

The importance of teaching Phonology in EFL Speaking classes (Teachers' perspectives)

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Abstract

This study aims to illuminate teachers' perspectives on the value of phonology in EFL speaking skills programs. The main inquiry aims to determine the value of phonology instruction in enhancing speaking abilities among EFL students at the faculty of education at Sudan University of Science and Technology. A questionnaire for instructors was used to gather the data, and N. 30 participants in all. The data were analysed using the SPSS programme. The study suggests that instructors include phonology instruction in EFL lessons and allow students to actively participate in the exercises. The researchers advise more research into the effectiveness of various phonology teaching strategies and how it affects the development of speaking abilities in EFL students.

Keywords *Speaking skills, Phonology, EFL, Teaching*

1. Introduction

The need for English communication skills from all facets of society has grown steadily day by day, and it is now an unstoppable force. According to a 1995 US assessment titled "Fastest Growing Careers," communication skills will continue to be in demand throughout the workforce long into the twenty-first century. Speaking abilities are crucial for successful job careers in the modern workplace. Speaking abilities are more crucial to job success than specific technical skills, according to a number of studies cited by Becker and Ekdorf (1980). But in addition to the issue of language barriers, language learners have various difficulties in their studies, such as tension, anxiety, and dread. This makes it more difficult to learn the target language in a formal environment. (Jayanth & Soundiraraj, 2016). In this age of globalisation, being able to speak English clearly and effectively is critical. This is a wonderful opportunity for a literature or English education student to help expand and strengthen the community's English-speaking skills. As prospective teachers, students majoring in English Education are required to always educate and correct their students. The English education study programme, in particular, ensures that students obtain the best possible support information, one of which is pronunciation and phonology, in order to accomplish these abilities. (Asiyah1 and Maghfiroh, p. 349) Arabs commonly pronounce several English sounds wrong due to their little exposure to English as a foreign language. (Jahara & Abdelrady, 2022, p. 194)

2. PREVIOUS STUDIES

Namaziandost et al., 2018 have conducted a significant study to determine the effect of phonological rule instruction on Iranian pre-intermediate EFL students' English pronunciation. Non-random sampling was used to choose 50 pre-intermediate students enrolled in a private language school in Ahvaz, Iran (convenience sampling). They took the Oxford Quick Placement Test, a homogeneity test, to find out how homogeneous they were. They were then split into two groups at random: control (n = 25) and experimental (n = 25). A validated teacher-made pronunciation test was given to both groups as the pre-test prior to the start of the treatment. The results showed that there was a significant difference between the two groups' performances. Participants in the experimental group performed better than those in the control group, it was discovered. The experimental group generally performed better than the control group. This study suggests that teaching phonological rules can make pronunciation learning more efficient and simple. (Namaziandost et al., 2018).

Goswami & Chen² (2010) study evaluated the impact of instruction in phonetic and phonemic distinctions in sounds on the English pronunciation of English language learners, specifically, Spanish speakers learning English as a second language (ESL). Target sounds in English deemed difficult for Spanish speakers learning ESL were

identified. The target sounds were categorized into sounds having allophonic distinctions between the two languages; sounds having phonemic Results indicated that the intervention had a statistically significant impact on the experimental group's pronunciation of the target sounds. Further, subjects' showed improvement in the pronunciation of individual target sounds in the following order: sounds with allophonic distinctions, phonemic differences, and absence in the native language. (Goswami & Chen, 2010)

Phonology or phonemics

Segmental and suprasegmental phonology are the two levels of phonology. It is important to think about some fundamental theoretical issues. We create a continuous stream of sounds when we speak. In order to study speech, we break this stream up into what are known as segments. The word man, for instance, is divided into three segments. Finding the rules that control how sounds are arranged in languages and explaining variation are the main goals of phonology. The foundation of phonological analysis is the idea that some sounds alter the meaning of a word or phrase, while other sounds do not. An early investigation into the matter used a straightforward methodology to show this. (Roach, 2010)

Definition of Phonological-Based Instruction

Phonological instruction focuses on audibly analysing words at the phonemic level and mapping linguistic units to print in order for children to eventually learn to read. There are two types of phonological-based instruction programmes: phonics instruction and phonemic awareness instruction (PA)

Phonics training focuses on the explicit and direct teaching of alphabetic principles and grapheme-phoneme matching rules, as well as their application to word- and text-level reading. In PA, students learn phonological skills such as rhyming, recognising, segmenting, and combining phoneme sounds. There is some overlap between phonemic awareness and phonics education (Ehri et al., 2001). Both of these may have the grapheme-phoneme relationship of 26 English letters. Beyond teaching letter sounds, phonics teaches more sophisticated spelling rules such as digraphs and diphthongs. (Huo & Wang, 2017, p. 3)

Phoneme awareness training focuses on teaching kids how to manipulate speech sounds in the absence of written letters, and word level reading and spelling are significant goals of phonics training. Phoneme awareness training can be used as a preliminary to systematic phonics training. (Ehri et al., 2001).

