students) are going to read the following two extracts aloud for recording.*

I. Passage One

The use of desktop computer equipment and software to create high-quality documents such as newsletters, business cards, letterhead, and brochures is called Desktop Publishing, or DTP.

The most important part of any DTP project is planning. Before you begin, you should know your intended audience, the message you want to communicate, and what form your message will take.

II. Passage Two

Health clubs have undergone a major transformation that can be described in three words: mind, body, and spirit. Loud, fast, heart-thumping aerobics has been replaced by the hushed tones of yoga and the controlled movements of Pilates.

The clubs are responding to the needs of their customers who are increasingly looking for a retreat from their hectic lifestyles and a way to find a healthy balance in their lives by nurturing their whole selves.

A.2 Pronunciation Test Transcriptions

2.1 SEGMENTS & SUPRASEGMENTS

2.1.1 Contoids/Consonant Phonemes

Distinguishing Target Sounds (Perception). Words with target sounds are bolded and underlined.

□ *Track 1*

1. sort /sɔ:t/----- **thought** /θɔ:t/-----

2. **sin** /sɪn/----- thin /θɪn/-----

3. breeze /bri:z/----- **breathe** /bri:ð/-----

4. **force** /fɔ:s/----- forth /fɔ:θ/-----

5. sink /sɪŋk/----- **think** /θɪŋk/-----

6. **tank** /tæŋk/----- thank /θæŋk/-----

7. sing /sɪŋ/----- **thing** /θɪŋ/-----

8. **mouse** /maʊs/----- mouth /maʊθ/-----

2.1.2 Vocoids/Vowel Phonemes

Distinguishing Long and Short Vocoids in Minimal Pairs during Speech Perception. Words with target sounds are underlined.

□ *Track 2*

1. **cheek** /tʃi:k/----- chick /tʃɪk/-----

2. **tin** /tɪn/----- teen /ti:n/-----

3. bad /bæd/----- **bud** /bʌd/-----

4. duck /dʌk/----- **dark** /dɑ:k/-----

5. **pull** /pʊl/----- pool /pu:l/-----

6. heard /hɜ:d/----- **hard** /hɑ:d/-----

7. cod / /kɒd/----- **cord** /kɔ:d/-----

8. ship /ʃɪp /----- **sheep**/ʃi:p /-----.

2.1.3 Vocoids/Vowel Phonemes =Diphthongs

□ **Track 3**

Students' Word Perception and Dictation (Target Diphthongs=/ʊə/, /ɪə/, /eə/

Students' ID No.	1. premier /premiə/	2. clear /kliə/	3. air /eə/	4. pure /pjʊə/,	5. beer /biə/
S1	Promiame	Care	Air	Pour	Birre
S2	Training	Player	Air	Pure	Bear
S3	Permanent	Player	Air	Pure	Beer
S4	-	-	Air	Pure	Bear
S5	Primear	Player	Air	Pow	Beer
S6	Premiarling	-	Air	Pure	-
S7	Funy	Player	Air	Pure	Beer
S8	Training	Player	Air	Pure	Beer
S9	Premiarlig	Player	Air	Pure	-
S10	Terianig	Player	Heir	Pure	Beer
S11	Prime	Player	Flower	Air	Piour
S12	Premiem	Player	Air	Pure	Bair
S13	Training	Chair	Air	Poor	Beer

S14	Primared	Payer	Piar	Pour	Beair
S15	Permer	Cheir	Air	Pure	Bear
S16	Premier	Player	Air	Pure	Beer
S17	Primiam	Player	Air	Pure	Bair
S18	Premiar	Player	Air	Pure	Beer
S19	Permer	Chair	Air	Pure	Bear
S20	Premier	Clear	Air	Pure	Bear
S21	Premiarlig	Player	Air	Pure	-
S22	Training	Chier	Hear	Poor	Bear
S23	Premier	Clear	Air	pure	Bear
S24	Pramedie	Player	Ear	pour	Bear
S25	Premier	Clear	Air	pure	Bear

Notes:

1. *Ear* (in S24 subject transcription for air) can be marked as correct as it is a homophone with air and both words take /eə/ diphthong sound.
2. *Poor* (in S13 and S22subject transcriptions for pure) can also be considered right as both words are homophones.

2.1.4 Correct Word Stress Transcription

Track 4

Scripted Words in BrE Accent Recording (Better English Pronunciation, O' Connor, 1980: 91)

Words	Phonetic Transcription
1. *father	/fɑ:ðə/
2. *any	/eni/
3. *steady	/stedi/
4. *gathering	/gæðəriŋ/
5. *excellent	/eksələnt/
6. *obstinaçy	/ɒbstinəsi/
7. *reasonable	/ri:znəbl/
8. a*bout	/əbaʊt/
9. be*fore	/bɪfɔ:/
10. a*ttractive	/ətræktɪv/
11. be*ginning	/bɪɡɪnɪŋ/
12. in*tellegent	/ɪntelɪdʒənt
13. mag*nificent	/mæɡnɪfɪsnt/

2.1.5 Sentence Stress and Meaning

Track 5

Utterances with Possible Meanings
1. This is your English dictionary. = B. Only a dictionary of English language, not other language.
2. This is your English dictionary. = D. Not that one
3. This is your English dictionary . = A. Not textbook or course book or any other material other than dictionary.
4. This is your English dictionary. = C. The dictionary only belongs to you, not to others.

