

Pronunciation Challenges in English Language Among Undergraduate Students of Adekunle Ajasin University, Akungba-Akoko, Ondo State, Nigeria

Dare Williams Omotoyinbo*

PhD, Department of Arts Education, Faculty of Education,
Adekunle Ajasin University, Akungba-akoko, Nigeria

*Corresponding Author

Dare Williams Omotoyinbo, P.hD, Department of Arts Education, Faculty of Education, Adekunle Ajasin University, Akungba-akoko, Nigeria.

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Abstract

This study investigated pronunciation challenges among undergraduates among undergraduate students of Adekunle Ajasin University, Akungba-Akoko, Ondo State, Nigeria, as case study. The descriptive survey design was used for the study. The sample of the study was One Hundred (100) respondents, selected from five (5) different Departments using simple random sampling technique. The study used a structured self-constructed questionnaire for data collection. Obtained data were analysed through frequency counts and percentages. Findings of the study revealed that Mother Tongue plays a significant, but negative role, in the phonological acquisition of a second language learner. Again, Language in contact, like pidgin and creole can cause wrong pronunciation of English words among undergraduates. A detailed description of English sounds, intonation and stress as well as teaching of English words are imperative to reducing the problem of wrong pronunciation among undergraduates and second language learners of English Language in Nigeria. Based on the findings, it was recommended that stakeholders of university education should ensure that phonetics and phonology are taught and enough textbooks on each, should be provided by government and which should be effectively used by lecturers and students, in the concerned departments.

Keywords: Pronunciation, Mother-Tongue, Second-language Learner, Description of English Sounds, Phonetics, Phonology.

1. Introduction

The ultimate goal of most second language learners is to attain native-like fluency. However, for many learners, this dream has not come true, especially in the area of pronunciation, as native speakers usually identify them as non-native speakers, because of their accents. The importance of investigating pronunciation difficulties, stems from the fact that, pronunciation stands as an obstacle in communication, especially when the meaning of a certain word or an expression is altered because of the wrong pronunciation. This research, therefore aimed, at considering the factors that have roles to play in the acquisition of the phonological system of any non-native language. The factors are considered imperative, if learners of English as a second language, must communicate effectively in English like the native speakers. English has today become a world language. Research has shown that English is the first language of about Three hundred (300) million people (inner circle) known as the norm- providing, (UK and US) in Britain, America, Australia, New Zealand and Canada. It is also an additional language of hundreds of millions of people in many other countries, (Outer circle) referred to as norm-developing, of the world where English is used, either as a second language or as a foreign language. There are others users of English (Expanding circle) known as norm-dependent [1].

In Africa, especially West Africa, and the Caribbean, for

example, English is not just an additional language, but a second language that has assumed the position of an official language. English Language, especially in Nigeria, has become the principallingua Franca of educated Nigerians, the principal medium of instruction in Nigeria's educational system, wider communication and of literary expression, more importantly it functions as the language of official business and serves as a vital link between the various ethnic groups in Nigeria. It is simply the language of unification (Omotoyinbo, 2020) One of the implications of these tremendous official functions that English performs in Nigeria, is that, learners of English as a second language in Nigeria, and as a leading world language, have to face the difficult task of learning to speak English in such a way as to communicate effectively, not only with Nigerians but also with all other speakers of English in the world. Though English is Nigeria's official language and the principal medium through which Nigerians interact with the rest of the world, most speakers of English in Nigeria find it difficult to communicate effectively in English. One of the problems that these speakers usually encounter is the pronunciation of the English sounds, especially those that do not occur in some or all of the Nigeria Languages.

What these speakers usually do whenever they come across English words that have these sounds, therefore, is to replace them with similar sounds in the Nigerian languages that they can

easily pronounce. As Bamgbose (2004) puts it: The first notable aspect of English language is the way it has been nativized... this includes substitution of Nigeria Language; vowels and consonants for English ones... (pp. 20-21). The reason may not be far from the fact that the Yoruba consonant inventory is just fifteen in number and they are: /t/ /d/ /b/ /f/ /gb/ /kp/ /ʃ/ /s/ /l/ /r/ /m/ /i/ /j/ /k/ /h/. While the vowel sounds are just seven which are: /a/ /e/ /e/ /i/ /o/ /o/ /u/ as against Twenty- Four (24) consonant sounds and Twenty Vowel sounds of the English Language.

