# Improving Pronunciation is Possible[*]

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**Lee, Vicki. (2005). Improving pronunciation is possible. *English Teaching, 60*(1), 167-181.**

Many phonemes in English are difficult for native speakers of Korean to both hear and pronounce, so the purpose of this study was to see if it was possible to see any measurable improvement in pronunciation in just one semester. Using individual pre- and post-tests, a short practice session each week (covering ten phonemes in total), and speaking and pronunciation practise outside of the classroom, the seventy-two participants did demonstrate significant improvements in both the total number of errors and the pronunciation of several of the phonemes practised. In the light of these results, how to bring learner friendly hearing and pronunciation exercises back into the EFL/ESL classroom through short, but frequent, practice sessions is considered.

## I. INTRODUCTION

In Korea (and many other Asian countries), students study English in elementary, middle and high school, giving them specific knowledge of grammar and vocabulary and considerable exposure to written English. The schools use the same textbooks, curriculum and methodology and, almost always, teachers and students both have the same first language (L1). As a result of all of these factors, although the English spoken in Korea is unique in its homogeneity, it still deviates considerably from the English of native speakers from English speaking countries (Kosofsky, 1987). Kosofsky even goes so far as to say that there is a language community with a self-sustaining dialect, which reproduces and reinforces what might be called Konglish, Korean-English patterns. It is as if the students are speaking in a dialect known only in Korea. Indeed, such dialects are common in many countries. In general, however, such dialects do not transfer to populations outside of the country of their origin. Spanish speakers of English, for example, may understand a Spanglish spoken in their country, but not necessarily a Spanglish spoken in another Spanish speaking country. And neither Spanglish is

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understood in France or in those countries where English is a native language. This may explain why sometimes my students understand each other when they speak English but I do not understand them. This is, of course, occasionally true for native speakers from different countries, as well.

So, for native English speakers who have decided to teach pronunciation, what are some of the difficulties? Firstly, one of the major problems is that we learn English naturally and are not overtly aware of the 'how' of pronunciation. Moreover, if you want to further your knowledge, there is very little systematic training in TESOL programs, the information in the literature is unclear and difficult to apply (Fraser, 1999) and, for publishers, pronunciation is not as profitable as other areas, so there are very few (good) textbooks to choose from (Robertson, 2003). Due to obstacles such as these, pronunciation has been in the English as a Foreign/Second Language (EFL/ESL) 'too hard' basket for too long (Fraser, 2000) and this study will attempt to shed some light on how to get it out, because students still want and need help with their pronunciation. In surveys quoted by Robertson (2003), students value pronunciation, insist more emphasis be placed on it and require more correction. And, according to Kim and Margolis (1999), Korean students are sensitive to pronunciation issues and want improvement. Toward this end, with a lot of practice, over a long period of time, many studies and pronunciation courses, may demonstrate improvements in pronunciation. However, the participants in this study only met for English conversation (not specifically pronunciation), once a week for 50 minutes, for just one semester. Hence, the purpose here was to investigate whether, within these time constraints, it would be possible to achieve any measurable improvement in pronunciation.

## II.  THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

"The pronunciation of a word or language is the way it is usually spoken" (Collins, 1991, p. 1150) and, every language has its own phonemic system or finite set of possible sounds (phonemes). In the case of English, there are 26 letters and over 40 phonemes but, unfortunately, learning English or any other language, involves more than just the mastery of these component sounds.

The formal study of pronunciation began just before the beginning of the twentieth century and its importance tended to be connected with the instructional method of the time. For example, during the grammar-translation period it was almost disregarded. Then, with audiolingualism, from the very beginning, the emphasis was on pronunciation. Later, with the introduction of communicative teaching, pronunciation was either considered within the context of true communication (Cunningham Florez, 1998) or its importance was downplayed once again (Fraser, 2002).