2.1.6 Intonation and Meaning

Track 6

Utterance	Intention
1. Richard phoned (F)	Statement
2. Richard phoned (R)	Question
3. You can't go (R)	Question
4. You can't go (F)	Command

5. Good Heavens (R)	Question
6. Good Heavens (F)	Exclamation
7. How extraordinary (F)	Exclamation
8. How extraordinary (R)	Sarcasm
9. (He's forty-five) Forty six (Fall-Rise)	Self-correction
10. (He's forty-five) Forty-six (Rise)	Question

R- Rising tune F- Falling tune

APPENDIX B

Materials Designed for Native Speaker Participants

JIMMA UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

B. Speech Production and Intelligibility Testing

B.1 Consent Form and Personal Information

Dear Sir/Madam,

I would like to invite you to participate in the data collection of an MA study of Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) that I will have been carrying out in Jimma University under the supervision of *Dr. Adege Alemu* (mob - *0911351967*) and *Dr. Mandefro Fenta* (mob - *0911836971*). The research is intended to investigate difficulties of English pronunciation for preparatory level students in learning and use of English as a foreign language. One of its focuses is to closely look into the intelligibility of the students' spoken English to listeners of native English speakers and its influence on their spoken English.

From the results of the study, I hope to learn major areas of English pronunciation that cause some difficulties for students in spoken English. The study also hopes to come up with some important areas of English pronunciation that require due attention in teaching and learning of English pronunciation for students so as to increase effective communication skills with English in the international context.

If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to attend a session (*at a place and time of your convenience*), in which 1) you will listen to short speech samples (*ranging in length from 02 to 08 seconds*) extracted from Jimma Preparatory school students spoken English and write down every word you hear; and 2) provide feedback on the students' pronunciation

challenges both at segmental and suprasegmental levels. *The whole session will last for approximately 40 to 0 minutes.*

The reason that you are selected as a possible participant in this study is because you are a native speaker of English. Participation is entirely voluntary.

The information from participants will be completely confidential. There is no way to identify you by name.

If you are willing to participate or have any questions about this research, I can be contacted at (mobile) telephone number +251- 0929279585; or you may leave an address of your preference so that the researcher would contact you to arrange the session.

Sincerely,

Muhammed Teshome, the researcher

CONSENT FORM

I, _____, agree to take part in this research study and I allow the researcher to use the data I will provide.

Signature _____ Contact Address _____

B.2 Speech Recognition and Production

1. Word Stress

Track 1

Direction 1: Now, you will listen to students' word production. So, listen to the voice, write the words you will listen to and determine whether the students use the correct stress of the words or not describe whether their word pronunciation is intelligible for you or not. (Don't worry, you can write what you predict while you are listening to the recording.)

- | | |
|----------|-----------|
| 1. ----- | 9. ----- |
| 2. ----- | 10. ----- |
| 3. ----- | 11. ----- |
| 4. ----- | 12. ----- |
| 5. ----- | 13. ----- |
| 6. ----- | 14. ----- |
| 7. ----- | |
| 8. ----- | |

Direction 2: You will say the following words with their natural word stress for recording.

- | | | |
|---------------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. <i>father</i> | 7. <i>reasonable</i> | 13. <i>magnificent</i> |
| 2. <i>any</i> | 8. <i>about</i> | |
| 3. <i>steady</i> | 9. <i>before</i> | |
| 4. <i>gathering</i> | 10. <i>attractive</i> | |
| 5. <i>excellent</i> | 11. <i>beginning</i> | |
| 6. <i>obstinacy</i> | 12. <i>Intelligent</i> | (O' Connor, 1980: 91) |

2. Sentence Stress

Direction 1: In English, speakers change their tone of voice in their pronunciation to highlight one word as most ‘attention focusing or important’ as opposed to the rest of the words in a sentence. So, say the underlined words in the sentences (1-4) below in a prominent speech so that students match the message of the sentences with their possible intention.

A	B
Utterance	Possible meaning
1. This is your <u>English</u> dictionary.	A. Not textbook or course book or any other material other than dictionary
2. <u>This</u> is your English dictionary.	B. Only a dictionary of English language, not other language
3. This is your English <u>dictionary</u> .	C. The dictionary only belongs to you, not to others
4. This is <u>your</u> English dictionary.	D. Not that one

3. Intonation

Direction: You will say the same sentence two times changing your tone or voice on a word across the sentence to give it particular emphasis as opposed to the first so that students underline the words given particular emphasis by the speaker when pronouncing the sentences and they will write the intention or meaning they understand from the speaker’s pronunciation.

1. Richard phoned (F)
2. Richard phoned (R)
3. You can’t go (R)
4. You can’t go (F)
5. Good Heavens (R)

6. Good Heavens (F)

7. How extraordinary (F)

8. How extraordinary (R)

9. (He's forty-five) Forty six (Fall-Rise)

10. (He's forty-five) Forty-six (Rise)

R- Rising tune F- Falling tune

4. Connected Speech

Track 2

Direction 1: You are now to listen to a stretch of utterances said by the students. Write the sentences in the worksheet below as you listen to the utterances. Don't worry if a word is not clear for you; you can leave it or skip to the next sequence of the utterance.