Definition of Speaking

Speaking, according to Longman Dictionary, is the utterance of intelligible speech or the appearance of being capable of speech. Speaking is the process of verbally expressing one's thoughts and feelings, reflecting on and shaping one's experience, and sharing information. Speaking is a complex process that involves both thinking and language skills, as well as social skills. The speaker combines words to form sentences and paragraphs and employs a socially appropriate language style. Speaking is development for the relationships between a speaker and her/his hearer. Speaking also entails deciding whether logical linguistic, psychological, and physical rules should be followed in a certain communicative circumstance.

Teachers should educate pupils the following procedures in order to make speaking proper and understandable: Speak clearly and expressively about their views. 2011 (Bin Tahir) Speaking is a highly complex and dynamic talent that requires the simultaneous activation of numerous processes - cognitive, bodily, and socio-cultural - and the activation of a speaker's knowledge and skills in real-time. As a result, it is critical that speaking be explicitly taught in language schools — "doing" speaking through a sequence of activities is not the same as learning the knowledge, abilities, and techniques of speaking. (2019, Burns)

Micro-Skills of oral communication

Speaking necessitates mastery of a variety of small skills known as micro-skills. These micro-skills can be used to evaluate speech production quality. Furthermore, English teachers must be aware of the following micro-skills in order to effectively plan their lessons. Brown (2001) defines oral communication micro-skills as the following tasks. Mastery of a variety of small skills known as micro-skills is required for speaking. These micro-skills can be used to evaluate speech production quality. Furthermore, English teachers must be aware of the following micro-skills in order to effectively plan their lessons. Language chunks of multiple lengths are rated. Oral production of differences in English phonemes and allophonic variants. Use patterns, stress in words and unstressed positions, rhythmic structure, and intonation. to use a large number of lexical units to achieve pragmatic goals, to create abbreviated

forms of words and phrases □ To speak fluently at various levels of speaking. To monitor oral production using strategic devices such as pauses, fillers, and self-corrections to improve message clarity Using grammatical word classes (nouns, adjectives, and so on), systems (such as tense and pluralization), word order, patterns, and rules. To use proper phrases and sentences when speaking. To use several grammatical forms to communicate a given idea. In order to use coherent devices in one's speech, one must first learn how to use them. To fulfill communicative functions in a suitable manner for the occasion. Appropriate registers, pragmatic rules, and other sociolinguistic elements must be developed in order to engage with others. Using connections and links between events to connect situations like the main idea, supporting idea, new information, supplied information, generalization, and exemplification. Combining expressions, gestures, body language, and other nonverbal indicators with spoken language to convey the meaning of a speech. Developing and using speaking tactics such strengthening key words, rephrasing, offering context for comprehending word meanings, appealing for help, accurately measuring how well your listener understands the dialogue, generalization, and exemplification. (Masuram & Sripada, 2020)

Principals of teaching speaking skills

According to Anuradha et al (2014), the following are the principles of teaching speaking skills: to encourage students to speak up right away. If not, be patient with students who simply repeat what they say as soon as possible and without having to wait until she teaches them a set of words, phrases, or sentences; if a student responds to a question with a single word, accept it for the time being; allow students to actively participate in the conversation using whatever English knowledge they have; and allow learners to make errors and mistakes at the beginning. Interruptions and corrections impede fluency and discourage learners from completing any task or topic without difficulty; propose structures/words and have students use them in a variety of situations; drill as much as possible; and encourage students to use the back-chaining or tail-forwarding approach to combine more than 10 sentences to construct lengthy sentences, organize role play and pair work as much as possible, and supervise the learners to correct the active learners and activate the passive ones, be well prepared in terms of lesson planning, activities, and tasks ahead of time, and allow learners to make mistakes and errors in the early stages. In addition, keep in mind that interruptions and corrections stifle learning and discourage students. (Hussain, 2017)

