The Fossilized Pronunciation of the /ɜː:/ Sound in the Speech of Intermediate Tunisian English Students: Problem, Reasons and Suggested Solution

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ABSTRACT

Fossilization is a universal phenomenon that has attracted the attention of teachers and researchers alike. In this regard, the aim of this study is to investigate a supposedly fossilized feature in Tunisian learners’ performance, namely the pronunciation of the /ɜː:/ sound among Intermediate Tunisian English Students (ITES). It tries to show whether ITES pronounce it correctly or whether it is rather often replaced by another phoneme. The study also tries to show the reasons behind fossilization. It is conjectured that L1 interference, lack of exposure to L2 input, and the absence of pronunciation teaching methods are the main factors behind this fossilized pronunciation. Finally, the study tries to apply the audio-articulation method to remedy for this type of fossilization. This method contains many drills that can help learners articulate better, and consequently produce more intelligible sounds.

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