When learning English (and probably any other language), if a sound in the second language (L2) is the same as a sound in L1, it is generally easy to recognise and pronounce. However, if a sound in L2 is not clearly received, it is often converted to the nearest sound in L1. Unfortunately, students often have difficulty hearing unfamiliar sounds or distinguishing between (what they hear as) similar sounds. Thus, when practising pronunciation, you have to listen and imitate as a child learning his/her first language does. Most of us ignore the inside of our mouths unless we have a toothache (Lane, 1993) and now, suddenly, we have to pull all kinds of faces and discover the physical side of language because all sounds are produced in the vocal tract, which includes the larynx, mouth, lips and nose. And, since teachers cannot possibly teach the pronunciation of each and every individual word, students need to start using their dictionaries; not only to check spelling and pronunciation, but also word stress, which is fixed for every English word; in words with more than one syllable, there are three possible stress patterns: one primary, one primary plus one secondary or two equal primary stresses (Kimble-Fry, 2001). These patterns are important because if the stress is on the wrong syllable, a word may be incomprehensible (Kimble-Fry, 2001).

With respect to rhythm, language learners often transfer the rhythm of their L1 to L2. Fortunately, English and Korean (and most European languages and Japanese) are not tone languages. This means that differences in pitch dictate intention or attitude, but do not change the meanings of words (Kimble-Fry, 2001). Secondly, if L2 speakers do not have a broad English vocabulary, it is possible to use intonation and simpler vocabulary for everyday use to convey feelings, attitudes and beliefs (Kimble-Fry, 2001). Finally, native English speakers tend to accept a large range of intonation as normal anyway, including almost monotone (Kimble-Fry, 2001). All of this may indicate that the suprasegmentals (rhythm, sentence stress and intonation) need not be one of the highest priorities for Korean speakers of English.


## III.  SAMPLE

The seventy-two students in this study were in five of the General English Conversation classes at a women's university in Seoul in the second semester, 2003. Classes met once a week for 50 minutes and the participants were all freshmen. Two of the classes majored in Language (30 students in total), and the other three majored in English Language and Literature (10), Natural Science (15), and Humanities (17).

# IV.  METHODOLOGY

## 1. Research Question

Is it possible, with a short practice session each week and practise outside of the classroom, to demonstrate any measurable improvement in pronunciation in just one semester?

## 2. Method

### 1) Practising Pronunciation in Class

According to Nilsen and Nilsen's (1973) comprehensive lists for over fifty languages, Korean students have problems with at least thirty different minimal pairs. Shaffer (2001) also discerned a wide range of pronunciation problems for Korean students: consonants, consonant clusters, released consonants, Korean-influenced problems and orthography-related problems. In his study, the following percentages of students perceived pronunciation problems with these consonants: /T/ (62%), /r/ (48%), /Δ/ (38%), /v/ (38%), /f/ (32%), /z/ (18%), /dZ/ (16%), /Z/ (14%) and /Σ/ (12%)[1]. The five most commonly perceived problems were practised using minimal pair and syntagmatic drills: /T/ and /s/ (**th**ank/**s**ank), /r/ and /l/ (**r**ace/**l**ace), /Δ/ and /d/ (**th**en/**d**en), /v/ and /b/ (**v**an/**b**an), and /f/ and /p/ (**f**ad/**p**ad). For each sound, initial, medial and final positions were practised (from Nilsen & Nilsen, 1973). I also read a sentence with one sound of the pair and students had to discriminate which sound it was (from Nilsen & Nilsen, 1973) and, finally, they practised longer sentences, similar to tongue twisters. For the remaining four, (/z/ (**z**oo), /Z/ (u**s**ual), /dZ/ (**j**am) and /Σ/ (wi**sh**)), using listen and repeat, lists of individual words were practised. Students were given handouts containing all of the above. Then, during the semester, at the beginning of each class, we spent about the first five minutes of class practising pronunciation.

### 2) Speaking and Pronunciation Practise

Because I only saw my classes once a week for 50 minutes, minimal under any circumstances, I wanted students to practise outside of the classroom. Each student had two A-4 sized grid sheets with days of the week across the top and numbers for the weeks of the semester down the left hand side. I asked them to practise speaking with a partner for 10 to 15 minutes, three times a week. On the grid they wrote the name of their partner and

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[1] These problems are also included in Nilsen and Nilsen (1973).

the amount of time they practised (Appendix A). I also asked them to practise their pronunciation for two to three minutes, three times a week and they recorded the sounds and times they practised (Appendix B). Students wrote their total times each week and the semester totals for both sheets at the end of the semester. I checked and initialled the diaries at the beginning of each class.