Egbe, opines that...The Nigerian user of English language chooses from his inventory those sounds which he shares with RP speakers, and then makes a convenient substitution where no equivalence exists... (pp. 90) According to Adegbiya, it was discovered that non-specialised teachers revealed an average of 40 mistakes out of every 100 words, 40 words were wrongly pronounced. It is important to note that the percentages of error range from a minimum of 23% to the highest of 58% and 64%. Also, the hundreds of ethnic groupings in Nigeria have characteristic speech patterns and each of these different dialects has its own area of deficiency [2-4].

For instance: An Osun indigene of the Yorubas in the western part of Nigeria, has problem with the following sounds, absent in Yoruba consonants: /ʃ/, /v/ etc. For the word "Sugar": They pronounce /suga/ instead of /ʃugə/. For "Very" They pronounce /feri/ instead of /veri/; An Urobo man in the Eastern part of Nigeria has problem with /r/. For a word like "Pray" He pronounces /plei/ for /prei/; while an Hausa man in the Northern part of Nigeria, has problem with /f/; for a word like "Fifty" an Hausa speaker of English pronounces /pipty/ for /fifti/. This is as a result of mother tongue influence on their pronunciation.

Moreover, users of English who speak Hausa as their mother tongue, for example, find the pronunciation of /f/ very difficult. Therefore, whenever they come across English words in which /f/ occur, they usually replace it with /p/. This substitution of /p/ for /f/ can, however, cause a distortion of the intended meaning of the speaker's message. A Hausa man who goes to a shop to buy a 'fan', for example, will certainly be presented with a 'pan' if he says "I want to buy a pan" instead of "I want to buy a fan". Similarly, a Yoruba man who substitutes /f/ for /v/ in a word because he is unable to pronounce /v/ correctly will certainly destroy the meaning of his message. If, for example, a Yoruba speaker says, "I bought a fan yesterday" instead of "I bought a van yesterday", the hearers will definitely miss the intended meaning of the speaker's message. The same is applicable to an Urhobo speaker of English language, who says "I want to pray" instead of "I want to play" because of his inability to pronounce /l/ correctly. The hearer will definitely take the message to mean "he wants to pray" and not "to play". The original meaning of the message is therefore distorted. To communicate effectively, one should learn the correct pronunciation of these English sounds and distinguish them from one another as they occur in English. Azikwe, pointed out that when a learner becomes competent in a language he/she reads, comprehends the texts written, and is able to speak that language, he will be able to express him/her views effectively. This seems very true. However, Learners

of English as a second language, should have it at the back of their minds that English Alphabet is different from English sounds. Closely related is the problem of identifying the various speech-sounds when they occur in words. Each of the English sounds is represented by specific letters of the English Alphabet [5]. A particular English sound may be represented by two or more letters in different English words. For example, /ʃ/ may be represented by the following letters in English words:

- (i) 's' as in sure /ʃuə/; Sugar /ʃugə/; Tension /tenʃn/;
- (ii) 'c' as in Ocean /əʊʃn/, Associate /əsəʊʃieit/ Appreciation /əpri:ʃieʃn/;
- (iii). 'ci' as in Special /spəʃl/; Racial /reiʃl/; Spacious /speiʃəs/

Though these letters represents /ʃ/ in spelling, they can also represent some other English sounds in words. 's' for example, can apart from representing /ʃ/, also represent /s/, /z/, /ʒ/ as shown in the following words:

- 's' as in Seat /si:t/; Case /keis/; Chiefs /tʃi:fs/ 'z' as in Trousers /traʊzəz/; Thousand /θaʊznd/ 'ʒ' as in Causal /kæʒəʊi/; Pleasure /pləʒə/
- Similarly, though "ch" is one of the spelling symbols of /ʃ/, it also represents /k/, /t/ or /dʒ/ in spelling:
- /k/ as in Chemistry /kemistri/; Character /kærəktə/;
- /tʃ/ as in Chest /tʃest/; Charm /tʃa:m/;
- /dʒ/ as in Sandwich /sænwidʒ/

When one spelling-symbol represents two or more sounds in different English words, most learners of English are usually confused when they come across such words. The problem these learners usually face, is that of identifying the particular sound that this spelling symbol represents out of the numerous sounds they are usually represented by it in various English words. It is therefore, necessary for a learner of English as a second language, to learn and master how to recognise the various speech sounds that occur in English as they are represented in various English words.

