

An Analysis of English Pronunciation Errors Made by Taiwanese Junior College and College Students

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ABSTRACT

English pronunciation teaching deals with individual sounds of English, sounds in connected speech, word and sentence stress, rhythm and intonation. These components are usually divided into two groups: (1) the segmental features of pronunciation (individual sounds and sound combination) and (2) the suprasegmental features (stress, rhythm and intonation). The major purpose of this study was to examine the pronunciation errors made by EFL college students in Taiwan. Three instruments employed were the self-designed diagnostic pronunciation test, the questionnaire, and the individual interview. The sample consisted sixty college students enrolling in the English programs at two colleges; one is a junior college and the other, a university. They were randomly selected. The statistical analysis of the data collected yielded the following findings. The students had trouble with: 1. Consonants and vowels which are absent in Mandarin Chinese. 2. Long vowels in the closed syllable of a word. 3. Longer consonant clusters that do not occur in Mandarin Chinese. 4. The stress, rhythm, pitch and intonation patterns that are completely different from those of Mandarin Chinese. 5. Segmental features that are neglected by EFL teachers in the classroom. 6. The suprasegmental features that have less emphasized in the classroom. The social factors contributing to the students' success in pronunciation include: (a) frequent contact with native speakers, (b) positive attitude toward pronunciation learning, (c) teachers acting as scaffolders for students, and (d) the self-access learning center provided. The findings support the principle of the contrastive analysis, error analysis and crosslinguistic transfer of language and cognition that description of areas of difference can be used to predict areas of difficulty for EFL learners. Many valuable insights have been achieved from the study. Hopefully, the findings would be of value to EFL teachers and material developers who would like to improve the communicative skills of their students.

Keywords : English pronunciation errors、 causes of pronunciation errors、 English pronunciation teaching

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