Teaching-Speaking cycle

Taking some of the previous ideas and expanding on them to plan a comprehensive and sequential series of speaking activities based on the teaching-speaking cycle (Goh and Burns, 2012, p. 153). The model's goal is to highlight a few key elements that teachers can use to help their students, such as developing fluency in meaning expression, using grammar flexibly to produce a diverse range of utterances that express meaning precisely, and so on. Using appropriate vocabulary and accurate language forms relevant to their speaking needs, understand and apply social and linguistic communication rules in a variety of contexts, manage and self-regulate their own speaking development, increase understanding of genre and genre structures, and increase metacognitive awareness of EFL speaking (Burns, 2019)

According to research, variables such as second language learners' age and gender, the extent of second language use, the length of residence in the second language environment, learners' aptitude, first language background, and the presence or absence of phonetic training in the second language all influence second language learners' pronunciation (Piske, 2008).

TOOLS OF THE STUDY

The data needed for the study is collected through the use of

A. A QUESTIONNAIRE.

The questionnaire is designed for university teachers Sudan University for Science and Technology –College of languages – University requirements unit & English department teachers .

A.1 THE VALIDITY OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE

The questionnaire is judged to be valid because it is distributed to ten university teachers four of them are PH.D holders in English and education . This committee agrees on the face, content, structure validity of the questionnaire. They participate on the final form of the questionnaire by their advices and comments.

A-2-THE RELIABILITY OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE

The questionnaire is distributed to thirty university teachers and they understand it and respond accurately which emphasis the reliability of the questionnaire.

A-3 THE POPULATION

All the teachers at the University Requirements unit - English department - College of languages - Sudan University of Science & Technology who teach English for specific purposes courses

A.4- THE SAMPLE

The sample is thirty teachers from Sudan University of science and technology –college of languages – University requirements Unit – English department.

Table 1 GENDER (teachers)

Gender	Number	Percent
Male	19	63
Female	11	37
Total	30	100

Table 2 Experience (teachers)

Year	Frequency	Percent
1-5	10	33.3
10-5	12	40
15-10	06	20
More than 15	02	6.7
Total	30	100

Table 3 Qualifications (teachers)

Degree	Number	Percent
Bachelor	01	3.3
Higher diploma	04	13.3

Master	25	83.3
Philosophy Degree	00	0
Over philosophy Degree study	00	0
Total	30	100

In this chapter, the researcher uses SPSS statistical computer programm to analyze the teacher's questionnaire and the students test to achieve the results.

Table 4. Frequency Table

sex			
		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Male	19	63.3
	Female	11	36.7
Total		30	100.0

Figure 1

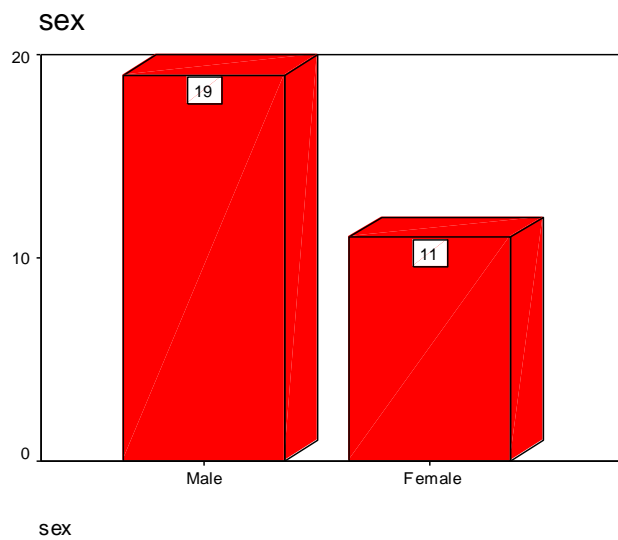
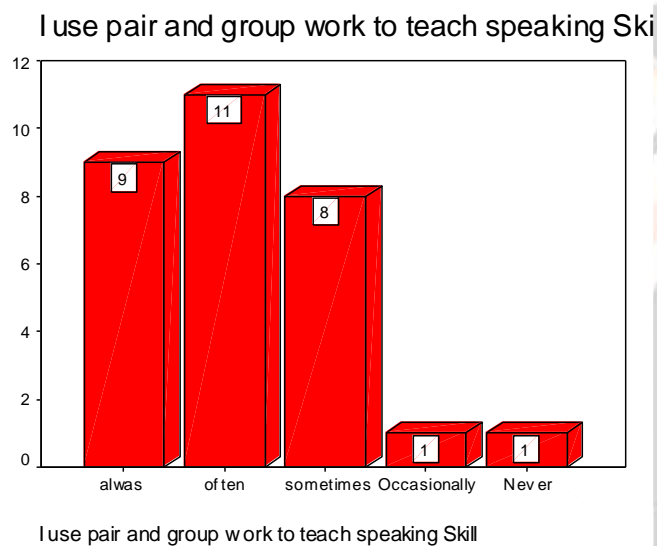


