

## Investigation into English and Arabic Exist and Non-exist Vowel Sounds which Cause Problems to some University EFL Students in Khartoum State

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### Abstract:

*The purpose of this study is to investigate English and Arabic exist and non-exist vowel sounds, which cause problems to some Sudanese university students studying EFL in Khartoum State. The sample of this study was 130 university students from three Sudanese universities. The data was collected by interviews to some 3<sup>rd</sup> year university students. The researcher used the descriptive statistical method and the data was analysed by using SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Science). The findings of the study showed that third year university students face problems in pronouncing certain long and short vowel sounds. The differences between English and Arabic phonemics system lead pronunciation problems in exist and non-exist vowels sounds.*

**Key words:** (SA) Standard Arabic Language. **اللغة العربية الفصحى.**

(L1), First Language. **اللغة الأم.**

(L2), Second language. **اللغة الثانية.**

(EVS) English Vowel Sounds. **الأصوات الانجليزية المتحركة.**

(AVS) Arabic Vowel Sounds **الأصوات العربية المتحركة**

## **INTRODUCTION:**

Standard Arabic is the first official language in all Sudanese written documents. It's the official language and the language of the most Sudanese daily life communication skills. On the other hand, Arabic and English languages are both used in education system.

Learning and producing English vowel sounds are great challenges to Sudanese university students, who study English as EFL in Khartoum State. So, vowel sounds are more difficult to learn. Ladefoged,(2001. P 12) (1) states:

"Vowel sounds may be specified in terms of the position of the highest point of the tongue and the position of the lips".

There are many factors that can affect learning English as EFL in Sudan; one of them is the difference between English and Arabic phonemic system. Moosa ( 1972) (2) states that:

“the Arab learners strongly build the phonological features of Arabic; this makes them encounter many difficulties in distinguishing sound systems between a native language and the second language”.

Researchers and linguists always link such problems with the complexity of the vowels sound system that exists in English and the inconsistency of its pronunciation. Cruttenden (1994)(3) state that:

“the inconsistency of English vowels causes difficulties for other language learners of English e.g. if we take for instance ‘o’ in some words like some, move, home, women, in each word it has different pronunciation as /ʌ/, /u:/, /əʊ/, /i/ so the English learners who don't have the mastery of the pronunciation of such words will also face difficulties”.

On the other side, words such as book, butcher, could, wolf etc in all of them the letters (oo, u, ou, o) have the same

pronunciation /u:/, so in the first example we have same letters with different pronunciation, and in the other one we have different letters with same pronunciation.

Sudanese EFL learners confuse to pronounce words that contain long and short vowel sounds, e.g. pen and pin, sit and set, let and late, mat and mate. According to Flege (1995) (4) Stated that:

“segmental errors like these frequently occur in ESL/EFL due to differences between L1 and L2”.

The mother tongue interferes in pronouncing vowel sounds so most of the Sudanese students as EFL learners pronounce sounds which are near to their mother tongue L1 Arabic. Ladefoged (2001); Carter & Nunan, (2001) (1) aim that:

“mother tongue has clear influence on learning L2 pronunciation. Where L1 and L2 rules are in conflict, errors are expected to be committed by foreign learners”.

Inconsistency of English vowel sounds is one of the most important problems faced by EFL learners in general and the Sudanese students in particular. As a vowel sound has more than one pronunciation. Cruttenden (1994) (3) states that:

“the main difficulty for all those whose own languages have a less complex vowel system, lies in the establishment of the qualitative oppositions”.

The effect of the spelling on pronunciation skills, this problem is related to the differences in the spelling systems between English and Arabic languages. So in Arabic, it is very easy to pronounce a word from the written text, just by looking at it. Arabic language doesn't have silent letter. In contrast, English has many silent sounds in many positions in the front e.g., know, hour, and in the middle, sign and reign, and at the end: column and autumn. Many words in English have letters, which are not pronounced.

