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L'auteur d'un article est tenu de présenter son texte dans un seul document et en respectant les critères suivants :

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Un titre qui indique clairement le sujet de l'article, n'excédant pas 25 mots.

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Une courte présentation en note de bas de page des auteurs (es) ne devant pas dépasser 100 mots par auteur. On doit y retrouver obligatoirement le nom de l'auteur, le nom de l'institution d'origine, le statut professionnel et l'organisation dont il relève, et enfin, les adresses de courrier électronique du ou des auteurs. L'auteur peut aussi énumérer ses principaux champs de recherche et ses principales publications. La revue ne s'engage toutefois pas à diffuser tous ces éléments.

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Un résumé de l'article ne doit pas dépasser 160 mots. Le résumé doit être à la fois en français et en anglais (police Times new roman, taille 12, interligne 1,15).

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Une liste de cinq mots clés maximum décrivant l'objet de l'article.

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-La structure d'un article, doit être conforme aux règles de rédaction scientifique, selon que l'article est une contribution théorique ou résulte d'une recherche de terrain.

-La structure d'un article scientifique en lettres et sciences humaines se présente

comme suit :

- Pour un article qui est une contribution théorique et fondamentale :

Introduction (justification du sujet, problématique, hypothèses/objectifs scientifiques, approche), Développement articulé, Conclusion, Bibliographie.

- Pour un article qui résulte d'une recherche de terrain :
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Résumé en français. Mots-clés, Abstract, Keywords,
Introduction, Méthodologie, Résultats et Discussion, Conclusion, Bibliographie.
Par exemple : Les articles conformes aux normes de présentation, doivent contenir les rubriques suivantes : introduction, problématique de l'étude, méthodologie adoptée, résultats de la recherche, perspectives pour recherche, conclusions, références bibliographiques.

Tout l'article ne doit dépasser 17 pages,

Police Times new roman, taille 12 et interligne 1,5 (maximum 30 000 mots). La revue *Particip'Action* permet l'usage de notes de bas de page pour ajouter des précisions au texte. Mais afin de ne pas alourdir la lecture et d'aller à l'essentiel, il est recommandé de **faire le moins possible usage des notes (10 notes de bas de page au maximum par article).**

- A l'exception de l'introduction, de la conclusion, de la bibliographie, les articulations d'un article doivent être titrées, et numérotées par des chiffres **(exemples : 1. ; 1.1.; 1.2; 2. ; 2.2. ; 2.2.1 ; 2.2.2. ; 3. ; etc.).**

Les passages cités sont présentés en romain et entre guillemets. Lorsque la phrase citant et la citation dépassent trois lignes, il faut aller à la ligne, pour présenter la citation (interligne 1) en romain et en retrait, en diminuant la taille de police d'un point. Insérer la pagination et ne pas insérer d'information autre que le numéro de page dans l'en-tête et éviter les pieds de page.

Les figures et les tableaux doivent être intégrés au texte et présentés avec des marges d'au moins six centimètres à droite et à gauche. Les caractères dans ces figures et tableaux doivent aussi être en Times 12. Figures et tableaux doivent avoir chacun(e) un titre.

Les citations dans le corps du texte doivent être indiquées par un retrait avec tabulation 1 cm et le texte mis en taille 11.
Les références de citations sont intégrées au texte citant, selon les cas, de la façon suivante :

-        (Initiale (s) du Prénom ou des Prénoms de l'auteur. Nom de l'Auteur, année de publication, pages citées) ; - Initiale (s) du Prénom ou des Prénoms de l'auteur. Nom de l'Auteur (année de publication, pages citées). Exemples :

-        En effet, le but poursuivi par **M. Ascher (1998, p. 223),** est « d'élargir l'histoire des mathématiques de telle sorte qu'elle acquière une perspective multiculturelle et globale (...), d'accroitre le domaine des mathématiques : alors qu'elle s'est pour l'essentiel occupée du groupe professionnel occidental que l'on appelle les mathématiciens (...) ».

