Adding a New Sound Transcription to the Sound Transcriptions of English Language

Atallah Alroud

Department of Curricula and Instruction, Faculty of Educational Sciences, Tafila Technical University, Tafila, Jordan

ABSTRACT Since a language is a system of sounds, then all the sounds of each language must be clarified with a system of sound symbols in order to facilitate pronunciation. The study aims to indicate the difference between the available sounds of the letter (S) which are /S/ and /Z/ and the available sound of (S), but without a sound symbol, which is / ss / in English language, and adding this new symbol to the sound symbols of English language. The researcher found that the students in Bridgewater State College are confused when using the sounds /S/ and / ss / in Arabic language because there is no sound symbol for the sound / ss / in the native language (English). Through investigating the dictionaries which interest in sound symbols, it is found that none of these dictionaries gave the sound symbol / ss / for the letter (S) as in the word 'sun'. The researcher recommends that this new transcription for the letter (S) be added to the sound symbols of English language in dictionaries and in new studies.

INTRODUCTION AND SIGNIFICANCE

A language, as almost all linguists define, is a means of communication between individuals and groups. They illustrate that there are two types of languages: the verbal language which will be the researcher's interest in this article and the non- verbal language.

The verbal language is considered as a system of letters and sounds (the pronunciation of the letters). The sounds form the words that give or express a meaning or convey an idea or thought from one person to another or to a group.

The Free Dictionary defines language as "a communication of thoughts and feelings through a system of arbitrary signals, such as voice, sounds, gestures or written symbols."

In this article the researcher will take one of the domains of the system: which is sound (pronunciation).

Pronunciation means uttering sounds of symbols, and The Free Dictionary indicates that "by sounds we commonly mean the vibrations that travel through the air and can be heard by human."

When we make an analysis for the speech of any language; two things should be taken into consideration: first, the organs of speech and how these organs function and the second is how a sound is produced.

Linda (1998) states that the International Phonetics Association (IPA) "provides the user with a universally accepted symbol for each of the speech sounds."

Catford (1988) indicates that " in any language we can identify a small number of regularly used sounds (vowels and consonants) that are called phonemes." He also mentioned that "it is important to learn to think of English pronunciation in terms of phonemes rather than letters of the alphabet," and he added that "phonetics is considered the systematic study of human speech sounds. It provides the means for describing and classifying virtually all the sounds that can be produced by human vocal tracts." The researcher found, however, that there is a sound in the English language which does not have a transcription in the IPA or in other dictionaries.

The Problem

Through my experience as a professor of Arabic language in Bridgewater State College in the United States of America, I noticed that the students become confused when they pronounce in Arabic Language the letter (S) and the letter / ss/— as the researcher suggests that this could be the transcription of the new sound in English language — as in the words (sun, san) , which means that they do not differentiate between the two sounds though they are available in their mother tongue Language (L1).

Aim of the Study

The study aims to indicate the difference between the available sounds of the letter (S)

which are /S/ and /Z/, and the available sound / ss /, which does not have a sound symbol in English language, and add it to the sound symbols of English language.

Previous Studies

The sounds of English language, in general, are available in the dictionaries of this language, which means that the conclusions of studies relating to sound symbols are included in dictionaries.

Morreale et al. (2007) say that "if you have any doubt about how to pronounce a word, look it up in a dictionary to see which syllables should be accented."

In this study the researcher will concentrate on the target letter (S), in some dictionaries, to indicate the sound symbols of this letter.

Cambridge Dictionary of American English mentioned the sound /S/ for the letter(S) by giving examples like the word 'say'.

World Book Dictionary gave examples for the sound /S/: the words 'yes' and 'say'.

Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary gave two examples for the sound /S/: the   A Dictionary of Phonetics and Phonology gave one example for the sound /S/: the word 'sauce'.

DISCUSSION

It becomes obvious that the letter (S) has three different sounds. It is well known that the sound of one letter may be changed according to what vowel/s precede/s or follow/s it. However, each sound must have a symbol to facilitate and distinguish pronunciation. There is a difference in the place of articulation between the sound /s/ and the sound/ss/.In /ss/ sound the sides of the tongue rise upper slightly.

Through revising the dictionaries and the IPA;

it is found that none of them mentioned that there is a difference between /S/ and / ss /, and there is no definite symbol for the sound /ss/ in any dictionary or in IPA. So the study meets with the dictionaries and IPA in the sounds /S/ and /Z/, but it indicates the difference in the sound / ss /, for it proves that there is a different sound for the letter (S) available in English language. However, there is no symbol for it among the symbols in the dictionaries or in the IPA. This could be noticed in the word 'suspect' the first (S) is pronounced as/ ss/ and the second is as /S/.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

The researcher recommends that the sound / ss / for the letter (S) should be added to all references with examples. He suggests that extra studies in the field of phonetics should be conducted by comparing the sounds of English language with different languages.

REFERENCES

Cassidy CJ 2007. *Cambridge Dictionary of American English* 2007. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Catford JC 1988. *A Practical Introduction to Phonetics*. Oxford: Claredon House.

Lawrence Robert 1996. *A Dictionary of Phonetics and Phonology*. Newyork, London: Routledge.

Linda I 1998. *Phonetics and Phonology* (A Workbook Approach). New York: State University of New York.

Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary 1993. 10th Edition, Springfield: Merriam-Webster Inc.

Morreale Sherwyn P, Kevin J Barge Brian, Spitzberg H 2007. *Human Communication: Motivation, Knowledge, and Skills.* Belmont: Wadsworth. Publishing Company.

The Free Dictionary. April 15, 2007. www.thefreedictionary.com/73K

World Book Dictionary 2003. Vol. 2. Chicago: World Book.