## **STUDY PROBLEM:**

Some University students study English as EFL in Khartoum State face problems in pronouncing correct long and short vowel sounds. The vowel sounds don't have certain places and manners of articulations. As a result, pronouncing vowel sounds depend on the movement of the tongue inside the mouth, front, middle or back. Other reasons there are differences between L1 and L2, and there are some phonemes exist and non-exist between the English and Arabic languages.

## **STUDY QUESTIONS:**

For the purpose of this study tries to answer the following questions:

- 1-What are the English short vowel sounds that cause problems to some university students in Khartoum State?
- 2-What are the English long vowel sounds that cause some problems to university students in Khartoum State?
- 3- What are the phonemes that exist or do not-exist between the English and Arabic language and cause problems to university students?

## **HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY:**

In this study the following hypotheses have been formed:

- 1-Some university students in Khartoum State have problems in pronouncing words that containing English short vowel sounds.
- 2-Some university students in Khartoum State face problems in pronouncing words containing English long vowel sounds.

3-There are some English vowel sounds which exist and do non-exist in Arabic and are likely to cause problems to university students.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW:**

English vowel sounds are sounds produced through oral chamber without any obstruction of flow of air in the mouth. The production of English vowel sounds are classified according to the movements of the tongue front, back, or middle, rounding lips shapes and the jaws positions to produce vowel sounds.

## **COMPARISON AND CONTRAST BETWEEN ENGLISH AND ARABIC**

English has twelve vowel sounds, five long vowels which are /i:/ as in beat ,/a:/ as in pass , /ɜ:/ as in bird , /u:/ as in food ,and /ɔ:/ as in board . As well, there are seven short vowel sounds which are /i , as in pin , e, as in men /æ/, as in man, /ə/ as in sailor /ʌ/ as in rush /ɒ/ as in gone, and /ʊ/ as in pull /. In contrast Modern Standard Arabic language has thirty six phonemes. There are six vowel sounds. eg. /a, i, u, a: , i:, u:/. Three of them are short /a, i, u,/ and the other three are long vowels which are / a: , i:, u:/.

### **English long front vowel /i:/ and Arabic long vowel /i/**

When we compare English and Arabic languages both have long vowel sounds. English has five long vowels and Arabic language has six long vowels. The Arabic three long vowel sounds are called "Hourouf Almaad" which are Al aleef, Alwaw, and Alyaa" (حروف المد) and the other three are short.

To compare English and Arabic long front vowel sounds, there is a big difference between English long vowel sound /i:/ and Arabic long vowel /i/. English long vowel sound /i:/ can be

written as phonemic sound is pronounced by tongue moving up near to the hard palate near close, along the side of the mouth. The lips are spread and the jaws are narrow. Example, beat mean, leak, heel, teen, neat, least, free, leaf, sea, field, siege. seize, receive. In comparing, Arabic long vowel /i/ is represented by Arabic letter ( ya,a , ي ) As in Arabic word (Yaad يد hand ) and (Neel نيل -Nile).

### **Long front central vowel /a:/ and Arabic Long Vowel / æ /**

This English long vowel sound /a:/ is formed by the back of the tongue is full open the lips are neutral the jaws shape is lowered to wide. e.g. pass, fast, hard, barn, farm.. In contrast, This is one of the Arabic long vowel is written as a symbol as /a/ and is represented by Arabic letter( الألف Aleef) which is produced by glottal and the lips are moderated. As in Arabic name ( أمال Amal )

### **Long close back vowel /u:/ and Arabic long vowel /u/**

This long vowel is produced when the back of the tongue is close situation the lips are rounded.. It is available in the words for example, coed, rude, shoed food, rude, soup and June". Similarly, this Arabic phoneme /u:/ represented by Arabic letter ( /و / waw) as in ( Taweel طويل long).

### **Long half-open back vowel/ɔ:/**

This long vowel is pronounced the back of the tongue is full open position, the lips are neutral and the jaws are medium. For example, wall, cord, horse, sword, more, before. In contrast, there is not Arabic sound or letter matches this English long sound. So it does not exist in Arabic language.