-        Pour dire plus amplement ce qu'est cette capacité de la société civile, qui dans son déploiement effectif, atteste qu'elle peut porter le développement et l'histoire, S. B. Diagne (1991, p. 2) écrit :

Qu'on ne s'y trompe pas : de toute manière, les populations ont toujours su opposer à la philosophie de l'encadrement et à son volontarisme leurs propres stratégies de contournements. Celles-là, par exemple, sont lisibles dans le dynamisme, ou à tout le moins, dans la créativité dont sait preuve ce que l'on désigne sous le nom de secteur informel et à qui il faudra donner l'appellation positive d'économie populaire.

-        Le philosophe ivoirien a raison, dans une certaine mesure, de lire, dans ce choc déstabilisateur, le processus du sous-développement. Ainsi qu'il le dit :

le processus du sous-développement résultant de ce choc est vécu concrètement par les populations concernées comme une crise globale : crise socio-économique (exploitation brutale, chômage permanent, exode accéléré et douloureux), mais aussi crise socio-culturelle et de civilisation traduisant une impréparation sociohistorique et une inadaptation des cultures et des comportements humains aux formes de vie imposées par les technologies étrangères. (S. Diakité, 1985, p. 105).

Pour les articles de deux ou trois auteurs, noter les initiales des prénoms, les noms et suivis de l'année (J. Batee et D. Maate, 2004 ou K. Moote, A. Pooul et E. Polim, 2000). Pour les articles ou ouvrages collectifs de plus de trois auteurs noter les initiales des prénoms, le nom du premier auteur et la mention ″et al″ (F. Loom et al, 2003). Lorsque plusieurs références sont utilisées pour la même information, celles-ci doivent être mises en ordre chronologique (R. Gool, 1998 et M. Goti, 2006).

Les sources historiques, les références d'informations orales et les notes explicatives sont numérotées en série continue et présentées en bas de page.

Références bibliographiques (obligatoire)

Les divers éléments d'une référence bibliographique sont présentés comme suit : NOM et Prénom (s) de l'auteur, Année de publication, Zone titre, Lieu de publication, Zone Editeur, pages (p.) occupées par l'article dans la revue ou l'ouvrage collectif.

Dans la zone titre, le titre d'un article est présenté en romain et entre guillemets, celui d'un ouvrage, d'un mémoire ou d'une thèse, d'un rapport, d'une revue ou d'un journal est présenté en italique. Dans la zone Editeur, on indique la Maison d'édition (pour un ouvrage), le Nom et le numéro/volume de la revue (pour un article). Au cas où un ouvrage est une traduction et/ou une réédition, il faut préciser après le titre le nom du traducteur et/ou l'édition (ex : 2nde éd.).

Ne sont présentées dans les références bibliographiques que les références des documents cités. Les références bibliographiques sont présentées par ordre alphabétique des noms d'auteur. Il convient de prêter une attention particulière à la qualité de l'expression. Le Comité scientifique de la revue se réserve le droit de réviser les textes, de demander des modifications (mineures ou majeures) ou de rejeter l'article de manière définitive ou provisoire (si des corrections majeures doivent préalablement y être apportées). L'auteur est consulté préalablement à la diffusion de son article lorsque le Comité scientifique apporte des modifications. Si les corrections ne sont pas prises en compte par l'auteur, la direction de la revue *Particip'Action* se donne le droit de ne pas publier l'article.

AMIN Samir, 1996, *Les défis de la mondialisation*, Paris, Le Harmattan.

AUDARD Cathérine, 2009, *Qu'est-ce que le libéralisme ? Ethique, politique, société*, Paris, Gallimard.

BERGER Gaston, 1967, *L'homme moderne et son éducation*, Paris, PUF.

DIAGNE Souleymane Bachir, 2003, « Islam et philosophie. Leçons d'une rencontre », *Diogène*, 202, p. 145-151.

DIAKITE Sidiki, 1985, *Violence technologique et développement. La question africaine du développement*, Paris, Le Harmattan.

NB1 : Chaque auteur dont l'article est retenu pour publication dans la revue *Particip'Action* participe aux frais d'édition à raison de **55.000** francs CFA (soit **84 euros** ou **110** dollars US) par article et par numéro. Il reçoit, à titre gratuit, un tiré-à-part.

NB2 : La quête philosophique centrale de la revue ***Particip'Action*** reste : **Fluidité identitaire et construction du changement : approches pluri-et/ou transdisciplinaires**.