Another major problem that the speakers of English in Nigeria usually encounter is how to correctly pronounce the various English words they come across. Many speakers of English usually pronounce English words as they are spelt. The users of English in Nigeria should not continue to, as Egbe (1996) suggests, "Make the sounds of English as he perceives them from the graphic symbols..." since this may, in some cases, lead to wrong pronunciation. A learner of English as a second language, should bear in mind that, though each of the various English sounds is usually represented by specific letters of the English alphabet, there are some cases in which these sounds are not pronounced even when they are represented in spelling in words [2]. For example, /b/, /t/ and /p/, though are not pronounced especially when it comes before 't' or after 'm' at the end of the words like:

- Debt /det/; lamb /læm/; Doubt /daʊt/; tomb /tu:m/;
 - Subtle /stl/; comb /kəʊm/
- Similarly, though /t/ is usually

represented in spelling by letter /t/, it is not pronounced in some English words even when it occurs in these words. Some examples of these include: Castle /ka:sl/; Christmas /krɪsməs/, Often /ɔfn/; Apostle /əpɒsl/; Listen /lɪsn/; Sachet /sæʃei/, /p/, like /b/ and /t/, is not pronounced in some words, though it is represented by letter “p” in such words e.g Psalm /sa:m/; Empty /emti/; Pneumonia /nju:məʊniə/; Receipt /resi:t/, Psyche /saik/; Coup /ku:/

It is, therefore, misleading and wrong to pronounce these words as they are spelt. Many speakers of English in Nigeria, make this mistake because they are not aware of the fact that there are some circumstances in which some English sounds are not pronounced in words. It is therefore, important for learners of English to distinguish the circumstances in which these sounds are not pronounced.

Although most previous research has been conducted on the segmental level, recent studies show that supra-segmental may play a more important role in the acquisition of a second language phonological system. This study will therefore trace some supra-segmental difficulties in the area of “Stress and Intonation”

1.1. Stress

This is another aspect of English which gives terrible problems to most speakers of English in Nigeria. Over eighty percent (80%) of those who speak English in Nigeria, find it difficult to place the stress on the appropriate syllable in English words. For instance, the Yorubas place emphasis on words through syllable, in other words, the Yoruba mode of placing emphasis on words is syllable-termed e.g. ba- ba. (father); A-gba-la-gba (old person) etc

1.2. Intonation

One other important aspect of spoken English that gives terrible problems to speakers of English in Nigeria, and which, therefore, needs urgent attention is, intonation. Many speakers of English in Nigeria feel that they do not have to bother themselves to learn and understand English intonation and all its complexities, because they are not native speakers of English. Therefore, they do not have to use intonation the way the native speakers of English do. In spite of that, intonation still remains an important aspect of spoken English which speakers of English in Nigeria must learn, if they, in addition to giving significant meaning to what they say, must also understand the meaning of the utterances of others.

Though Nigerians may not be able to use English intonation as perfectly as the native speakers do, yet, it is necessary to learn it, since the knowledge of it will, at least, assist them to understand more correctly, the speech of other speakers of English in the world. This becomes doubly-important especially when one considers the fact that Nigerians are speaking English to communicate not only with Nigerians, but also with other speakers who consistently use English intonation to convey meaning. It should be stressed that any speaker of English who

is unable to use English intonation to convey meaning and understand the various shades of meaning that other speakers of English use of intonation to convey, will certainly be unable to communicate effectively in English. It is necessary for learners of English to learn and master how English intonation is used to convey meaning.