### **Long Central Vowel /ɜ:/**


This long vowel is articulated by the centre of the tongue is half-close and half-open position, the lips are neutral spread

and the jaws are narrow. For example, search, bird, first, nurse. In contrast, there is a not Arabic sound or letter matches this English long sound, so it is not exist in Arabic language.

### **English Short Vowels:**

Short vowels are simple vowels, which are made without any stoppage of the air in the mouth cavity. There are three short English vowels which are /i/, /a/ and /ʊ/ are scripted by diacritical marks which are written above the letter in case (/a / Fat'haa) and /ʊ/ Dham'ah ) or below in case of (/i/Kasr'ah). The other four vowels sounds do not have matched sound in Arabic vowel sounds.

### **Short close to half close front to central /i/**

This short vowel is produced when the front of the tongue is near the half-close position, and the lips are loosely spread the jaws are narrow to medium. e.g. hit, rich and private. sit, bid, and pin, and hill. In the contrary, in Arabic language this short vowel sound /i/ is replaced this by a mark under Arabic letter known as ( /  / Ksr'ah a mark under a letter ). It changes the sound of the Arabic letter and the meaning too. E.g. (Sara سرّ happy ) ( seer سر secret ) .

### **The shot half close front vowel /e/**

This short vowel is pronounced by front of the tongue is raised in mid-way between half-close and half-open, the lips are unrounded and the jaws are medium. E.g. head, dead, desk, and ten. In comparison, in Arabic standard language there is no phoneme matches this Arabic sound.

### **The short half open front vowel /æ/**

This short vowel is formed with the front of the tongue is in half-open position and makes slightly contact with back of the tongue ,the lips are neutral and the jaws are medium to wide

e.g. sat, pat, pack.. In reality, in Arabic standard language there is no phoneme matches the Arabic ones.

### **The short half open central vowel /ʌ/**

This short vowel is pronounced by the front back of the tongue is full open, the lips are neutral and the jaws are wide. e.g. mud, cut, sun, drug.. Conversely, in Arabic standard language there is no similar phoneme to this English one.

### **The short open back vowel /ɒ / And Arabic short vowel /a/**

This vowel is pronounced by the back of the tongue is i full open position, and the lips are open rounded and the jaws are medium wide. It is found in the words e.g. dock, lost, box, and dog. On other hand, This Arabic short vowel /a/ which known as (Fat'ha الفتحة ) is written as a symbol in front of the Arabic / ا / letter to change the sounds and the meaning at the same time. As in (taba طَب). Which means "treated" and (Teeb طَب ) which means "medicine".

### **The short close to half close back vowel /ɔ/**

This short vowel is the central-back of the tongue is just in half-close position and the lips are slightly rounded and the jaws are medium. It founds in words like e.g. look, wood, wolf, and woman. Similarly, in Standard Arabic we can find this phoneme which means (Dhamah الضمة). It is written above the Arabic alphabets in Arabic word (Auud اُء come back). It changes the meaning of a single word and sound as in( Adaa اء count) (Ouwd اء retuned or come back).

### **The short central vowel /ə/**

This sound is called schwa. It has a half close open central of the tongue position and lips are neutral and the jaws are medium. It appears in the words annoy, sailor, collar. It represents the weak sound forms in English. As in admit,



lemon, banana, obey, America. appear, sooner, measure, Africa, flatter ,colour, picture , murderer. There is no similar sound in Standard Arabic matches this English short vowel sound.

### **Previous Studies:**

There are many studies in different countries that have been done in this field of Phonetics especially in pronunciation. Here are some international and local studies about pronunciation problems to Second language Learners or FEL.