1. -----.

2. -----.

3. -----.

4. -----.

5. -----.

6. -----.

7. -----.

8. -----.

Direction 2 :You are now to say seven stretch of connected speeches. And, students write the sentences as they listen to the recording.

1. *I'm here.*
2. *Get some of that soap.*
3. *You must go to on the right place.*
4. *They've bought a black box.*
5. *Let him take it.*
6. *That's a nice suit. I haven't seen it before, have I?*
7. *I'm very comfortable, thank you.*

B.3: Intelligibility Tests Transcribed and Rated by an AmE native speaker

B.3.1: Native's Perception and Dictation of Scripted Words

Target Words	comfortable	Refuse	entertain	paper	protect	disconnect	Detest
NS's Transcription	comfortable	-	-	-	protect	disconnect	Ditest
Target Words	Disaster	productivity	profession	design	apply	proverbial	Reflexive
NS's Transcription	Disaster	Activity	revision	design	factory	-	-

B.3.2: Connected Speech

Item	1. There was a fight at the party but nobody got hurt.	2. We can leave as soon as you get dressed.	3. Cattle are allowed to graze in the cemetery.
Listener transcription	1. There was fight of the...but no body got hurt.	2. We can leave after you get dressed.	3.cemetery.
Item	4. Extra police were drafted into the district.	5. People are always inquisitive.	6. Find a book on the wood work.
Listener transcription	4. Extra police were drafted into the district.	5. People are always inquisitive.	6. Find a on wood work.
Item	7.They couldn't afford to buy it.	8. My friend also helped.	
Listener transcription	7. They couldn't afford to buy it.	8. My friend also helped.	

B.3.3. Read Aloud Text Read by Students and Rated by an AmE NS

Track 3

Direction: You are about to listen to a reading aloud recording of the following two different texts by different students. While you're listening to the recordings, you'll identify the students' major pronunciation challenges (mainly at segmental and word stress level) from the readings/speeches.

I. Passage One

The use of desktop computer equipment and software to create high-quality documents such as newsletters, business cards, letterhead, and brochures is called Desktop Publishing, or DTP.

The most important part of any DTP project is planning. Before you begin, you should know your intended audience, the message you want to communicate, and what form your message will take.

II. Passage Two

Health clubs have undergone a major transformation that can be described in three words: mind, body, and spirit. Loud, fast, heart-thumping aerobics has been replaced by the hushed tones of yoga and the controlled movements of Pilates.

The clubs are responding to the needs of their customers who are increasingly looking for a retreat from their hectic lifestyles and a way to find a healthy balance in their lives by nurturing their whole selves

Evaluation Checklist for Major Pronunciation Challenges (in Segments and Word Stresses) in the above Two Read Aloud Passages Rated by Native Speaker

*= in the orthographic writing shows wrong word stress placement pronounced by the students

/* /= in the phonetic transcription shows the correct word stress said by the native speaker

St. ID	Sound Matter/Segmental Difficulties		Word Stress Difficulties	
	Passage 1	Passage 2	Passage 1	Passage 2
S1	/z/ in <u>the</u> /ðə/, /f/ in	/z/ in heal <u>th</u> , / helθ/, /s/	document, but	heart-thum*ping,

	broch <u>u</u> res /brəʊʃz:z /, /vʃ/ in of /ɒv/	in <u>th</u> ree/θri:/, /z/ in <u>th</u> e /ðə/	/*dɒkju:mənt/	but /hɑ:*θʌmpɪŋ/
S2	/k/ in broch <u>u</u> res //brəʊʃz:z /, /z/ in <u>th</u> e /ðə/, /vʃ/ in of /ɒv/	/s/ in <u>th</u> ree/θri:/, /z/ in health <u>th</u> / helθ/, /z/ in <u>th</u> e /ðə/	e*qui*pment, but /ɪ*kwɪpmənt/ document, but /*dɒkju:mənt/	*pilates, but /prɪ*la:ti:z/ , heart-thum*ping, but /hɑ:*θʌmpɪŋ/
S3	/tʃ/ in broch <u>u</u> res /brəʊʃz:z /, /z/ in <u>th</u> e /ðə/, /vʃ/ in of /ɒv/	/z/ in <u>th</u> e /ðə /, /s/ in <u>th</u> ree/θri:/, /z/ in health <u>th</u> / helθ/,	Letterhead*d, but /*letər hed/ document, but /*dɒkju:mənt/	heart-thum*ping, but /hɑ:*θʌmpɪŋ/, *pilates, but /prɪ*la:ti:z/
S4	/vʃ/ in of /ɒv/, /z/ in <u>th</u> e /ðə/, /tʃ/ in broch <u>u</u> res /brəʊʃz:z /	-/t/ in heart- <u>th</u> umping /hɑ:θʌmpɪŋ /, /z/ in <u>th</u> e /ðə /, /s/ in <u>th</u> ree/θri:/, /z/ in health <u>th</u> / helθ/,	su*ch as, but /*sʌtʃ əz/ e*qui*pment, but /ɪ*kwɪpmənt/	transformation, but /trænsfə*meɪʃn/, *pilates, but /prɪ*la:ti:z/
S5	-/vʃ/ in of /ɒv/, /z/ in <u>th</u> e /ðə/, /tʃ/ in broch <u>u</u> res /brəʊʃz:z /,	-/d/ in hushed/hʌʃt/, /z/ in <u>th</u> e /ðə /, /s/ in <u>th</u> ree/θri:/, /z/ in health <u>th</u> / helθ/,	before, but /brɪ*f ɔ:r/ document, but /*dɒkju:mənt/	heart-thum*ping, but /hɑ:*θʌmpɪŋ/, *pilates, but /prɪ*la:ti:z/
S6	-/vʃ/ in of /ɒv/, /z/ in <u>th</u> e /ðə/, /tʃ/ in broch <u>u</u> res /brəʊʃz:z /	/s/ in club <u>s</u> /klʌbz/, /s/ in <u>th</u> ree/θri:/, /z/ in health <u>th</u> / helθ/, /z/ in <u>th</u> e /ðə/	begin, but /brɪ*ɡɪn/, before, but /brɪ*f ɔ:r/ document, but	heart-thum*ping, but /hɑ:*θʌmpɪŋ/, *pilates, but /prɪ*la:ti:z/