Table 5

use pair and group work to teach speaking Skill

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	alwas	9	30.0
	often	11	36.7
	sometimes	8	26.7
	Occasionally	1	3.3
	Never	1	3.3
	Total	30	100.0

Figure 2



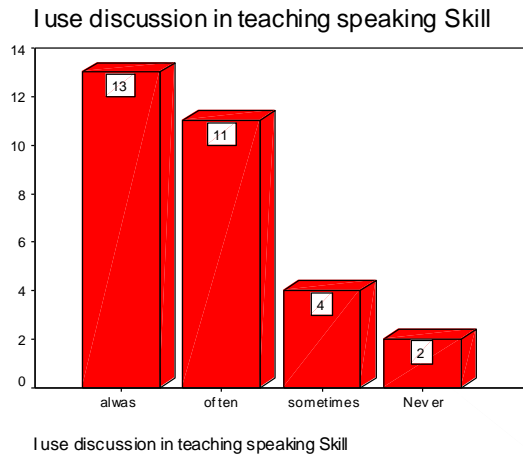
Based on the data presented in table ((4-4)), it is clear that most of the samples responses are limited in the (often) .the frequency is (11), they constitute 36.7%.

Table 6

I use discussion in teaching speaking Skill

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	alwas	13	43.3
	often	11	36.7
	sometimes	4	13.3
	Never	2	6.7
	Total	30	100.0

Figure 3



Based on the data presented in table ((4-5)), it is clear that most of the samples responses are limited in the (always) .the frequency is (13), they constitute 43.3%.

Table 7

use problem solving to teach communication Skills

	Frequency	Percent
Valid alwas	1	3.3
often	10	33.3
sometimes	15	50.0
Occasionally	2	6.7
Never	2	6.7
Total	30	100.0

Figure 4

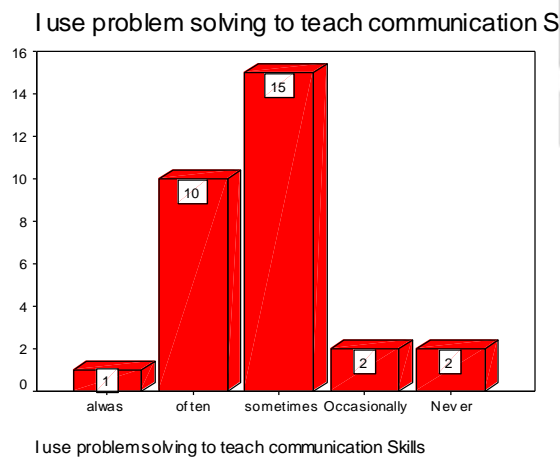


Table 8

Based on the data presented in table ((4-6)), it is clear that most of the samples responses are limited in the (some times) .the frequency is (15), they constitute 50%.

use audiovisual aids in teaching receptive Skills

	Frequency	Percent
Valid alwas	6	20.0
often	3	10.0
sometimes	12	40.0
Occasionally	8	26.7
Never	1	3.3
Total	30	100.0

Figure 5

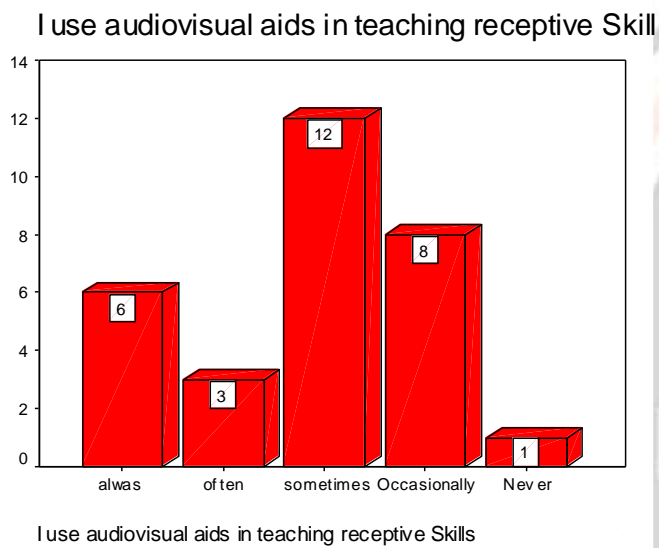


Table 9

Based on the data presented in table ((4-7)) ,it is clear that most of the samples responses are limited in the (sometimes) .the frequency is (12), they constitute 40.0 %.