**(Elkhair Muhammad Idriss Hassan,2014, Sudan University of Science and Technology, Sudan) In his topic Pronunciation Problems: A Case Study of English Language Students.**

The study problem of this research is that some Sudanese students study English as EFL face problems in pronunciation of English vowel and consonant sounds. The researcher used tape recording, classroom observation and questionnaire at Sudan University of Science and Technology and arrived to the following conclusion:

- 1- Many SSEs mispronounce vowels because each English vowel has more than one way of pronunciation. Many SSEs confuse the different pronunciations of each of the vowels (a, e, i, o, u). In a word like 'obstacle' many students pronounce /ei/ or /i/ or /æ/ instead of /ə/.
- 2-Also the pronunciation error by the SSEs is noticeable in a word such as 'women', so they fail to pronounce the target sound of the two vowels /i/. Also in words such as 'service', 'city', 'promise' the students tend to pronounce the short vowel /i/ as the diphthong /ai/ as it is pronounced in 'invite'.
- 3-There are some English words which are spelt differently, but pronounced the same e.g. hi 'city', 'private' 'English', 'women', 'busy' we have five different

vowels (y, a, e, o, u) all of them are pronounced the same as /i/. This inconsistency in the English sounds leads many SSEs to a mispronunciation.

**(Sanna Izaddin , 2007 , Sudan University of Science and technology, Sudan) (Pronunciation Problems of Sudanese learners of English)**

The statement problem of this study is Sudanese students in Sudan University of Science and Technology face problems in pronunciation. They confused in pronunciation of the most English words that do not have sounds in Sudanese Arabic. Also, they do not differentiate between the vowel sounds which have more than one way of pronunciation and they replaced /b/ by /p/. In her research she used Descriptive Statistic Method and arrived to the following results:

- (1) Sudanese learners are mispronounced some English sounds like the soft "C" /s/ and hard "C"/ k! In some words like "concern" some Sudanese learners pronounce /k! instead of / s / Also soft " g" /d3/ and hard "g" /g/ are problematic for the learners, so they sometimes pronounce /g/ it instead of /d3/ as in "engagement".
- (2) The interference of the mother tongue and sound systems between Arabic (generally) and Sudanese Spoken Arabic (particularly) are behind many pronunciation errors spelling of some English words lead many Sudanese learners to wrongly guess the pronunciation.
- (3) On the other hand, many Sudanese learners mispronounce vowels because each English vowel has more than one way of pronunciation many Sudanese learners confuse the different pronunciations of each of the vowels (a, e, l, o, u) In a word like „obstacle“ many students pronounce /ei/ or /i / „or // instead of /a/.

(4) There are some English words which are spelt differently ,but pronounced the same like "city", "private" "English", "women", "busy" we have five different vowels (y, a, e, o, u) all of them are pronounced the same. This inconsistency in the English sounds leads many Sudanese learners to mispronunciation.

**(Ezzeldin Mahmoud Tajeldin Ali, 2013, Khartoum University, Sudan) Title :- Pronunciation problems: Acoustic analysis of the English vowels produced by Sudanese learners of English.**

The study problem in this research is Sudanese students face problems in pronouncing English vowel sounds. The differences between L(1) , L(2) and the way a language is taught has some effect on the learning of English. The researcher used and Experimental Method recordings were made on a laptop computer using Adobe Audition software ,and arrived to the following conclusion:-

- 1- There are few errors made in the pronunciation of the tense vowel /i /. This is probably because the Sudanese speakers have similar equivalents for such vowels.
- 2- Sudanese speakers' vowels are mostly distinguished with lower formant values. The speakers need to enhance their vowel inventory to produce less foreign-accented English vowels.
- 3- Sudanese learners show a correspondence to the duration norms of the native speakers. However, some vowel durations are slightly lengthened, probably due to the circumstance that the learners tend to produce English vowels with their L1 productive strategies.
- 4-Differences between L1 and L2 present part of the causes of the production problems of English by Sudanese university learners of English. The lack of L2

phonemic knowledge also forms a second factor which adds to the problems.