## 3. Evaluation: Pre- and Post-Tests

The pre- and post-tests consisted of the same thirty-one sentences, which screened the pronunciation of all vowels, diphthongs and consonants in English (Kimble-Fry, 2001) (Appendix C). The students came to the school recording studio and, one by one, read into a microphone, and were recorded onto a cassette tape as they read the 31 sentences. This same test was conducted at the beginning and the end of the semester (pre- and post-tests respectively). This reading method was chosen in light of the Kim and Margolis study (1999), which found that the pronunciation of native speakers changes, depending on the circumstances, with reading tending to be the most precise. If this finding is extrapolated to non-native speakers, reading should most accurately exemplify a student's best ability.

The following instructions were given in both English and Korean to ensure that there were no misunderstandings: Before going into the studio, please read these sentences through silently so that you are familiar with them. This will encourage you to give a fluent, natural and confident delivery. Please try to relax. REMEMBER THIS IS NOT A TEST. IT WILL NOT BE GRADED. Read everything out loud, at a natural, steady pace; don't rush or read deliberately. Don't worry if you make a mistake or stumble over a word. Keep reading and only stop when you reach the end. If there are any unfamiliar words, skip over them and keep reading; it is not important whether you understand the meaning of the sentences or not.

The researcher listened while each student read the sentences. Every type of error was coded, not only the specific phonemes being tested in each sentence. In the recording studio this was quite easy to do because the sound was loud and very clear (I was confident about my error coding and I could check on the tape if I was not sure, but having another native speaker present would have eliminated interrater reliability). After the first recording, I gave each student their pre-test (the 31 sentences with my error coding). I explained the error coding so that each student could see their own personal problems. I was hoping that this would encourage them to focus on their pronunciation because self-monitoring is essential to change (Miller, 2000). This may or may not have been sufficient for self-monitoring and, if time had permitted, I would have interviewed the subjects individually and discussed and explained their problems. In addition, I think it would have been encouraging to give students their pre- and post-tests back so that they could see their improvement.

## 4. Data Analysis

The following data analyses were performed:

1) Raw data for error counts were tabulated and then calculated as percentages of the total number of errors.
2) Paired t-tests for mean improvement (pre- vs. post-) for each type of error.
3) Univariate analysis of variance (ANOVA) between majors.
4) Least significant differences (LSD) between majors.

# V.   RESULTS

During both readings in the recording studio, all mistakes were recorded. Of these, just over one third were not specifically pronunciation errors. These included omitting plural, past tense and other endings, omitting, adding or replacing words, or, with the definite article 'the', using /Δ≅/ before vowels and /Δ□/ before consonants. These errors accounted for 38% of the total and, by far the most common problem was omitting plural endings (23%), with a distant second being replacing words with others (6%).

The remaining 62% of errors related specifically to pronunciation (Table 1). In the following consonant articulation problems, the second sound mistakenly replaced the first: /Δ/-/d/, /Δ/-/s/, /T/-/s/, /T/-/d/, /f/-/p/, /r/-/l/, /l/-/r/, /s/-/Σ/, /s/-/z/. Students also added extra syllables to words, e.g. watch-ed or an intrusive /≅/ (schwa) or /i:/ at the end (notation 'intrusive' in Table 1). Other errors were dividing syllables wrongly (wrongly div), e.g. sin-gers, and pronouncing words so incorrectly as to block understanding (wrong pron).