			/*dɒkju:mənt	
S7	-/ɒf/ in of /ɒv, /z/ in the /ðə/, /tʃ/ in broch <u>u</u> res /brəʊʃz:z /	-/z/ in the /ðə /, /s/ in th ree/θri:/, /s/ in lives /laɪvz/, /z/ in health /helθ/	Communicate, but /kəmju:nɪ*keɪt/, before, but /brɪ*fɔ:r/, document, but /*dɒkju:mənt	heart-thum*ping, but /hɑ:*θʌmpɪŋ/, *pilates, but /prɪ*la:ti:z/
S8	-/ɒf/ in of /ɒv, /z/ in the /ðə/, /tʃ/ in broch <u>u</u> res /brəʊʃz:z /	/e/ in a major/əmeɪdʒə(r)/, /z/ in health /helθ/, -/z/ in the /ðə /, /s/ in th ree/θri:/, /s/ in lives /laɪvz/	e*qui*pmənt, but /ɪ*kwɪpmənt/, before, but /brɪ*fɔ:r/, document, but /*dɒkju:mənt	heart-thum*ping, but /hɑ:*θʌmpɪŋ/, *pilates, but /prɪ*la:ti:z/
S9	-/ɒf/ in of /ɒv, /z/ in the /ðə/, /tʃ/ in broch <u>u</u> res /brəʊʃz:z /,	/ɪ/ in been /bi:n/, /z/ in the /ðə /, /s/ in th ree/θri:/, /s/ in lives /laɪvz/, /z/ in health , /helθ/	before, but /brɪ*fɔ:r/, e*qui*pmənt, but /ɪ*kwɪpmənt/	heart-thum*ping, but /hɑ:*θʌmpɪŋ/, *pilates, but /prɪ*la:ti:z/
S10	-/ɒf/ in of /ɒv, /z/ in the /ðə/	/t/ in nurt <u>u</u> ring/nɜ:rʃərɪŋ/, /z/ in the /ðə /, /s/ in th ree/θri:/, /s/ in lives /laɪvz/, /z/ in health , /helθ/	e*qui*pmənt, but /ɪ*kwɪpmənt/, before, but /brɪ*fɔ:r/	heart-thum*ping, but /hɑ:*θʌmpɪŋ/, *pilates, but /prɪ*la:ti:z/
S11	-/ɒf/ in of /ɒv, /z/ in the /ðə/	/s/ in needs /ni:dz/, /z/ in the /ðə /, /s/ in th ree/θri:/, /s/ in	e*qui*pmənt, but /ɪ*kwɪpmənt/,	heart-thum*ping, but /hɑ:*θʌmpɪŋ/, *pilates, but