Les auteurs qui souhaitent se faire publier dans nos colonnes sont priés d'avoir cette philosophie comme fil directeur de leur réflexion.

La Rédaction

SOMMAIRE

LITTERATURE

LINGUISTIQUE

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AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE USE OF ENGLISH SILENT SOUNDS IN THE SPEECH OF CHADIAN LEARNERS

Celestin TAO✦

Abstract

This study investigates the use of silent sounds in the English of Chadian learners, focusing on their pronunciation patterns, awareness, and the factors contributing to errors. English, as a foreign language in Chad, poses particular challenges for learners, especially regarding silent sounds, which are often mispronounced due to interference from French and local languages, relying on spelling, and limited exposure to spoken English. A mixed-methods approach was adopted, combining quantitative analysis of pronunciation errors from a word list and reading passage with qualitative insights from semi-structured interviews. A purposive sample of 60 learners across beginner, intermediate, and advanced levels participated in the study. Findings indicate that learners frequently pronounce sounds that should remain silent, apply silent sound rules inconsistently, and sometimes hypercorrect in formal contexts. Advanced learners demonstrated greater awareness, particularly when exposed to spoken English through media or language laboratories, yet difficulties persisted with less common or academic vocabulary. The study concludes that silent sounds represent a significant obstacle to effective English pronunciation for Chadian learners and recommends explicit instruction, phonetic training, and increased exposure to authentic English speech. The findings have implications for teaching strategies, curriculum design, and pronunciation-focused interventions in the Chadian context.

Keywords: Silent sounds, pronunciation, Chadian learners, English as a foreign language, phonological awareness.

Résumé

La présente étude analyse l'emploi des lettres muettes dans l'Anglais des apprenants tchadiens, en s'intéressant à leurs caractéristiques de prononciation, à leurs degrés de conscience phonologique ainsi qu'aux

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facteurs explicatifs des erreurs observées. L'Anglais, langue étrangère au Tchad, constitue un domaine d'apprentissage complexe, notamment en ce qui concerne les lettres muettes qui sont fréquemment mal rendues en raison de l'interférence du français et des langues nationales, de la tendance à se fier à l'orthographe et d'une exposition limitée à l'Anglais oral. Une méthodologie mixte a été mobilisée, associant une analyse quantitative des erreurs de prononciation relevées à partir d'une liste de mots et d'un texte de lecture, à une analyse qualitative issue d'entretiens semi-directifs. Un échantillon raisonné de soixante apprenants répartis entre les niveaux débutant, intermédiaire et avancé a été retenu. Les résultats montrent que les apprenants prononcent fréquemment des segments devant rester muets, appliquent les règles relatives aux lettres muettes de manière irrégulière et manifestent parfois des phénomènes d'hypercorrection en contexte formel. Les apprenants avancés présentent un niveau de conscience phonologique plus élevé, particulièrement lorsqu'ils bénéficient d'une exposition accrue à l'Anglais oral par les médias ou les laboratoires de langues ; néanmoins, des difficultés persistent, notamment face au lexique moins courant ou à caractère académique. L'étude conclut que les lettres muettes constituent un obstacle majeur à une prononciation performante de l'Anglais chez les apprenants tchadiens et préconise un enseignement explicite, un entraînement phonétique ainsi qu'une exposition renforcée à des modèles authentiques de langue. Les résultats apportent des éclairages utiles pour l'amélioration des pratiques pédagogiques, la conception des curricula et la mise en place d'interventions centrées sur la prononciation dans le contexte tchadien.

Mots-clés : lettres muettes, prononciation, apprenants tchadiens, anglais langue étrangère, conscience phonologique.

Introduction

English, as a global language, plays a significant role in education, business, and international communication. In Chad, English is taught as a foreign language in schools and universities, complementing French and local languages. Mastery of English requires not only knowledge of grammar and vocabulary but also pronunciation. Among the challenges learners face, silent sounds are particularly problematic. Silent sounds are sounds in words that are written but not pronounced, such as the */k/* in *know*, the */b/* in *debt*, or the */t/* in *castle*. Their irregularity in English spelling and pronunciation makes them difficult for learners, especially for those whose first languages are largely phonetic, like French or Arabic. The difficulty with silent sounds often results in mispronunciations that may impede communication, affect learners' confidence, and limit their proficiency in spoken English. In Chad, where English is learned as a foreign language with limited exposure to native speakers, these challenges are compounded. Learners frequently rely on spelling as a guide to pronunciation, leading to hypercorrection or inconsistent application of silent sound rules.