**TABLE 1**
**Raw Data for Error Counts (in descending order)**

| Error | Pre-Test | Post-test | Total | Percent of Total Errors |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| /Δ/-/d/ | 839 | 305 | 1144 | 43.8% |
| Intrusive | 369 | 301 | 670 | 25.7% |
| Extra syllable | 121 | 128 | 249 | 9.5% |
| /T/-/s | 83 | 34 | 117 | 4.5% |
| /f/-/p/ | 72 | 38 | 110 | 4.2% |
| Wrong pron | 45 | 60 | 105 | 4.0% |
| /r/-/l/ | 54 | 21 | 75 | 2.9% |
| Wrongly div | 29 | 43 | 72 | 2.8% |
| /l/-/r/ | 20 | 4 | 24 | 0.9% |
| /Δ/-/s/ | 19 | 1 | 20 | 0.8% |
| /s/-/Σ/ | 6 | 6 | 12 | 0.4% |
| /T/-/d/ | 9 | 2 | 11 | 0.4% |
| /s/-/z/ | 3 | 0 | 3 | 0.1% |
|  | 1669 | 943 | 2612 | 100.0% |

All of the pronunciation errors which occurred in the pre- and post-tests together with their frequencies, totals and percentages are detailed in Table 1. In the pre-test there were a total of 1669 errors and in the post-test there were only 943, about a 43% decrease. The total number of errors was 2612 and, of these, 43.8% were /Δ/ being replaced by /d/ and 35.2% were adding extra syllables, in the majority of cases (25.7%), an intrusive schwa or /i:/. The next 18.4% included /T/-/s/ (4.5%), /f/-/p/ (4.2%), wrong pronunciation (4.0%), /r/-/l/ (2.9%) and incorrectly syllabifying (2.8%). Hence, only two errors accounted for almost 80% of the pronunciation problems in this study; /Δ/-/d/ and adding extra syllables, including an intrusive schwa or /i:/. On first inspection, the very frequent occurrence of /d/ replacing /Δ/ is noteworthy, but it should also be borne in mind that in the 31 sentences there were a total of 242 words and, of these, there were 31 occurrences of words containing /Δ/, 17 of which were the definite article 'the'. The intrusive schwa was also very widespread, occurring at the end of 71 different words (accounting for 74% of the intrusive errors), but, most often at the end of 'clothes', 'fast', 'dishonest', 'dragged', and 'ends'. In contrast, although the intrusive /i:/ only occurred at the end of four words ('cage', 'page', 'judge', 'large'), these alone made up the remaining 26%. As discussed next, from the results in Table 2, statistically it is clear that there was improvement but, when considering the raw data in Table 1, it may have been better to have either controlled the frequency of the consonants in the pre- and post-tests or calculated the error percentages based on their frequencies of occurrence.

**TABLE 2**
**Paired T-tests for Mean Improvement (pre-post)**

| Error | N | Mean Improvement | SD | t-value |
|-------|---|------------------|-----|---------|
| /Δ/-/d/ | 72 | 7.42 | 4.586 | 13.721*** |
| /Δ/-/s/ | 72 | 0.25 | 0.436 | 4.865*** |
| /T/-/s/ | 72 | 0.68 | 0.947 | 6.099*** |
| /f/-/p/ | 72 | 0.47 | 1.162 | 3.447*** |
| /r/-/l/ | 72 | 0.46 | 0.871 | 4.465*** |
| /l/-/r/ | 72 | 0.22 | 0.451 | 4.181*** |
| /T/-/d/ | 72 | 0.10 | 0.381 | 2.164* |
| Intrusive | 72 | 0.94 | 3.139 | 2.553* |
| /s/-/Σ/ | 72 | 0.00 | 0.291 | 0.000 |
| /s/-/z/ | 72 | 0.04 | 0.262 | 1.349 |
| Extra syllable | 72 | 0.10 | 1.077 | 0.766 |
| Wrongly div | 72 | 0.19 | 1.096 | 1.505 |
| Wrong pron | 72 | 0.21 | 1.138 | 1.554 |
| Total | 72 | 9.68 | 6.550 | 12.542*** |

* p: <0.05     ***p: <0.001
SD: standard deviation

When the errors were considered individually and paired t-tests were performed (pre- vs.

