

CROSS-LANGUAGE SPEECH PERCEPTION BY KOREAN AND POLISH.

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Abstract

This paper is concerned with adults' foreign language acquisition and intends to research the relationship between the mother tongue's phonetic system (L1) and the perception of the foreign language (L2), in this paper Polish and Korean. The questions that are to help to define the aforementioned relationship are 1) how Polish perceive Korean vowels, 2) how Koreans perceive Polish vowels, and 3) how Koreans perceive Korean vowels pronounced by Poles.

In order to identify L2's vowels, the listeners try to fit them into the categories of their own language (L1). On the one hand, vowels that are the same in both languages and those that are articulated where no other vowel is articulated, have the best rate of recognition. For example, /i/ in both languages is a front close vowel and in both languages there are no other front close vowels. Therefore, vowels /i/ (and /a/) have the best rate of recognition in all three experiments. On the other hand, vowels that are unfamiliar to the listeners do not seem to have the worst rate of recognition. The vowels that have the worst rate of recognition are those, that are similar, but not quite the same as those of L1.

This research proves that "equivalence classification prevents L2 learners from producing similar L2 phones, but not new L2 phones, authentically" (Flege, 1987). Polish speakers can pronounce unfamiliar L2 vowels "more authentically" than those similar to L1 vowels. However, the difference is not significant and this subject requires further research (different data, more informants).