I use the audio-lingual method of teaching

	Frequency	Percent
Valid Strongly agree	3	10.0
Agree	11	36.7
undecided	11	36.7
disagree	4	13.3
Stongly disagree	1	3.3
Total	30	100.0

Figure 6

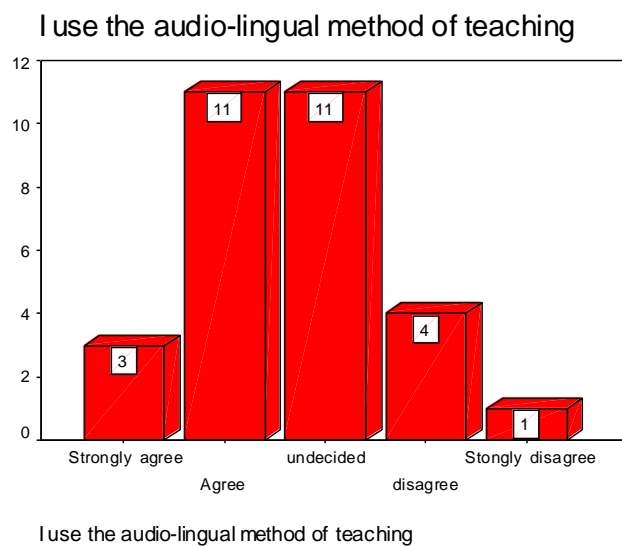


Table 10

Based on the data presented in table ((4-14)), it is clear that most of the samples responses are limited between the (always and often) .the frequency is (11-11), they constitute (36.7 -36.7%).

I the communicative method of teaching

	Frequency	Percent
Valid Strongly agree	8	26.7
Agree	17	56.7
undecided	3	10.0
disagree	1	3.3
Stongly disagree	1	3.3
Total	30	100.0

Figure 7

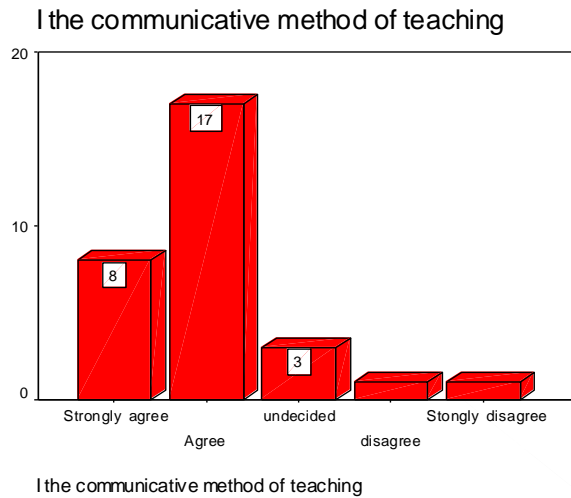


Table 11

Based on the data presented in table ((4-15)), it is clear that most of the samples responses are limited between the (always and often) .the frequency is (17), they constitute 56.7 %

I use the grammar translation method of teaching

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Strongly agree	3	10.0
	Agree	10	33.3
	undecided	6	20.0
	disagree	6	20.0
	Stongly disagree	5	16.7
	Total	30	100.0

Figure 8

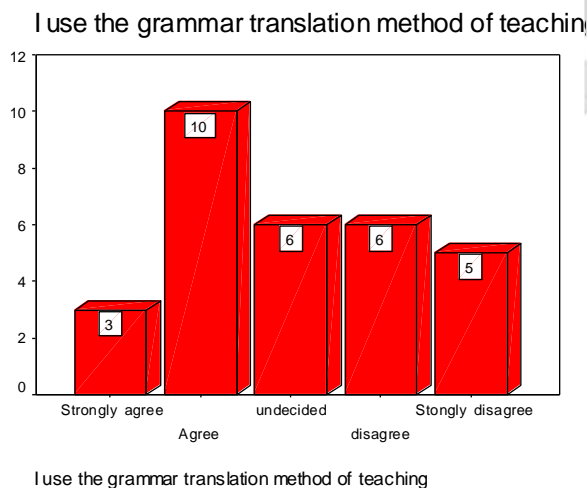


Table12

Based on the data presented in table ((4-16)), it is clear that most of the samples responses are limited in the (always) .The frequency is (10), they constitute 33.3 % .