Literature Review

The review of existing literature reveals that silent sounds are a widespread challenge for learners of English as a foreign language. Studies in South Asia, Nigeria, and other EFL contexts have consistently shown that learners mispronounce silent sounds due to L1 interference, overreliance on spelling, and limited exposure to authentic English (Khan, 2015; Oladipo, 2018; Adeyemi, 2020). Pedagogical approaches such as explicit instruction, phonetic training, and listening-repetition exercises have been identified as effective strategies to reduce errors. However, there is a notable lack of research specifically focusing on Chadian learners of English. Existing studies rarely examine:

- The pronunciation of silent sounds in both isolated words and connected speech.

- Learners' awareness, perceptions, and metalinguistic strategies regarding silent sounds.

- Context-specific pedagogical recommendations suited to the Chadian educational environment.

Given the unique linguistic context of Chad where French and local languages dominate, and English exposure is largely limited to the classroom these gaps are significant. Silent sounds are likely to present persistent challenges, yet there is minimal empirical evidence to guide teaching practices or curriculum design.

Methodology

This study presents the research methodology employed in investigating the use of silent sounds in the English of Chadian learners. It describes the research design, population and sample, research instruments, data collection procedures, data analysis techniques, and ethical considerations. The methodology is designed to ensure the study produces reliable, valid, and meaningful results regarding learners' pronunciation patterns, awareness, and challenges with silent sounds. The population of the study consisted of Chadian learners of English at secondary school and university levels. From this population, a sample of 60 learners was purposively selected to ensure representation across different proficiency levels (beginner, intermediate, advanced). The sample included both male and female students, aged between 16 and 25 years. Three instruments were employed to collect data:

1- **Word List Pronunciation Task**

A list of some English words containing common silent sounds (e.g., *know, debt, castle, subtle, psychology*). Learners were asked to read each word aloud individually so that we examine pronunciation accuracy in isolated words.

Words with Silent /a/

The sound /a/ often goes silent in specific English words, especially in combinations like -EA- or -AI-. These silent sounds can be tricky as they frequently disrupt pronunciation expectations, making them difficult for learners to master. For example:

Bread	Head	Heart
Leather	Great	Fear
Heavy	Ready	Sweater
Deal	Real	Clean
Year	Break	Dream
Fearful	Steak	Death
Wealth	Health	Peach
Teacher	Seam	

Words With Silent /b/

The sound /b/ is typically silent in English when it follows the sound /m/ at the end of a word (-MB). These silent sounds often confuse learners, as the

Aplomb	Bomb	Climb
Comb	Crumb	Debt
Doubt	Dumb	Jamb
Lamb	Limb	Numb
Plumb	Subtle	Succumb
Thumb	Tomb	Womb

rule is inconsistent and the /b/ is unpronounced.

Words With Silent /k/

SC words with silent /k/ ki, like "scene" and "scissors, can be challenging for learners because they don't follow standard pronunciation patterns. Understanding these rules can help improve pronunciation and confidence!

Abscess	Ascend / ascent	Conscience
Conscious	Crescent	Descend
Disciple	Evanesce	Fascinate

Fluorescent	Muscle	Obscene
Resuscitate	Scenario	Scene
Scissors		

Words With Silent /d/

The sound /d/ often becomes silent in English when placed between certain letters, such as in the combinations -DG- or -ND-. This silent /d/ sound can trip up learners listening carefully to native speakers can help you master these tricky exceptions.

Bridge	Edge	Handkerchief (NOTE: in the word "hand", the /d/ is not silent)
Handsome	Handful	Grandson
Ledger	Sandwich	Wednesday

Words With Silent /e/

Many words contain a silent /e/ most commonly found at the end of words in English, especially when following a consonant. Usually, these words end in Vowel + Consonant + Silent /e/. This silent /e/ alters the pronunciation of the preceding vowel, like in "hope" and "time."