		<u>lives</u> /larvz/, /z/ in health <u>h</u> , / helθ/	before, but /bɪ*f ɔ:r/	/pɪ*la:ti:z/
S12	-/vʃ/ in <u>of</u> /ɒv/, /z/ in <u>the</u> /ðə/	/I/ in <u>needs</u> /ni:dz/, /z/ in <u>the</u> /ðə /, /s/ in <u>three</u> /θri:/, /s/ in <u>lives</u> /larvz/, /z/ in health <u>h</u> , / helθ/, /s/ in <u>needs</u> /ni:dz/	su*ch as, but /*sʌʃ əz/, e*qui*pment, but /ɪ*kwɪpmənt/	heart-thum*ping, but /hɑ:*θʌmpɪŋ/, *pilates, but /pɪ*la:ti:z/
S13	-/vʃ/ in <u>of</u> /ɒv/, /z/ in <u>the</u> /ðə/, /tʃ/ in broch <u>u</u> res /brəʊʃɜ:z /	s/ in whole sel <u>ves</u> /həʊl selvz/, /s/ in <u>needs</u> /ni:dz/, /s/ in <u>three</u> /θri:/, /z/ in <u>the</u> /ðə/, /z/ in health <u>h</u> , / helθ/	begin, but /bɪ*ɡɪn/ e*qui*pment, but /ɪ*kwɪpmənt/	heart-thum*ping, but /hɑ:*θʌmpɪŋ/, *pilates, but /pɪ*la:ti:z/
S14	-/vʃ/ in <u>of</u> /ɒv/, /z/ in <u>the</u> /ðə/	/s/ in <u>lifestyles</u> /laɪfstʌɪlz/, /s/ in <u>three</u> /θri:/, /z/ in health <u>h</u> , / helθ/, /z/ in <u>the</u> /ðə/	e*qui*pment, but /ɪ*kwɪpmənt/ begin, but /bɪ*ɡɪn/	heart-thum*ping, but /hɑ:*θʌmpɪŋ/, *pilates, but /pɪ*la:ti:z/
S15	/s/ in club <u>s</u> /klʌbz/, /z/ in <u>the</u> /ðə/	/s/ in <u>three</u> /θri:/, /z/ in <u>the</u> /ðə/	e*qui*pment, but /ɪ*kwɪpmənt/	heart-thum*ping, but /hɑ:*θʌmpɪŋ/, *pilates, but /pɪ*la:ti:z/
S16	/z/ in <u>the</u> /ðə/, /vʃ/ in <u>of</u> /ɒv/	/s/ in <u>three</u> /θri:/, /z/ in <u>the</u> /ðə/	e*qui*pment, but /ɪ*kwɪpmənt/	heart-thum*ping, but /hɑ:*θʌmpɪŋ/, *pilates, but /pɪ*la:ti:z/

S17	/z/ in the /ðə/, -/vʃ/ in of /ɒv/	/s/ in three /θri:/, /z/ in the /ðə/	begin, but /bɪ*ɡɪn/	heart-thum*ping, but /hɑ:*θʌmpɪŋ/, *pɪlɑ:tɪz, but /pɪ*lɑ:tɪz/
S18	/z/ in the /ðə/, -/vʃ/ in of /ɒv/	/s/ in three /θri:/	su*ch as, but /*sʌtʃ əz/	heart-thum*ping, but /hɑ:*θʌmpɪŋ/, *pɪlɑ:tɪz, but /pɪ*lɑ:tɪz/
S19	/z/ in the /ðə/, -/vʃ/ in of /ɒv/	d/ in hushed/ h ʌʃt/, /s/ in three /θri:/	document, but /*dɒkju:mənt/	heart-thum*ping, but /hɑ:*θʌmpɪŋ/, *pɪlɑ:tɪz, but /pɪ*lɑ:tɪz/
S20	/z/ in the /ðə/, -/vʃ/ in of /ɒv/	/z/ in the /ðə/, /s/ in three /θri:/	document, but /*dɒkju:mənt/	heart-thum*ping, but /hɑ:*θʌmpɪŋ/, *pɪlɑ:tɪz, but /pɪ*lɑ:tɪz/
S21	/z/ in the /ðə/, -/vʃ/ in of /ɒv/	/z/ in the /ðə/, /s/ in three /θri:/	document, but /*dɒkju:mənt/	heart-thum*ping, but /hɑ:*θʌmpɪŋ/, *pɪlɑ:tɪz, but /pɪ*lɑ:tɪz/
S22	/z/ in the /ðə/, -/vʃ/ in of /ɒv/, /tʃ/ in bro ch ures /brəʊʃɜ:z /	/z/ in the /ðə/, /s/ in three /θri:/, /z/ in heal th , / helθ/	document, but /*dɒkju:mənt/	heart-thum*ping, but /hɑ:*θʌmpɪŋ/, *pɪlɑ:tɪz, but /pɪ*lɑ:tɪz/
S23	/z/ in the /ðə/, -/vʃ/ in of /ɒv/	/s/ in three /θri:/, /z/ in the /ðə/, /z/ in heal th , / helθ/	document, but /*dɒkju:mənt/	heart-thum*ping, but /hɑ:*θʌmpɪŋ/, *pɪlɑ:tɪz, but

				/pɪ*la:ti:z/
S24	/z/ in the /ðə/, -/vʃ/ in of /ɒv/	/s/ in th ree/θri:/, /z/ in the /ðə/, /z/ in health , / helθ/	document, but /*dɒkju:mənt/	heart-thum*ping, but /hɑ:*θʌmpɪŋ/, *pilates, but /pɪ*la:ti:z/
S25	/z/ in the /ðə/, -/vʃ/ in of /ɒv/	/z/ in the /ðə/, /s/ in th ree/θri:/, /z/ in health , / helθ/	document, but /*dɒkju:mənt/	heart-thum*ping, but /hɑ:*θʌmpɪŋ/, *pilates, but /pɪ*la:ti:z/