2. Statement of The Problem

2.1 Pronunciation Challenges Among Second Language Learners of English is Identified with Different Sources and Factors

The home and school environment are the major causes of these challenges. A child learns by imitating the older siblings and even the mother, and whatever language that is been used in the home is what the child learns and it is known that, the language of the home is the mother tongue i.e. dialect, which is definitely not English Language. This will go a long way in affecting the child that grows to an adult.

The school that is even meant to help the child out of this dilemma, can be termed a “slaughter house”. Even the teachers, mainly those who are not specialists in the field of phonetics and phonology, but, currently teaching English in some secondary schools, face some difficulties in their pronunciation.

2.2. Research Questions:

1. How do we identify sounds in English?
2. How do we differentiate between a sound and an alphabet?
3. What are the distinctive features of sounds?
4. Why is pronunciation aspect of English a difficult task?
5. Why do learners of English as a second language replace every difficult sound with the Nigerian equivalent?

Factors Affecting Pronunciation (i) Age; (ii) Mother tongue influence (iii) Personality (iv) The appropriate use of stress (v) Intonation

Also, the organs of speech and speech production shall be looked into briefly.

2.3. Age

Age has been a hot issue in language acquisition and learning since it was introduced; it has received a fair amount of attention and research as a controversial factor. It may make adults find acquisition more difficult than children do and that they probably will not achieve native-like proficiency. The role of age is found to be more prominent in pronunciation than in other areas, it was Lenneberg, who proposed the critical period hypothesis (CPH) suggesting that there is a period of time when language learning is more successful than the period to the completion of cerebral lateralization of language function which takes place at puberty [6]. The CPH is still disputed in many languages acquisition studies; for instance, Chiswick and Miller, define the CPH as a sharp decline in learning outcome with age. They add that to ensure a native-like proficiency, one has to acquire the language before the critical period ends [7]. In response to Lenneberg point of view, Johnson and Newport (1989) conclude that they do not find a direct relationship between performance and age learning throughout childhood, with a rapid decline

in performance marking the end of critical period; instead, in their study, performance increasingly declined from about age seven until adulthood. According to CPH, there is a biological or neurological period, which ends around the age of 12; after which it becomes extremely difficult to attain the mastery of the second language, especially pronunciation.

3. Mother Tongue Influence

First language is complete as compared to second language learning in the sense that learners have no choice to leave certain aspect of L1 as they need it for their daily life communication. As far as the former is concerned, L1 learners have no difficulty in producing most words in their language after the age of puberty because it is only one linguistic system that the learner's mind tries to understand and he/she is exposed to the language all the time; where as in the learning of L2, L1 features play a kind of role which results in a clash between the system of L1 and that of L2.

Odin (1989), puts it, there is little doubt that native language phonetics and phonology are powerful influences on second language pronunciation. Whenever learners of English as a second language come across English words that they cannot produce or pronounce, they quickly replace them with similar sounds in the Nigerian languages that they can easily pronounce. As Bamgbose (1995) puts it:

The first notable aspect... is the way it has been nativized... This includes substitution of Nigerian language vowels and consonants for English ones... (pp. 20-21).

Egbe also opines that The Nigerian users of English chooses from hi inventory those sounds which he shares with RP speakers and then makes a convenient substitution where no equivalence exist... (p.90)

Many speakers or users of English who speak Hausa as their mother tongues, for example, do find the pronunciation of /f/ very difficult. Therefore, whenever they come across English word in which /f/ occurs, they usually replace it with /p/. This substitution of /p/ for /f/ can, however, cause a distortion of the intended meaning of the speaker message [2].

Avery and Ehrlich, claim that learners transfer their L1 sound patterns into the second language and this transfer is likely to cause foreign accents. It is reflected by the mispronunciations of words by non- native speakers [8]. In this respect, Avery and Ehrlich, point out that the second system of the native language can influence the learner's pronunciation of a target language in at least three ways. First, when there is a sound in the target language which is absent from the learners native sound inventory or vice- verse, learners may not be able to produce or even perceive sounds. Sound, when the rules of combining sounds into words i.e. [phonotactic constraints/rules] are different in the learner's mother tongue from the target language, they cause problems for learners because these rules are language specific as they vary from one language to another. Thirdly, since the rhythm and melody of a language determine its patterns of stress and intonation, learners may transfer these patterns of stress and

intonation; learners may transfer these patterns into the target language.

