

Overcoming phonetic interference: English pronunciation for the Korean learner

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1. Contrastive analysis enables us to predict many pronunciation problems
 - 1.1 compare and contrast the sounds of English and Korean
 - 1.2 where the phonemic systems are the same, positive transfer
 - 1.3 where they are different, negative transfer (= interference)

2. Interference
 - 2.1 phonemic errors, failure to distinguish English phonemes, may lead to confusion; e.g. /p/ vs. /f/, compare Korean [ph] ㅍ?
 - 2.2 phonetic errors, failure to get the sounds exactly right, e.g. /l/ in pull [tʃ], compare Korean [l] in 달?

3. Phonemic contrasts: problem areas
 - 3.1 The contrast /p/ (bilabial plosive) vs. /f/ (labiodental fricative): pin and fin
 - 3.2 The contrast /r/ and /l/, compare Korean ㄹ?: right and light, pray and play
 - 3.3 The contrast /θ/ (dental) vs. /s/ (alveolar): thumb and sum
 - 3.4 Voicing of fricatives, /v, ð, z, ʒ/: cover, other, easy, vision
 - 3.5 Final consonants (i) voiceless vs. voiced: cap vs. cab; (ii) raise vs rage

- § Pre-fortis clipping: right vs. ride
- § The ending of regular plurals: cats, dogs, horses
- § Beware Korean-style assimilation! pop music

- 3.6 The contrast /i:/ vs. /ɪ/, sheep and ship
- 3.7 The contrast /ɜ:/ vs. /ʌ/, shirt and shut
- 3.8 The contrast /e/ vs. /æ/, pet and pat
- 3.9 The contrast /ɔ:/ vs. /əʊ/, caught and coat

4. Phonotactic difficulties

- 4.1 Initial consonant clusters: pray, bread, train, queen, splash
- 4.2 Final consonant clusters: milk, lamp, left, fox, wasp
- 4.3 Medial consonant clusters whisky, doctors, Scotland

5. How can we improve?

- 5.1 Interference: know the differences. Do production drills, ear-training
- 5.2 Spelling-induced: learn each word with its pronunciation, check dictionary

Useful references

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