**(Mohammed Ahmed Ali, 2010. Alzaeem Al Azharey University, Sudan) Title, Pronunciation problems for EFL learners in Sudanese curriculums.**

The study problem of this research is that Sudanese EFL learners face a shortage in pronunciation exercises in Sudanese English curricula. The researcher used and Experimental Method recordings were made on a laptop computer, and arrived to the following conclusion:-

- 1- Sudanese students' curriculums were empty of pronunciation exercises.
- 2- Most of EFL in Sudan face problems in pronouncing English words contain English Vowel Sounds.
- 3-There are problems in pronouncing English affricate sounds /tʃ/ and /dʒ/
- 4-There are problems of pronouncing Fricative Sounds, /f/ /v/
- 5-Students face problems in pronouncing bilabial sounds /b/ and /p/.
- 6 There are difficulties face Sudanese students when pronounce English Dental Fricative Sounds, / θ/and / ð/./ ʃ/ and /ʒ etc.

**(Liang-Chen Lin, 2014, Texas A&M University-Kingsville, U.S.A) In his topic (Understanding Pronunciation Variations Facing ESL Students).**

The statement problem is that different students from different culture backgrounds Vietnamese, Japanese, Chinese, Spanish and Arabian in America face problems in English articulation. The researcher asked five groups direct question what are some common pronunciation variations facing ESL students? The researcher arrived to the following results:

First, the common problem of Vietnamese speakers of English is mainly the pronunciation of “final consonants.” Second, Japanese speakers of English tend to add some vowels after English words which end with consonants according to their basic CV structure. Third, Arabic speakers learning English tend to insert a vowel sound when the stems have onset consonant clusters for the purpose of making the articulation conform to Arabic syllable structure. Fourth, the common pronunciation problems of Spanish-speaking learners of English mainly fall on long vowel /ā/, consonants /d, th, v/ and /b/.Fifth, Chinese-speaking students have problems in pronouncing /θ/, /ð/, /r/, /ʃ/ and /v/.

**( Mona Wahbey, 2006, Tanta University ,Egypt) In her research (Pronunciation problems that face Egyptian Students as ESL)**

The study problem of this study is that Tanta University students in Egypt face problems in pronunciation consonant and vowel sounds. The students used L (1) for sounds that are not match or equivalent in their L (2) In her research she used a descriptive Statistic Method and arrived to the following results:

- 1-Egyptian students face problem when they pronounce English bilabial sounds, /b/ and /p/.
- 2-Egyptian students mispronounce fricative sounds /f/ and /v/.
- 3-There is a problem in pronouncing English affricate sounds /tʃ/ and /dʒ/,
- 4-There are difficulties face Egyptian students when pronounce English dental fricative sounds, / θ/and / ð/.
- 5-Egyptian students do not mastering English plato alveolar sounds / ʃ / and /ʒ / and they cause many problems to them.

6-Egyption students face problem in pronouncing English words contain vowel sounds (a,e, o,u,i)

7-Egyptian student do not pay attention to suprasegmentals feature in general stress, and intonation.

**(Jalal Ahmed, 2011, Najran University Preparatory Year, Saudi Arabia) In his topic (Pronunciation Problems among Saudi Learners)**

The study problem of this research is preparatory year students in Najran University, Saudi Arabia face problems in pronunciation of some English consonant and vowel sounds. The researcher used An Experimental Method (Microphone and Recorder) to a chief the goals of his study. Eight students had been chosen randomly from Najran University Preparatory year. The researcher arrived to conclusion that:

1- Certain English consonant sounds are difficult to pronounce for Saudi learners. Most of the participants faced problems while pronouncing the consonant sounds, /p/, /d/, /v/, /tʃ/, /z/, and /ŋ/.

2-They pronounce /p/ as /b/ when it appears in the initial and final positions of a word. They pronounce /p/ as /b / when it appears in the medial or final positions.

3-According to his data /v/ is replaced by /f/ when it appears in the medial and final positions.

4-Most of the participants pronounce /tʃ/ as /ʃ/ when it appears in all three positions.

5-The /z/ sound is sometimes replaced by /ʃ/, /s/ or /z/, when it is in medial position, and when it is in final position it is pronounced as /g/.