The Appropriateness of Stress is another aspect of English which posts great problems to most speakers of English in Nigeria. Over eighty (80) percent of those who speak English in Nigeria find it difficult to place the stress on the appropriate syllable in English words. Banjo (1995) asserts that,

... In phonology, the appropriate use of English stress and intonation is the final hurdle which the vast majority of speakers of English as a second language never manage to cross...(p. 12).

Egbe, also has this to say on the use of stress in the stress in the English of Nigerian speakers owl strengthening or weakening according to whether or not there is stress pronounce is unknown in Nigerian English [2]. What Nigerians generally do is to transfer to English some aspects of their tonal languages and so tend to have a fixed pronunciation for every word. Since tones in the indigenous languages are phonemic, there is a tendency for Nigerian to treat stress in English as if it was phonemic. The general pattern therefore is for them to stress equally almost every syllable in a word (p.92).

Stress is, however, one of the most important aspects of spoken English which speakers of English in Nigeria must learn, if they must speak English to communicate effectively. Some speakers of English in Nigeria, are in some cases unable to communicate effectively because of inability to use stress correctly. According to Roach [9].

Incorrect stress placement is the major cause of intelligibility problems for foreign learners and is therefore a subject that needs to be treated very seriously (p. 91).

Kujore, also asserts that the ability to identify the position of the principal stress in the word and to apply the stress properly constitutes major achievements in proficiency in oral English (p.ix). If a speaker is, for example, unable to place stress on the appropriate syllable in a word, it may, in some cases affect the meaning of the word, thereby distorting the intended meaning of the entire utterance in which the word occurs [10].

4. Intonation

One other important aspect of spoken English that gives terrible problems to speakers of English in Nigeria, and which, therefore, needs urgent attention, is intonation. Many speakers of English in Nigeria feel that they do not have to bother themselves to learn and understand English intonation and all its complexities because they are not native speakers of English and, therefore, do not have to use English intonation the way the native speakers of English do. Egbe notes that It is debatable whether or not Nigerian English meaning to use all these devices, since the methods of communicating information in speech vary from one speech community in another the specific attitude that the various intonation pattern convey will to a large extent depend on the linguistic habits of the individual speech community. (pp. 95-96) Egbe (1989) goes on to say that, rather than using intonation, many Nigerians rely on other devices to convey

specific attitudes many variations in the nuclear turn (e.g. the rise- fall and fall-rise tunes) and the over-all pitch movement in a tune group found in RP... are completely absent... Generally, speakers... rely on high pitch and amplitude of voice, instead of intonation, to express attitude like anger and surprise (pp. 35-36). In spite of that, intonation still remains an important aspect of spoken English which speakers of English in Nigeria must learn, if they, in addition to giving significant meaning to what they say, must also understand the meaning of the utterances of all other speakers of English in the World. According to O'Connor, intonation is one of the most effective meaning of conveying meaning in English tune plays an important part in English. We can say a word group definitely or we can say it hesitantly, we can say it angrily or kindly, we can say it with interest or without interest and these differences are largely made by the tunes we use: the words do not change their meaning but the tune we use adds something to the words, and what it add is the speaker's feelings at that moment; this way of using tunes is called intonation (p.108).

Egbe (1979), also acknowledges this fact, but adds that, the speech of the Nigerian speaker may not, in terms of the use of intonation, be able to convey much meaning to the native speaker since he does not use intonation the way the native speaker does. In a sentence of Nigerian English, equal attention is paid to every syllable in the sentence, changes in tempo, in tune, and in voice quality in the manner of RP English and non-existent [2,11]. There are no accentual patterns that can differentiate content from function words and so to the native speakers, who will not leave his listener in doubt as to which words or syllable in the sentence he has made to carry the most important information, the Nigerian English intonation pattern will be nothing but monotonous and not quite informative (p. 96).