B.1.2: Natives' Opinion on the EFL Students English Pronunciation Difficulties

Native	Accent	Place of Birth	Opinion
N1	British English	London, UK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - (th) sound problems - minimal pairs with short and long vowels (words having different meanings) are pronounced in the same way and confusing to understand unless context helps. - Strong accent/stress. Incorrect use of words/sentences. - Many do not speak loudly and confidently. - Speed of speech is not well-balanced; sometimes very fast, sometimes low. - Some Ethiopian English users distract words while they are speaking. For example, 'productivity' will sound like 'productive tea'. Many of the words are unrecognizable unless context helps.
N2	American English	Seattle, USA	<p>-There are a lot of sounds that exist in English which are not equivalent to the sounds of Amharic. For example, the 'th' as in 'there' is pronounced as 'z' in Amharic.</p> <p>-For example, in the evaluation checklist of the two read aloud passages in the test you recorded,</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">-there was a lisp of sounds, and readers missed a lot of</p>

			<p>sounds while they were reading,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">-some others read like a ‘robotspeak’ without stressing words correctly,-some students pronounce words without any stress like in the word ‘communicate’ (passage 1) and some others fall the stress on incorrect placement like in the word ‘*pilates’ where the correct stress is on ‘pi*lates’ (passage 2) .-A lot of people study English with complex dictions and very large vocabularies but they do not use in context or as the same way as native speakers use. For example, where are you go? (We don’t use such an utterance).-Most of the Ethiopians also feel nervous and lose confidence when they speak English. They also mumble during speech and they jump some words.-Wrong word stress is also another challenging part among many English users of Ethiopians that causes communication distortion.
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APPENDIX C

C. 1 Questionnaires for Students

JIMMA UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

1. Personal Information Questionnaire

Dear students,

The purpose of this questionnaire and the sessions that follow is for an MA study intended to investigate issues related to English language teaching and learning, especially pronunciation in preparatory level. You are, thus, kindly requested to participate by filling in the questionnaire. Please respond first to the following questionnaire which aims at gathering participants' personal information relevant to the study.

Thank you in advance

Please answer the following questions about yourself. Check (√) in the box, or fill in the space provided.

1. Name: _____ (optional)

2. Age: _____ years (optional)

3. Sex: male..... female

4. Place of birth _____

5. What language do you speak as a mother tongue? _____

6. What language(s) do you speak other than your mother tongue?

7. Provide information on the place /town you are attending your preparatory program

2. Pronunciation Matters Questionnaires

The questions and discussion can be carried out in the mother tongue in the case of monolingual or bilingual classes. This may be necessary at the lower levels of proficiency in English, and may also be advisable at higher levels, to promote a meaningful discussion. (Kenworthy, 1987; 55-56).

1. Imagine you are talking in your own language with a foreigner. The person doesn't speak your language very well and is very difficult to understand. What do you do? Do you:

- a. pretend you understand even when you don't?
- b. ask him or her to repeat everything slowly and carefully?
- c. try to get away?

2. What do you say when the foreign speaker apologizes for his/her poor accent? Do you:

- a. tell him/her that his/her accent is very good even when it isn't?
- b. tell him/her that his/her poor accent doesn't matter?
- c. tell him/her that his/her accent is very bad and that he/she must work hard to improve it?

3. How do you feel when a foreigner pronounces your name wrongly?

- a. very angry
- b. it bothers me a little
- c. it bothers me a lot
- d. it doesn't bother me at all

4. How do you feel when you meet a foreigner who speaks your language with a very good accent?

- a. surprised
- b. pleased
- c. not surprised
- d. full of admiration
- e. don't care or think about it

5. In the future, who will you speak English to?

- a. mostly English people visiting my country who don't know my language.

- b. mostly English –speaking people in this country (Britain, USA, etc.).
- c. mostly non-English people who don't know my language and whose language I don't know, so that we speak English together.
- d. don't know.
6. What do you think about learning English pronunciation?
A. Unnecessary B. Very essential C. Hectic D. time consuming
7. Who do you think of when you hear the term —English speakers?
A. Americans B. Englishes/Britishes C. Scots D. Welshes E. All
8. Which English accent you want to learn as a model accent?
A. Indian English B. Canadian English C. British English D. American English
9. What are your thoughts on the English pronunciation in your school?
A. Native-like accented B. Amharic/Afan Oromo accented C. Intelligible accent D. ill-pronunciation
10. Do you need to have a good English pronunciation skill?
A. Yes B. No
11. Are you satisfied with your English language pronunciation proficiency?
A. Yes B. No
12. How do you need to improve your pronunciation skills?
A. by watching English language TV/movies. B. by listening to English language learning recordings like The BBC C. by speaking English with foreigners D. All
13. Do your parents believe learning English pronunciation is important?
A. Yes B. No C. Uncertain
14. What negative influences you faced in your unintelligible speech/spoken English?
A. Unable to understand what native English speakers say
B. Wrong/fossilized speech production so that native speakers can't understand me.
C. Communication problem D. All are the negative impacts on my pronunciation skills

15. Below are some situations. When is it most important to pronounce well? Put them in order of importance with a number if you want.

a. speaking on the telephone

b. meeting someone for the first time.

c. talking to someone you know very well (a good friend) in an informal situation (e.g. at the party)

d. doing business in English (e.g. at the bank, post office, bus station, railway station, in shops, etc.).

e. talking to strangers (e.g. asking the way)

f. chatting to a fellow student (e.g. during break time)