6-Saudi students face problems in pronouncing words contain vowel sounds /e/ , /a/ , /ɜ:/, /ə/ and /ʌ/.

**(Abbas Pourhosein Gilakjani, 2012, Islamic Azad University, Iran) In his topic (A Study of Factors Affecting EFL Learners' English Pronunciation Learning and the Strategies for Instruction)**

There are some factors affect Iranian students learning English pronunciation as EFL. The mother tongue differences, the differences between L (1) and L (2) phonemic system. This is the statement of the problem of this study. The researcher used Descriptive Statistic Method and arrived to the following conclusion:

- 1- Pronunciation can be one of the most difficult parts of a language for EFL learners to master and one of the least favorite topics for teachers to address in the EFL classroom.
- 2- All learners can do well in learning the pronunciation of a foreign language if the teacher and learner participate together in the total learning process.
- 3- Success can be achieved if each has set individual teaching and learning goals. Pronunciation must be viewed as more than correct production of phonemes: it must be viewed in the same light as grammar, syntax, and discourse that is an important part of communication.
- 4- Pronunciation is an essential component of communicative competence. With this in mind, the teacher must then set obtainable aims that are applicable and suitable for the communication needs of the learner.
- 5- The learner must also become part of the learning process, actively involved in their own learning.
- 6- The content of the course should be integrated into the communication class, with the content emphasizing the teaching of suprasegmentals, linking pronunciation with

listening comprehension, and allowing for meaningful pronunciation practice.

## **STUDY METHODOLOGY:**

The researcher used Statistical Analytical Method and (SPSS) program to analyse the data of this study.

### **Sampling:**

The target population of this study was English language university students 3<sup>rd</sup> year in some universities in Khartoum State. One hundred-thirty recorded guided interviews are done to male and female in three different universities Omdurman Al Ahlia, Alzaiem Al Azharey and Omdurman Islamic University in Khartoum State.

### **Instruments of the Study:**

The researcher used recorded guided interview to collect the data of this study. One hundred-thirty recorded guided interviews are done to some 3<sup>rd</sup> year university students in three different universities in Khartoum State.

### **Reliability and Validity of the Study tools:**

Concerning the reliability and validity of the research, the researcher conducted four Ph.D. holders are consulted who teach English as a Foreign Language before in different universities in Khartoum State and Egypt. The researcher gave them the tools and their comments, suggestions, recommendations and judgment about the construction and content of the tools were taken into consideration. In this study Alpha Cronbach program is used to calculate the person correlation and coefficient to show statistically the validity and reliability of the study tools.



The researcher used Alpha Cronbach to show the reliability and validity of the research tools recorded guided interview and teachers' questionnaire.

**Table (4.1) Reliability and Validity of the Research Tool.**

University students' interview	Reliability	Validity
	94.9%	90%

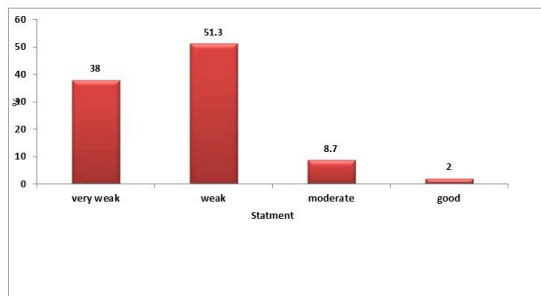
Questionnaire	Reliability	Validity
	90.11%	83%

## DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSIONS

### Interviews data analysis:

The researcher did one hundred and thirty recorded guided interviews on March 24<sup>th</sup> up to April 5<sup>th</sup>; 2015 here were some data results and discussions.