We have to mention at this point that, even if Nigerians will not, or cannot, use English intonation as perfectly as the native speakers, it is necessary for them to learn it since the knowledge of it, will, at least, assist them to understand more correctly the speech of other speakers of English in the world. This becomes doubly important especially when one considers the fact that Nigerians are speaking English to communicate not only with fellow Nigerians, but also with other speakers of English all over the world, including the native speakers, who consistently use English intonation to convey meaning. Human beings normally communicate through speech or writing (Jones, 2006).

5. Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework is rooted in Skinner's (1957), theory of Behaviourism which treated the acquisition of verbal and skills as environmentally- determined stimulus-response

behaviour. This method known as the Audio-lingual-method, requires intensive oral drilling. Popular opinion regarding the place of pronunciation training in the ESL or EFL curriculum has ebbed and flowed along with the historical framework of language learning theories and methodologies. Prior to the popularity of the direct methods in the late Nineteenth century, pronunciation received little overt focus with the language classroom. According to Aufderhaar, both the direct and grammar translation methods were more emphasized when there was a sudden and urgent need for qualified interpreters and intelligence to learn English with the advent of World war Two [12]. Brown (1997), as cited in Aufderhaar, explained that: "In contrast to the grammar translation-method, pronunciation was now considered to be of the highest priority, with phonetic and articulation explicitly taught" This is simply showing the importance of the teaching of pronunciation in the use of English language among ESL speakers and learners of the language [12].

6. Research Design

The research design to be used for this study is the descriptive survey design. The research is also concerned more with individual, to help users/learners of English. The design looks at among others, the causes of deficiency in the pronunciation of the English words by undergraduates after they had exerted their effects on another variety.

7. Sample

For accurate sampling, five departments are used: (1). Linguistics and Languages (2). Mass communication (3) English and literary studies (4). English Education (5). History and International Studies

From these Five (5) Departments, Ten (10) students were randomly selected in each and they responded to the questionnaire which was the main instrument used to gather information.

8. Instrument

The questionnaire which is the main research instrument, consists of two sections: Section A consists of personal data of informant, while section B consists of ten (10) research questions. The aim of the questions in the questionnaire is to determine how much informants deviate from the Received Pronunciation (RP) variety of English and to ascertain such deviations are as a result of interference or language transfer of their first language (L1) or mother tongue (MT) among other reasons.

9. Data Analysis

The procedure for data analysis for this study is percentage and statistical table (T-square)

Response	Number	Percentage (%)
Agree	45 (2)	90
Disagree	4 (2)	8
Undecided	1 (2)	2
Total	50 (2)	100

Table 1: Student first language or mother tongue plays a significant role in his/her phonological acquisition of a second language.

Table 1 shows that ninety (90) respondents supported the fact that mother tongue plays a significant role in the phonological acquisition of a second language learner, eight (8) respondents

disputed this fact while two (2) respondents were neutral i.e. they neither agree nor disagree.

Response	Number	Percentage (%)
Agree	38 (2)	76
Disagree	4 (2)	8
Undecided	1 (2)	16
Total	50 (2)	100

Table 2: Language in contact is a cause of wrong pronunciation of English words among undergraduates

Table 2 shows that 76% respondents support the fact that language in contact is the cause of wrong pronunciation of English words among undergraduate, 8% respondents disagreed while 16% respondents were neutral.

Response	Number	Percentage (%)
Agree	50 (2)	100
Disagree	0	0
Total	50 (2)	100

Table 3: In order to pronounce English sounds correctly, students require a detailed description of the sound system of English

Table 3 shows that 100 respondents agree to the fact that students require a detailed description of the sounds of English to be able

to pronounce English sounds and words correctly.

Response	Number	Percentage (%)
Agree	46 (2)	92
Disagree	3 (2)	6
Undecided	1 (2)	2
Total	50 (2)	100

Table 4: Effective teaching of English sounds and words can eradicate the problems of wrong pronunciation among Nigeria undergraduates.