Appendix C.2

Frequency and Percentage Tables for Students' Questionnaires

1. If a foreigner is in difficulty in speaking your language, what do you do?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid pretend	25	22.5	22.7	22.7
ask him	74	66.7	67.3	90.0
get away	11	9.9	10.0	100.0
Total	110	99.1	100.0	

2. What do you say when a foreigner apologizes for his poor accent ?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid very good	12	10.8	10.9	10.9
poor accent doesn't matter	29	26.1	26.4	37.3
very bad	69	62.2	62.7	100.0
Total	110	99.1	100.0	

3. How do you feel when a foreigner pronounces your name wrongly ?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid very angry	22	19.8	20.0	20.0
bothers me a little	55	49.5	50.0	70.0
bothers me a lot	23	20.7	20.9	90.9
doesn't bother me at all	10	9.0	9.1	100.0
Total	110	99.1	100.0	

4. How do you feel when you meet a foreigner who speaks your language with a very good accent?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid surprised	45	40.5	40.9	40.9
pleased	22	19.8	20.0	60.9
not surprised	10	9.0	9.1	70.0
full of admiration	33	29.7	30.0	100.0
Total	110	99.1	100.0	

5. In the future, who will you speak English to ?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid with people visiting my country	29	26.1	26.4	26.4
Valid with English speaking people	54	48.6	49.1	75.5
Valid with non-English people	27	24.3	24.5	100.0
Total	110	99.1	100.0	

6. What do you think about learning English pronunciation ?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Unnecessary	4	3.6	3.6	3.6
Valid Very essential	94	84.7	85.5	89.1
Valid Hectic	7	6.3	6.4	95.5
Valid time consuming	5	4.5	4.5	100.0
Total	110	99.1	100.0	

7. Who do you think of when you hear the term English speakers ?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Americans	32	28.8	29.1	29.1
Britishes	56	50.5	50.9	80.0
Valid Scots	11	9.9	10.0	90.0
Welshes	7	6.3	6.4	96.4
All	4	3.6	3.6	100.0
Total	110	99.1	100.0	

8. Which English accent do you want to learn as a model accent ?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Indian	4	3.6	3.6	3.6
Canadian	6	5.4	5.5	9.1
Valid British	64	57.7	58.2	67.3
American	36	32.4	32.7	100.0
Total	110	99.1	100.0	

9. What are your thoughts on the English pronunciation in your school ?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Native like	3	2.7	2.7	2.7
Amharic/Afan Oromo accented	67	60.4	60.9	63.6
Intelligible	11	9.9	10.0	73.6
Ill-pronunciation	29	26.1	26.4	100.0
Total	110	99.1	100.0	

10. Do you need to have a good English pronunciation skill ?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Yes	106	95.5	96.4	96.4
No	4	3.6	3.6	100.0
Total	110	99.1	100.0	

11. Are you satisfied in your English language pronunciation proficiency ?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Yes	21	18.9	19.1	19.1
No	89	80.2	80.9	100.0
Total	110	99.1	100.0	

12. How do you need to improve your pronunciation skills ?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid by watching TV/movies	19	17.1	17.3	17.3
by listening to English recordings	28	25.2	25.5	42.7
by speaking with natives/foreigners	16	14.4	14.5	57.3
All	47	42.3	42.7	100.0
Total	110	99.1	100.0	

13. Do your parents believe learning pronunciation is important ?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Yes	97	87.4	88.2	88.2
No	13	11.7	11.8	100.0
Total	110	99.1	100.0	

14. What negative influences you faced in your unintelligible speech/spoken English?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
misunderstanding	34	30.6	30.9	30.9
NS can't understand me	20	18.0	18.2	49.1
Communication breakdown	13	11.7	11.8	60.9
All	43	38.7	39.1	100.0
Total	110	99.1	100.0	

15. When is it most important to pronounce well ?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
during telephoning	6	5.4	5.5	5.5
meeting someone for the first time	12	10.8	10.9	16.4
at parties	17	15.3	15.5	31.8
doing business	58	52.3	52.7	84.5
talking to strangers	10	9.0	9.1	93.6
chatting to a fellow student	7	6.3	6.4	100.0
Total	110	99.1	100.0	

APPENDIX D
STUDENT INTERVIEW GUIDE

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COLLEGE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

Appendix D.1 GUIDED INTERVIEW

1. What do you think about learning English pronunciation?

Are you aware of different English varieties in the world? If so, which English accent you want to learn as a model accent? Would you explain why?

2. What do you think about the English pronunciation lesson in your school? Are you satisfied or dissatisfied with that? Please explain.

3. Would you explain why you are or not learning English pronunciation now?

4. How do you think you will be using spoken English in the future?

5. What are the major challenges you are facing while you listen to native English voices (native people and/or taped recordings)?