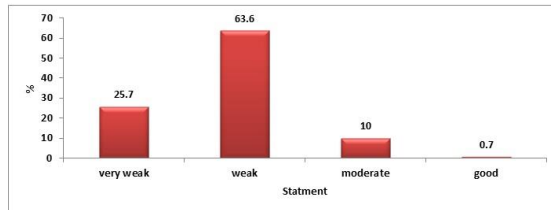
**Chart 1.1 English long vowel Sounds /i:/ and short vowel /i/ and /e/.**



In chart No (1) some of university students in Khartoum State interviewed to pronounce words which contain long /i:/ e.g lead, short /i/ e.g. lid and short /e/ e.g. led. (38%) of the students didn't differentiate between the target words pronunciation differences, so they were very weak. Other (51.3%) differentiated between the target words, but all of them were

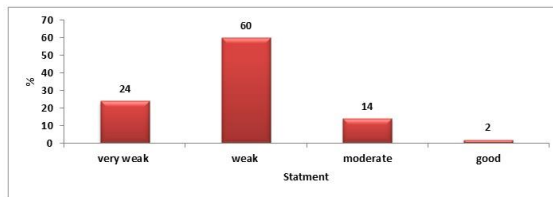
incorrect, so they were weak. The total percentage of the very weak and weak students was (89.3) as a result;

**Chart (1.2) English long vowel sounds /ɜ:/ and /ɑ:/**



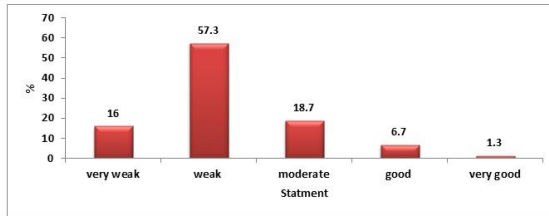
In chart No (2) above the researcher investigated long vowel sounds /ɜ:/ and /ɑ:/. Some of 3rd university students in Khartoum State interviewed to pronounce words which contain long vowels sounds /ɜ:/ as in purse and /ɑ:/ as in pass. (25.7) didn't differentiate between the target words pronunciation differences, so they were very weak. Also (63.6%) differentiated between the target words pronunciation differences, but all the words were incorrect, so they were weak as a result.

**Chart 1.3 Short vowel /ʌ /, long vowel /ɑ:/ and Short Vowel /ɒ /.**



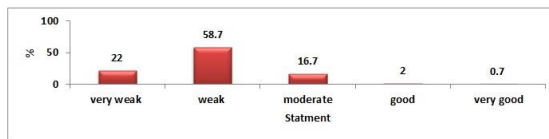
In the chart No (3) some of 3rd university students in Khartoum State investigated to pronounce words which contain short vowel sounds /ʌ/ e.g. luck and long /ɑ:/ e.g. lark and short vowel /ɒ/ lock. (24%) of the students didn't differentiate between the target words pronunciation differences, so they were very weak. (60%) differentiated between the target words pronunciation differences, but all of them were incorrect, so they were weak.

**Chart (1.4) Short vowel / ɒ /, /ʊ / and long vowel /u:/**



In the chart table No (4) some of 3<sup>rd</sup> year university students in Khartoum State interviewed to pronounce words which contain short vowel / ɒ / as in Cod and /ʊ / as in could and long vowel /u: /as in coed. (16%) of the interviewed students didn't differentiate between target words pronunciation differences, so they were very weak. (57.3%) differentiated between the target words, but all of them were incorrect, so they were weak.

**Chart (1.5) Short vowels /ʊ/ and long vowels /u:/**



In chart No (5) some of 3<sup>rd</sup> year university students in Khartoum State interviewed to pronounce words which contain short vowel /ʊ/ as in would and long vowel /u:/ as in wooed. (22%) of the interviewed students didn't differentiate between target words pronunciation differences, so they were very weak. Other (58.7%) differentiated between the target words, but all the words were incorrect, consequently to that, they were weak.