Sudanes Universities syllabi include segmental phonology

	Frequency	Percent
Valid Strongly agree	7	23.3
Agree	13	43.3
undecided	8	26.7
disagree	2	6.7
Total	30	100.0

Figure 9

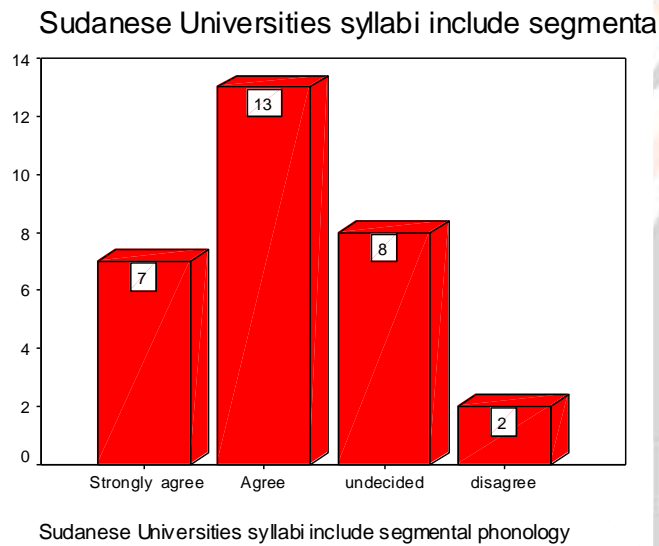


Table 13

Based on the data presented in table ((4-17)) it is clear that most of the samples responses are limited in the (agree) .the frequency is (13), they constitute 43.3%

Sudanese Universitys syllabi include suprasegmentaphonology

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Strongly agree	7	23.3
	Agree	10	33.3
	undecided	9	30.0
	disagree	2	6.7
	Stongly disagree	2	6.7
	Total	30	100.0

Figure 10

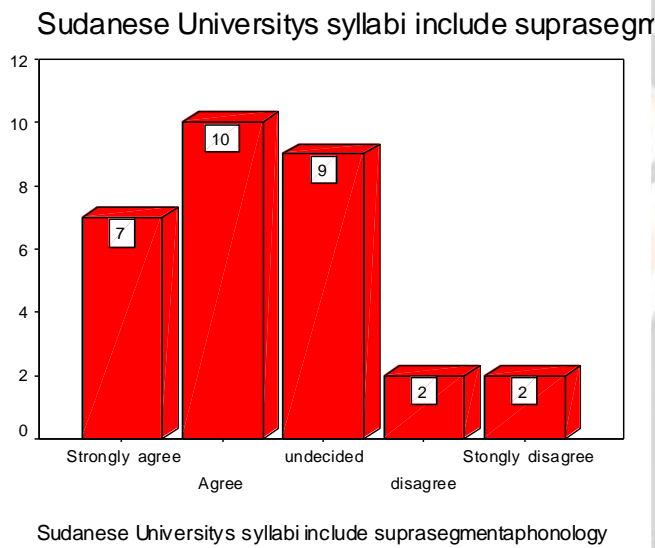


Table 14

Based on the data presented in table ((4-18)) it is clear that most of the samples responses are limited in the (agree) .the frequency is (10), they constitute 33.3%.

Sudanes Universities syllabi include phonetic sound

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Strongly agree	16	53.3
	Agree	12	40.0
	undecided	2	6.7
	Total	30	100.0

FIGURE 11

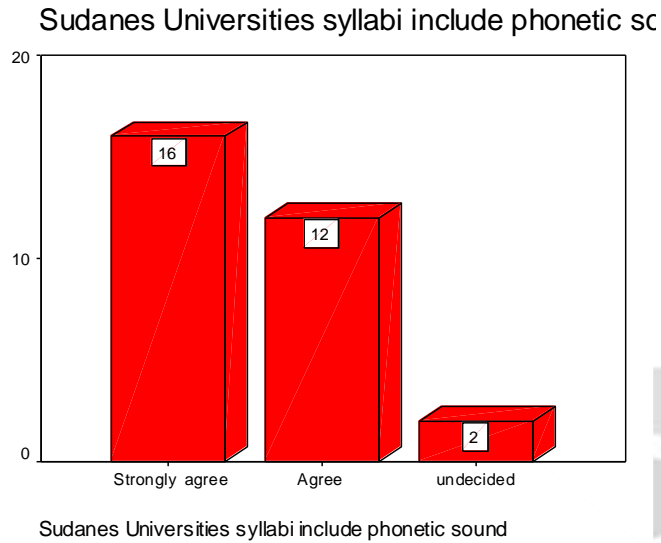


Table 15

Based on the data presented in table ((4-19)) ,it is clear that most of the samples responses are limited in the (strongly agree) .the frequency is (16), they constitute 53.3%.