Debate	Desire	Excite
Kite	Love	Make

Name		

Words With Silent /g/

The sound /g/is silent in many English words, especially when placed before N (-GN) like in the word "gnome" or followed by H (-GH) in the word "high." These silent /g/ words can be confusing due to the irregularities in pronunciation rules across silent sounds in English.

Words With Silent /h/

Align	Benign	Assign
Champagne	Cologne	Consign
Design	Feign	Foreign
Gnarl	Gnash	Gnaw
Gnome	Gnomic	High
Light	Resign	Sign

The sound /h/ is sometimes silent in words, particularly when it follows C (-CH) or appears after certain consonants like -GH, -WH, or -RH. Silent /h/ also appears at the beginning of words, such as "honest" and "hour," making these silent sounds a bit simpler to learn because they don't affect pronunciation.

Anchor	Archeology (in BrE: archaeology)	Architect / architecture
Archive	Borough	Chaos
Character / characteristic	Charisma	Chemical / chemistry / chemist
Choreograph	Chorus	Christmas / Christian
Echo	Heir	Herbs (only in AmE)
Hour	Honest / honor	Ghost
Psychology	Rhino	Schedule (only in AmE)
Scheme	School	Tech / technology / techie
Thai / Thailand	Thigh	Thorough
Vehicle	Weigh	What / when / where / why / which
White	While	

Words With Silent /k/

Words like "knee" and "knife" feature a silent /k/, typically when it precedes N. Silent /k/ words are challenging but following these rules helps learners confidently pronounce and spell similar words in their English vocabulary.

Knack	Knave	Knead
Knee	Kneel	Knell
Knickers	Knife	Knight
Knit	Knob	Knock
Knoll	Knot	Know / knew / known
Knowledge	Knuckle	

Words With Silent /l/

Silent sound /l/, like in "calm" and "yolk, " can confuse learners since the /l/ isn't pronounced. This is also commonly seen in combinations like -ALF, -ALM, or -OULD. Becoming familiar with these words enhances both fluency and pronunciation.

Almond	Balm	Behalf
Calf	Chalk	Could
Folk	Half	Palm
Salmon	Should	Stalk
Talk	Walk	Would

Yolk		

Words With Silent /n/

The sound /n/ becomes silent in English when it follows an M in combinations like -MN at the end of words. Some examples of silent /n/ words include "autumn" and "damn." These silent sounds in English words simplify speaking and build accuracy in understanding word structures.

Autumn	Column	Condemn
Damn	Hymn	Solemn

Words With Silent /p/

The sound /p/ is silent in English words, commonly appearing at the beginning of a word, followed by S (PS-). These silent /p/ words can be perplexing for learners because although the /p/ is part of the spelling, it isn't spoken.

Coup	Cupboard	Psychology
Pneumonia	Pseudo	Psychiatrist
Psychiatry	Psychotherapy	Psychotic
Receipt		

Words With Silent /s/

The sound /s/ is often silent in certain English words, creating confusion for learners. This typically occurs in words with specific historical or linguistic origins, such as "isle," "debris," and "aisle." Silent /s/ words challenge pronunciation expectations, making them tricky to master for both native and non-native speakers.

Island	Aisle	Viscount
Isle	Debris	Bourgeois
Corps		

Words With Silent /t/

The sound /t/ is silent in a variety of English words, particularly in combinations like -ST- or ending in -ET. Some examples include "castle" and "ballet." These silent /t/ words are common in English, and mastering them makes pronunciation easier for learners!

Apostle	Bristle	Bustle
Castle	Fasten	Glisten
Hustle	Listen	Moisten
Often		

Words With Silent /u/

The sound /u/ is used to soften the letter G in combinations like GU-, like in "guess" and "guitar." These silent /u/ words are tricky, as the usual pronunciation rules for vowels don't apply here.

Baguette	Biscuit	Build
Building	Built	Circuit
Disguise	Guess	Guest
Guide	Guild	Guilt
Guilty	Guise	Guitar
Rogue	Silhouette	

Words With Silent /w/

The sound /w/ is often silent in English words when it appears before an R (as in -WR-). These words with silent /w/ can be tricky for learners because silent letters in English don't affect pronunciation but is key to spelling.