In chart no (1) some university students pronounce five different words in three columns: long /i:/ as in lead, short /i/ as in lid and short /e/ as in led. The researcher related the main reasons of this problem to vowel sounds which don't have certain places and manners of articulations. That depends on the movement of the tongue inside front, middle, or back of the

mouth and how far you practice these vowel sounds. Another reason is the differences between English and Arabic languages. In case of these three vowels long /i:/ is represented by Arabic letter /ي/ and the short /i/ is scripted by diacritical mark below the letter “Kasra” /َ/ but the short /e/ is not exist in Arabic language which increase the problem. That relate to the students’ basic in comparing between English and Arabic languages.

Chart No (2) these two long vowel sounds investigated and the main problems are vowel sounds don’t have places and manners of articulations. Another reason is long that /ɜ:/ doesn’t exist in Arabic language and the second long vowel /ɑ:/ is represented by Arabic letter “Al-Aleef”. The researcher related that to differences between English and Arabic phonemic system. Also the shortage of training and lake of speaking exam in Sudanese universities too.

Chart No (3) as the researcher mentioned before the main reasons are there aren’t certain places and manners of articulations for these vowel sounds. That depends on the movement of the tongue inside the mouth front, middle or back. Another reason is that not all these phonemes exist in Arabic and English e.g, the short vowel /ʌ/ doesn’t exist in Arabic language, the long vowel /ɑ:/ is replaced by “Al Aleef” and the short Vowel /ʊ/ is scripted by diacritical mark which is written above the letter in case of “ Alfatha” /ُ/ ; this increases the problem too.

Chart No (4) these vowel sounds cause some problems to 3<sup>rd</sup> year university students, because there aren’t certain places and manners of articulations. Another reason is in Arabic language there represented either by letters or a mark; e.g. /ʊ/ is scripted by diacritical mark which is written above the letter in case of “ Alfatha” /ُ/. Also /ʊ/ is scripted by diacritical mark which is written above the letter in case of “ Al- Dhamma”

/ɔ/. But /u:/ is represented by Arabic letter “ Al – waaw” / و /  
The shortage of training plays a great role in this problem too.

Chart No (5) the main reasons are the differences between English and Arabic in existing phonemes and non-exist cause this problems. Also these two phonemes one /o/ is found as a letter “ waaw” / و / . And /u:/ is represented as a mark above the letter “Al-Dhammah” / ؤ /.

## **CONCLUSION AND FINDINGS OF THE STUDY:-**

The results of this study revealed that some university students in Khartoum State face problems when they pronounce English words containing short vowel sounds. Also they face the same problem when they pronounce English words contain long vowel sounds. The differences between English and Arabic phonemic systems cause some problems to some university students in Khartoum State. Also there are some phonemes exist and non-exist between English and Arabic languages cause some problems to some university students too. Moreover, the spelling system is different which leads to confusion to Sudanese students as EFL learners. In addition to, there is inconsistency between (L1) and (L2) leads increase the problems of pronunciation. Most of the university teachers agree that some university students face problems in pronouncing English words contain short and long vowel sounds.

## **THE MAIN FINDINGS OF THIS STUDY:**

The study arrived to the following findings:-

- 1-Some universities' Curricula do not have enough pronunciation exercises, containing long and short vowel sounds.

2- The differences between English and Arabic phonemics system exist and non-exist vowel sounds affect in pronouncing.

3- One vowel sounds can be pronounced differently in three situations, so the differences between mother tongue (L1) Arabic language and English language (L2) vowel sounds cause problems to some university students in Khartoum.

4- The spelling differences between English and Arabic cause pronunciation problems to some university students too. 5- There is a shortage of practicing English to some Sudanese university students.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

Based on the study findings, the researcher recommended the following:

- 1- Curricula designers need to rewrite more pronunciation exercises and practices in the students' curricula in all university levels.
- 2- Curricula designers need to concentrate more on pronunciation English vowels sounds in general.
- 3- University teachers are highly required to produce their own exercises to let their students differentiate; how one vowel pronounces differently in more than one situation.
- 4- To forward all these efforts English clubs and forums are needed to help students practice speaking and correct pronunciation.
- 5- Speaking exams are essential to encourage some university students practice English and pronounce correctly.

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