FIGURE 12

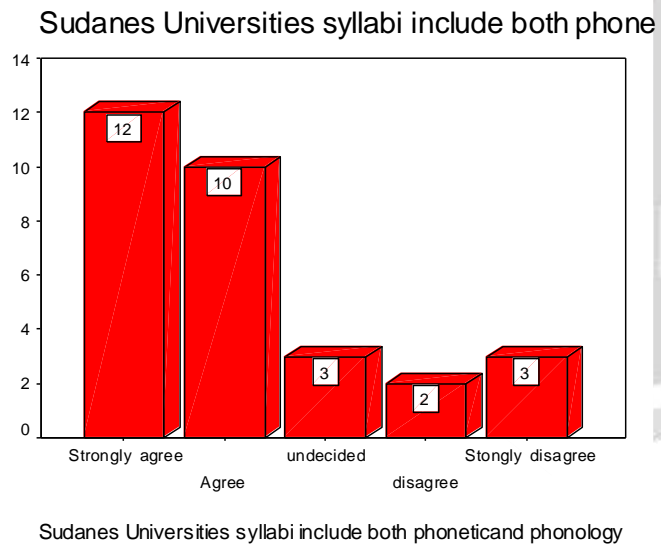


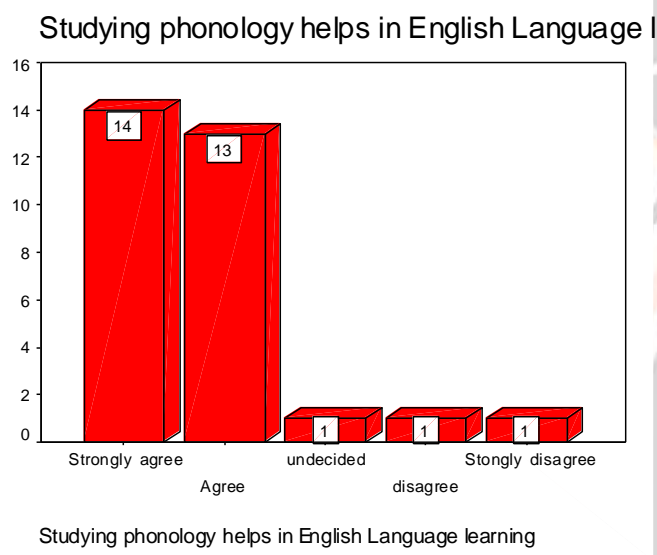
Table 16

Based on the data presented in table ((4-20)), it is clear that most of the samples responses are limited in the (strongly agree) .the frequency is (12), they constitute%40.0.

Studying phonology helps in English Language learning

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Strongly agree	14	46.7
	Agree	13	43.3
	undecided	1	3.3
	disagree	1	3.3
	Stongly disagree	1	3.3
	Total	30	100.0

FIGURE 13



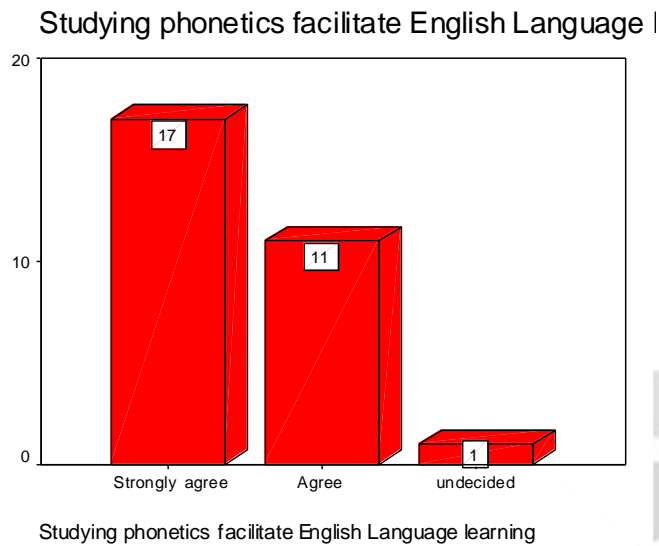
Based on the data presented in table ((14)), it is clear that most of the samples responses are limited in the (strongly agree) .the frequency is (14), they constitute 46.7%.