Table 4 shows that Ninety-two (92) percent supported that effective teaching of English sounds and words can eradicate the problems of wrong pronunciation among Nigerian undergraduates. Six (6) percent respondents refuted the claim while Two (2) percent respondents were neither in support of the claim nor against it.

the Nigerian languages that they can easily pronounce [13]. This causes a major set-back in their pronunciation of English sounds. Teaching the differences in the sounds of mother tongue language and the target language will make pronunciation of the target language sounds easier for learners.

10. Discussion of Findings

Table 1 shows a larger percentage of those who supported that Mother Tongue plays a significant negative role in the phonological acquisition of a second language learner. The implication of the finding of this study could be aligned with the assertion of Bamigbose, that Nigerian speakers of English Language replace the English sounds with similar sounds in

Table 2 shows a significant support of the fact that language in contact like pidgin, creole and diglossia causes wrong pronunciation of English words among undergraduates. The reason may be, among other things, that the languages have little or nothing to do with the observations of the rules of grammar of English language and sounds. This finding is in agreement with that of Egbe, who affirms that language in contact can cause wrong pronunciation and grammatical structure of

English language [2]. For example, “What is wrong with you?” in English becomes: “Wetin de do you?” in pidgin. How do we transcribe the pidgin version of the above sentence? The transcription of words, learners of English language should note, makes pronunciation easier and helps one pronounce certain English words correctly.

In Table 3, majority of the respondents were in support of the fact that to pronounce English sounds and words correctly, a detailed description of the English sounds should be taught perfectly. This is in accordance with Jones (2006), that if English sounds are perfectly taught, it will assist learners to understand, more correctly, the speech of other speakers of English globally, not excluding the native speakers. In order to reduce the challenges of pronunciation among learners of English as a second language, phonetics as a subject should be included in our school curriculum. English is a core subject, but phonetics, as an aspect of English, should be considered greatly and it must be taught in details for a better understanding of what this aspect of English is all about. Learners should be pruned in the pronunciation of English words and sounds.

In Table 4, most of the respondents support the effective teaching of English sounds and words to reduce the problems of wrong pronunciation. This is in consonance with Roach, affirmation that mastering the use of stress, one of the most important aspects of spoken English, is mandatory [9]. Nigerian learners and speakers of English Language are to master it to communicate effectively and intelligibly. English is seen as a prestige language in Nigeria. It has established itself as the language of upward mobility in the country, meaningful use of the language is therefore imperative.

11. Conclusion

It is unarguably true that many Nigerian students as well as many Nigeria speakers of English Language, find it cumbersome adjusting to the pronunciation acumen of the original owners of the English Language, the language still remains an indispensable language of instruction in schools and colleges in Nigeria. It is this language that enables students to communicate intelligibly with the wider world. English is also the most developed language that can be used to study scientific and engineering courses; it is the Nigeria National language. It is the general language used in Nigeria, due to the fact that Nigeria is made up of over two hundred (500) different cultures, tribes and languages. English language has served and still serving as the main communication medium between all tribes. By and large, it is the belief of this paper that, if more efforts are put in place by government, providing all necessary materials, and parents, buying recommended books for their children/wards and teachers endeavouring to employ the correct pronunciation inside and outside the classroom especially when conversing with students; and if other stake-holders cooperate in this vein, there will be improvement in the pronunciation ability of students. Finally, it is believed among other steps, that a detailed description of English sounds and effective teaching of the sounds and words, will reduce the problem of the pronunciation of English words to the barest minimum [14-19].

12. Recommendations

Based on the findings made of this study, the following recommendations are made:

- Stakeholders in Nigeria’s educational system including teachers, school owners and government should ensure that phonetics as an aspect of English language is included in the planning and implementation of the curriculum. This will lead to the success and intellectual development of the child in the area of pronunciation.
- Enough textbooks on phonetics and phonology should be given to schools and should be used effectively by teachers and students.
- Competent teachers should be employed for different levels i.e. infant, crèche, nursery/primary, secondary, because, that is the foundation on which every other intellectual ability stands.
- Also, textbooks on English and communication skill should be recommended for students from primary to secondary level.
- Phonetics and Phonology as aspects of English Language should be included in the school curriculum as a core subject and be taught effectively aside English Language

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