

The Impact of Automatic Speech Technology on Contrastive Stress among Adult EFL Learners

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ABSTRACT

The study aimed to explore the impact of Automatic Speech Recognition System (ASRS) on the development of English oral abilities including pronunciation, pitch, timing and emphasis for EFL college students in Taiwan. It is used ASRS—MyET to increase students' opportunities of after-class oral practice and training in virtual learning communities. The participants were 40 freshmen at the English Department of DaYeh University in Taiwan. They were assigned into a control group and an experiment group. Each group contains 20 students, including 10 English low-proficient and 10 English high-proficient students according to their English scores of the pretest. The control group received the lecture on contrastive stress in a classroom. In addition to the lecture in a classroom as the control group, the experiment group was required after the class to practice contrastive stress with an ASRS for six weeks. After six-week treatment, all participants did a posttest. The main findings are: (1) The ASRS helps students improve their pronunciation, pitch and timing. (2) The ASRS helps low-proficient students improve their pronunciation, pitch and timing more than high-proficient students. (3) Most students held positive attitudes toward the use of ASRS. Based on the findings, some discussion of the results, pedagogical implications and suggestions for further study are proposed.

Keywords : Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL) ; Automatic Speech Recognition System (ASRS) ; Oral Abilities

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