6. To what extent are these pronunciation difficulties negatively influence your speaking skills?

7. What are your attitudes toward learning pronunciation skills to overcome pronunciation problems?

D.2 Interview Responses

Students' (Interviewees') Attitude on Learning pronunciation and their Difficulties

ID No.	Sex	Opinion
Iwe1	M	<p>Learning English is very essential, but we face many challenges in it. The problem is not only from the students but from the teachers themselves. Teachers must shape their pronunciation skills first and should teach their students.</p>
Iwe2	M	<p>As a general sense, the English we learn and the level we are in seems imbalanced. What the teacher is teaching is different from what is in the textbook and the questions in the matriculation and university entrance exam sheets. We are learning ten subjects in English, but the teachers don't make the subjects attractive because of their poor English usage.</p> <p>As far as pronunciation is concerned, our teachers are not proficient in it; pronunciation matter is almost in a null condition. Teachers don't teach pronunciation at all because they don't have adequate knowledge on it.</p> <p>In my opinion, it is better to learn English pronunciation as the four language skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing). The problem, however, is that the teachers do not teach even listening lessons in the textbook effectively and efficiently.</p>
Iwe3	F	<p>We have a great desire to learn and to have a good pronunciation skills. However, teachers focus on teaching grammar. They do not teach pronunciation. Teachers should improve their pronunciation skills and should teach pronunciation so that students will shape their pronunciation habits a bit.</p>

Iwe4	M	<p>The textbook itself doesn't incorporate pronunciation aspects. It is designed on the basis of listening, speaking, reading and writing lessons. Moreover, there are redundancies throughout the textbook. For example, grammar parts of tenses repeatedly appear. And the teaching technique of the teachers is not in a proper way.</p> <p>As far as pronunciation goes, we need to have better English pronunciation. But the problem is our teachers are not good models for pronunciation; they speak with previously fossilized pronunciation style.</p>
Iwe5	M	<p>The organization of the textbook in terms of lessons is less-comfortable. For example, there are redundancies of grammar lessons such as tenses. Some teachers only teach the highlight part of the lesson. For example, in our English textbook, there is a passage entitled '<i>Climate Change</i>'; we learnt the conceptual framework of the passage from geography subject. The aim here in the English textbook is to teach language aspects, but the teachers do not teach in a way of language use; they only teach as a geography teacher does.</p> <p>Consequently, learning pronunciation is very decisive and equally important as other language skills. We are not, however, pronouncing even what we know properly. So, we become confused when natives speak even with simpler expressions because of our less exposure to their voices. We feel anxious and lose confidence to speak English intelligibly.</p> <p>I believe pronunciation and grammar can go together, so it is better if we learn concurrently.</p>
Iwe6	F	<p>Speaking with a good pronunciation is very much essential and makes speakers confident and comfortable. Nevertheless, while we are speaking English, we feel anxious even with non-native speakers of English whose pronunciation proficiency is not far more proficient than us. I think this is because we are not exposed for speaking English frequently with a model of native English voice. And, our teachers are not a good model of English pronunciation; what we hear the English in the</p>

		media from natives and from our classroom teachers is much more different. This makes us less- confident when speaking because we feel ashamed of errors in our poor pronunciation skill and lexical knowledge.
Iwe7	M	I have a desire to have good pronunciation skills for I wish to run business abroad. I need to communicate with foreigners comfortably in better pronunciation. However, I think I couldn't talk to native English speakers now because I'm not familiar with natives' voice, and my English language teachers themselves have no good pronunciation proficiency. These and other factors negatively influenced my speaking skill. As a result, I feel frustrated while I'm speaking even with non-native users of English.
Iwe8	F	Pronunciation learning is very much important; it helps us to communicate with natives and non-natives confidently and effectively. There is no pronunciation lesson and teaching in our English textbook, however. Also, teachers of English as they wish without native model; they don't teach language with the tape- recorded of native voice. Because of such impacts, we fail and fear in speaking English. In my belief, pronunciation lesson must be incorporated in the syllabus that is accompanied with native sound recordings for better English pronunciation and intelligible communications.
Iwe9	F	I appreciate people speaking with smart pronunciation. I wish I had good pronunciation skill, too. Saying this, the teaching way of English language teachers at the school level seems to deaden English_ teachers pronounce only in their own way of accent. We primarily imitate from our live classroom teachers and attempt to speak English but far more different from the natives' voice while we hear in the electronic media. For myself, I can't even listen to natives clearly.

Iwe10	M	Good pronunciation is significant in mutual communication, so I hope everyone needs to have clear pronunciation skill. However, I, for myself, have poor pronunciation proficiency while I'm speaking English. I think a lot of factors contributed for this. For example, I have no frequent familiarization of native voice or face to face contact in conversations, and I imitate my classroom teachers' accent and fossilized it.
Iwe11	F	I admire people who speak in a nice pronunciation. But, for most of us, there are potential challenges for not acquiring good pronunciation proficiency. One is our classroom language teachers do not enunciate words and utterances whom we directly imitate. The second is the language syllabus doesn't include pronunciation lessons that are accompanied with native audio recordings and textual descriptions of pronunciation matters. For this reason, we feel anxious to speak English with people, especially with foreigners. So, this is a negative impact for our oral/aural communication.
Iwe12	M	Our teachers are not good models of English pronunciation. I think they don't have adequate knowledge on how to teach language with good pronunciation. For this reason, some students get bored and leave classroom before the teacher enter to the class. So, we don't develop good speaking skill with good pronunciation proficiency.