Awry	Playwright	Sword
Wrack	Wrangle	Wrap
Wrapper	Wrath	Wreak
Wreath	Wreck	Wrestle

Wriggle	Wring	Wrinkle
Wrist	Writ	Write / wrote / written
Wrong		

2- **Reading Passage**

A short passage of 60–80 words containing multiple silent sounds. Learners read the passage aloud while being audio-recorded so that we investigate silent sounds pronunciation in connected speech.

Below is a table of English words with initial, medial and final silent sounds that are often difficult for Chadian learners of English. It shows the word, the common wrong pronunciation, and the correct pronunciation (IPA).

Words with Initial Silent Sounds

Word	Common Wrong Pronunciation (Chadian learners)	Correct Pronunciation (IPA)
knife	/knaɪf/	/naɪf/
knee	/kniː/	/niː/
know	/knoʊ/	/noʊ/
knock	/knɒk/	/nɒk/
knight	/knaɪt/	/naɪt/
Gnome	/gnəʊm/	/nəʊm/
Gnash	/gnæʃ/	/næʃ/
Gnat	/gnæt/	/næt/
Write	/wraɪt/	/raɪt/
Wrong	/wrɒŋ/	/rɒŋ/
Wrist	/wrɪst/	/rɪst/
Wrap	/ræp/	/ræp/ (no /w/)
Wreck	/wrek/	/rek/
Psalm	/psɑːm/	/sɑːm/

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Word	Common Wrong Pronunciation (Chadian learners)	Correct Pronunciation (IPA)
psychology	/psaɪˈkɒlədʒi/	/saɪˈkɒlədʒi/
pneumonia	/pnjuːˈmoʊniə/	/njuːˈmoʊniə/
pneumatic	/pnjuːˈmætɪk/	/njuːˈmætɪk/
Hour	/haʊər/	/aʊər/
Honest	/hɒnɛst/	/ɒnɪst/
Honour	/hɒnɔr/	/ɒnər/
Heir	/hɛər/	/ɛər/

Words with Medial Silent Sounds

Word	Common Wrong Pronunciation (Chadian learners)	Correct Pronunciation (IPA)
Doubt	/daʊbt/	/daʊt/
Debt	/debt/	/det/
Subtle	/ˈsʌbtl/	/ˈsʌtəl/
Calm	/kalm/	/kɑːm/
Half	/half/	/hɑːf/
Salmon	/ˈsalmən/	/ˈsæmən/
Autumn	/ˈɔːtumn/	/ˈɔːtəm/
Column	/ˈkɒlumn/	/ˈkɒləm/
Castle	/ˈkastl/	/ˈkɑːsəl/
Listen	/ˈlɪstən/	/ˈlɪsən/
Whistle	/ˈwɪstl/	/ˈwɪsəl/
daughter	/ˈdɔghtər/	/ˈdɔːtər/
Light	/lɪght/	/laɪt/
Night	/nɪght/	/naɪt/
Answer	/ˈænswer/	/ˈænsər/
Sword	/swɔːd/	/sɔːd/
Vehicle	/ˈvihikl/	/ˈviːɪkəl/
exhausted	/ɛks-hɔstɪd/	/ɪgˈzɔːstɪd/

Words with Final Silent Sounds

Word	Common Wrong Pronunciation (Chadian learners)	Correct Pronunciation (IPA)
Name	/namə/	/neɪm/
Like	/likə/	/laɪk/
Love	/lɔvə/ or /lɔvɛ/	/lʌv/
Move	/muːvə/	/muːv/
Lamb	/læmb/	/læm/

Word	Common Wrong Pronunciation (Chadian learners)	Correct Pronunciation (IPA)
Climb	/klaɪmb/	/klaɪm/
Comb	/koʊmb/	/koʊm/
Folk	/folkə/	/foʊk/
Walk	/wɔlk/	/wɔːk/
Talk	/tɔlk/	/tɔːk/
Autumn	/ˈɔːtumn/	/ˈɔːtəm/
Hymn	/hɪmn/	/hɪm/
Sign	/saɪgn/	/saɪn/
design	/dɪˈzaɪgn/	/dɪˈzaɪn/
Ballet	/ˈballet/	/ˈbæleɪ/
Depot	/ˈdepɒt/	/ˈdiːpoʊ/
though	/ðɔgh/	/ðoʊ/
through	/θruːgh/	/θruː/
High	/hɪgh/	/haɪ/

3 - Semi-Structured Interviews

Conducted with 15 learners (five from each proficiency level).