Table 17

Studying phonetics facilitate English Language learning

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Strongly agree	17	56.7
	Agree	11	36.7
	undecided	1	3.3
	Total	29	96.7
Missing	System	1	3.3
Total		30	100.0

FIGURE 14



Based on the data presented in table ((4-22)) it is clear that most of the samples responses are limited in the (strongly agree) .the frequency is (17), they constitute 56.7%.

Discussion of the questionnaire results

I use pair and group work to teach speaking skill, from ((appendix 1)) it is clear that this result is significant equals .005. It ensures that teaching phonology through the four skills enhances communication. I use discussion in teaching speaking skill. , from ((appendix 2)) it is clear that, this result is significant equals .010. It ensures that teaching phonology through the four skills enhances communication. I use problem solving to teach communication. From ((appendix 2)) .

It is clear that, this result is highly significant equals .000. It ensures that teaching phonology through the four skills enhances communication. I use audiovisual aids in teaching receptive skills. From ((appendix 2)) it is clear that, this result is highly significant .015. It ensures that teaching phonology through the four skills enhances communication. I use the audio-lingual method of teaching. From ((appendix 3)) it is clear that, This result is significant equals .005 it ensures that, teaching phonology through the four, skills enhances communication. I use the communicative method of teaching. From ((appendix 3)) it is clear that, this result is highly significant equals .000 it ensures that, teaching phonology through the four, skills enhances communication. I use the grammar translation method of teaching. From ((appendix 3)) it is clear that, this result is insignificant equals .363. This ensures that Sudanese teachers do not teach phonology at the university level.-first year within English for specific purposes courses.

Sudan university syllabi include segmental phonology. From ((appendix 4)) it is clear that, this result is significant equals .043 .it ensures that Sudanese universities syllabi include phonology.Sudan university syllabi include supra-segmental phonology. From ((appendix 4)) it is clear that, this result is significant equals .046 .it ensures that Sudanese universities syllabi includes phonology.

Sudan university syllabi include phonetic sounds. From((appendix 4)), it is clear that, this result is significant equals .006 .it ensures that Sudanese universities syllabi includes phonology.Sudan University syllabi include both phonetics and phonology. From ((appendix 4)) it is clear that, this result is significant equals .006 .it ensures that Sudan University syllabi includes phonology. Studying phonology helps in English language learning. From ((appendix 4)) it is clear that, this result is highly significant equals .000 .it ensures that teaching phonology through the four, skills enhances communication. Studying phonetics facilitates English language learning. This result is significant .001 .it ensures that teaching phonology through the four, skills enhances communication.

There is a need to introduce online learning through Blackboard on a regular and proper basis in order to overcome all deficiencies and create a more motivated and effective online learning environment. (Almekhlafy, S.2020). As English teachers, the researchers advocate for more research into the impact of the lockdown on other aspects and skills of English language teaching and learning.

FINDINGS

According to the questionnaire data, the researchers discovered that teaching phonology improves the speaking skills of EFL learners. As a result, the idea that Teaching Phonology can increase EFL learners' speaking skills is supported. According to the researchers, this is due to the nature of the course; unlike other academic courses, students can always practice speaking English inside and outside of the classroom. Students can now attend classes online and build friendships with native speakers through various social media programmes such as WhatsApp and Facebook, thanks to technological advancements. Twitter and Telegram

RECOMMENDATIONS

More study, on the other hand, is needed to determine the impact of other language factors on English learners' performance in terms of major and subskills in Reading, Writing, and Listening, as well as other aspects of English as a foreign language learning and teaching. One of the study's shortcomings is that it only investigated a limited sample of Sudanese EFL students at the Faculty of Education at Sudan University of Science and Technology; a larger sample may be collected from other Sudanese universities.

CONCLUSION

In this study, the researchers attempted to shed light on the importance of teaching phonology in improving EFL learners' speaking skills. Researchers suggests that the teaching phonology enhances EFL learners speaking skills. Students can learn in a variety of ways, including through movement, sound, and sight, to improve their comprehension and memory. • Keep your lessons applicable. Most students, even adults, find theory and technical explanations to be confusing. are hard to understand and are easily forgotten. Simple, concrete demonstrations followed by lots of practice produce better results. Lessons need to fit our students' level of understanding. • Include communicative practice whenever possible. Students need to work toward using their new pronunciation in real speech. We can support their practise in activities that simulate real communication during class. • Develop independent and self-directed learners in your students. Our students won't always be with us. They'll eventually have to solve pronunciation problems on their own. Their future learning will benefit greatly if we can assist them in developing their own abilities in listening, imitating, and checking their own pronunciation. (Yoshida, 2016)

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