Focused on learners' perceptions of silent sounds, awareness of pronunciation rules, and strategies for handling silent sounds so that we gather qualitative insights complementing the quantitative data.

Data Collection Procedures

Informants were first briefed on the purpose of the study and assured of confidentiality. Each learner was asked individually to pronounce the prepared word list. Their pronunciations were audio-recorded. Learners then read the passage aloud, also recorded for analysis. Finally, interviews were conducted with 15 Informants (5 from each proficiency level) to gain qualitative insights.

Findings

The investigation into the use of silent sounds in the English of Chadian learners yielded the following key results:

- Frequent Mispronunciation of Silent Sounds /k/, /w/, /b/, /t/

Learners often pronounced sounds that should remain silent, particularly in words beginning with *kn-* (*know, knife*), *wr-* (*write, wrong*), and those ending with *-mb* (*comb, thumb*). Words such as *castle* and *listen* also revealed common mispronunciations of the silent */t/.*

- Inconsistent Application of Rules

Some learners omitted silent sounds correctly in certain words (e.g., *debt*) but pronounced them in others (e.g., *subtle*). This inconsistency indicates a lack of systematic knowledge of silent sound patterns.

- Influence of Other Languages

French and Arabic, which are more phonetic in their spelling-to-sound correspondence, influenced learners to pronounce nearly all sounds as written. The lack of silent sounds in local languages further reinforced this tendency.

- Impact of Exposure and Proficiency Level

Advanced learners showed greater awareness of silent sounds, particularly when regularly exposed to spoken English through media or language laboratories. However, rare or academic words with silent sound (e.g., *mnemonic*) remained problematic even for advanced students.

- Sociolinguistic Observations

Some learners admitted to deliberately pronouncing silent sounds in academic contexts, believing this to be a sign of correctness. This reflects a perception that spoken English should mirror written English. Stressing

phonetics during English classes becomes necessary to channel good pronunciation.

Discussion

The analysis of data on the use of silent sounds in the English of Chadian learners reveals several significant tendencies that highlight both linguistic challenges and pedagogical implications. One of the most striking findings is the high frequency of mispronunciation of words with silent consonants**,** such as *know*, *listen*, *castle*, and *psychology*. Many learners tended to articulate the silent sounds, for instance pronouncing the /k/ in *know* or the /t/ in *castle*. This suggests a strong influence from French and Arabic, the dominant languages in Chad, where orthography is more closely related to pronunciation than in English.

Another important observation is that learners often **generalize pronunciation rules** inconsistently. For example, while some students correctly omitted the /b/ in *debt*, they would still pronounce the /b/ in *subtle*. This reflects incomplete mastery of English phonological rules and reliance on spelling-based strategies rather than phonetic awareness. It also highlights that silent sounds pose a systematic challenge, as they do not follow predictable patterns that learners can easily internalize.

The findings further show that learners at more advanced levels display greater awareness of silent sounds, especially those exposed to more spoken English input through media or language laboratories. However, even among advanced learners, silent sounds in less frequent or academic vocabularies (e.g., *mnemonic, pneumatic, gnosis*) remained problematic. This indicates that exposure alone is insufficient.

Sociolinguistic factors also emerged in the findings. Some learners reported that they deliberately pronounced silent sounds during class

sessions because they perceived this as more "correct" or "educated." This hypercorrection points to the role of classroom attitudes and the prestige associated with written English in shaping pronunciation practices.

Overall, the findings confirm that silent sounds are a persistent source of difficulty for Chadian learners of English. They demonstrate that challenges stem not only from interference from local languages but also from the complex orthographic system of English itself. These insights call for targeted pedagogical interventions, such as focused drills, listening and repeating exercises, and explicit instruction on common silent letter patterns.

Recommendations

Through this study we recommend school inspectors to integrate Phonetics and Phonology into the Curriculum so that students be introduced to the basics of phonetic and phonological transcription (IPA symbols) early in their studies and instruct teachers to teach them how to identify and mark silent sounds when reading words aloud. Teaching students to read and apply the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) can help bridge the gap between spelling and pronunciation. This will give learners a practical tool for recognizing when sounds are silent. English teacher training programs in Chad should integrate phonological awareness modules. Curricula should also include systematic attention to pronunciation, ensuring that silent sounds are not overlooked.

- Use Contrastive Analysis with French

Since French (the main language of instruction in Chad) also has silent sounds, teachers can draw parallels and contrasts between the two

languages. For example, compare *silent "/s/"* in French words like *frais* and in English words like *island*.

- Adopt Audio-Visual Resources

Employ language labs, audio dictionaries, and online pronunciation tools to expose learners to standard models of English and encourage students to listen, repeat, and record themselves to self-correct.

- Classroom Drills and Word Lists

Provide targeted practice lists of high-frequency English words with silent sounds (*know, doubt, lamb, listen, castle*) supplied by the use of choral repetition, spelling bees, and pronunciation games.

- Contextualized Practice

Encourage students to use words with silent sounds in dialogues, role-plays, and storytelling in order to help them master usage in real-life communication rather than isolated drills.

- Teacher Training and Awareness

English teachers in Chad should dedicate specific lessons to silent sounds, focusing on the most frequent cases (e.g., *kn-, wr-, -mb, -gh*). Providing learners with clear rules, exceptions, and examples can reduce guesswork and reliance on spelling. Organize workshops for English teachers in Chad on phonology and pronunciation pedagogy. Equip teachers with methods to detect and correct pronunciation influenced by silent sounds that is to say setting the Language Laboratory's materials for Teaching English native speakers' sounds intensively to them. Workshops can also be organized on the Teaching of silent sounds.

Incorporate Technology and Mobile Learning

Promote apps like *Cambridge Online Dictionary* that demonstrate pronunciation in real contexts and encourage learners to practice independently outside the classroom.

- Encourage Peer Correction and Group Work

Create pair or group activities where students identify mispronunciations of silent sounds and correct one another and build awareness through collaborative learning.

- Focus on Intelligibility, not Perfection

Teachers should stress that the main goal is *being understood*, even if traces of silent letter mispronunciations remain. This reduces anxiety and builds confidence in communication.

- Develop Locally Relevant Materials

Curriculum designers should create textbooks, pronunciation guides, and exercises that specifically address common difficulties faced by Chadian learners. Examples can be drawn from students' own speech and classroom errors.

Conclusion

The investigation of silent sounds in Chadian English reveals that these seemingly minor features of the English orthographic system exert a significant influence on learners' pronunciation and overall language use. Due to the complex spelling sound relationship in English, Chadian learners often face difficulties in recognizing silent sounds in their speech. This results in phonological deviations such as the unnecessary articulation of

silent "/k/" in words like *knife*, or *silent "/b/"* in *doubt*. Such patterns highlight the gap between written and spoken English, which poses particular challenges in an EFL context like Chad, where English is still relatively new as an academic and communicative tool.

Despite these challenges, the presence of silent sounds in Chadian English provides an important window into learners' strategies for adapting to a non-native language system. It reflects both the interference of French (the dominant language of education) and the limited exposure to native-like English input. Therefore, the phenomenon of silent sounds should not only be viewed as a source of "error," but also as an indicator of the transitional processes in language acquisition. In addition, while silent sounds remain a linguistic challenge, they can be effectively managed through deliberate teaching, consistent practice, and greater exposure. Addressing these issues would improve the spoken English of Chadian learners, enhance their communicative competence, and reduce misunderstandings in both academic and professional contexts. Most definitely, silent sounds in Chadian English underline the importance of targeted pronunciation instruction, increased exposure to authentic English models, and the use of language laboratories or phonetic drills in schools. Addressing these issues can enhance learners' oral competence, promote more intelligible communication, and strengthen the development of English as a growing language of education and interaction in Chad.

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