post-), there was a significant improvement in the following pronunciation errors: /Δ/-/d/, /Δ/-/s/, /T/-/s/, /f/-/p/, /r/-/l/ and /l/-/r/ (p<0.001) and /T/-/d/ and intrusive schwa or /i:/ (p<0.05). Notably, with the exception of the latter, these errors were directly focussed on. And, by practising /Σ/ at the end of words during the semester, students became aware of the intrusive /i:/. The difference in the total number of errors was also statistically significant (p<0.001). During the pre- and post-tests there were seemingly no problems with /v/, /z/, /dZ/, /Z/ or /Σ/. It is noteworthy however, that in the 31 sentences, /dZ/ and /Z/ rarely occurred and none of the sentences contained words beginning with /v/ (sentences 24 & 25, Appendix C) or /z/, or ending in /Σ/ (sentences 30 & 31, Appendix C) and, in my experience, this is when these three phonemes appear to be the most difficult (being called 'Vicki', I definitely know that /v/ is a problem). /s/ was also a problem consonant in this study. This phoneme is included in Nilsen and Nilsen's (1973) list, but not in Shaffer's (2001). In this study, the remaining errors, were not specifically focussed on and not significantly improved, namely, /s/-/Σ/, /s/-/z/, adding syllables (other than the intrusive /i:/), dividing syllables wrongly, and words being wrongly pronounced.

**TABLE 3**
**Descriptive Statistics According to Majors**

| Major | N | Mean Improvement | SD |
|---|---|---|---|
| English | 10 | 13.90 | 5.915 |
| Humanities | 17 | 13.41 | 4.664 |
| Language | 30 | 7.87 | 5.444 |
| Natural Science | 15 | 6.27 | 7.723 |

When considering majors, a univariate analysis of variance (ANOVA) confirmed differences between majors (F-ratio=6.617, p<0.001). When this was investigated further using least significant differences (LSD), the result was two groups which were not significantly different: (English, Humanities) and (Language, Natural Science) (Table 3).

I expected the English majors to stand alone because of their higher ability. However, perhaps because all of the students were freshmen, their previous exposure to English would have been limited and therefore not a predictor of ability.

## VI.   DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

In the EFL/ESL classroom, once we decide to teach pronunciation, how do we teach it when students find it the most difficult and teachers favour it the least (Cunningham Florez, 1998)? First of all, most researchers now agree that negative transfer is valid in the acquisition of L2 pronunciation (Celce-Murcia, Brinton, & Goodwin, 1996). Because of this, it is necessary to consider any English phonemes, which have no close equivalent in

L1 because these will probably be the ones that cause the most difficulty. In an EFL (as opposed to ESL) setting where students are generally monolingual, it is easy to discern these common errors and focus on them, rather than burden students unnecessarily with drills they do not need. Shaffer (2001) details problems encountered by Korean students as follows: consonants: /Δ/, /T/, /r/, /l/, /r/+/l/, /v/, /f/, /z/, /dZ/, /Z/, /Σ/, /rl/; released consonants (which generally involve an intrusive schwa or /i:/ at the end): /Σ/, /t/+/p/, /tΣ/ and consonant clusters: /ts/ (coa**ts**), /sts/ (co**sts**), /sks/ (de**sks**), /ths/ (mon**ths**). Then there are also the Korean-influenced problems: /b/, /p/ + /m/, /n/; /t/, /d/ + /m/, /n/; /k/, /g/ + /m/, /n/; /g/, /k/ + /n/; /n/ + /l/; /n/ + /r/; /l/ + /n/; /r/ + /n/ and /Σ/. Luckily, all of the above are consonant problems, which are simpler to solve than vowel problems because consonants can be described more easily. As a consequence, results are quicker and students have a feeling of accomplishment.

Because of the time constraints in this study, we could only practice ten phonemes for just a few minutes each week, for only one semester (/Δ/, /T/, /r / (together with /l/), /f/, /dZ/, /v/, /z/, /Σ/, /Z/). Over the semester there was a significant improvement in the total number of errors as well as in these individual phonemes: /Δ/, /T/, /r/, /l/, /f/. The intrusive schwa or /i:/ (indirectly practised with /Σ/), was also notably improved.

So, from the seemingly endless list of problem phonemes, how do we choose what to focus on and what not to? Firstly, because the fricatives, /Δ/ and /T/ only occur in English and Greek, they create a universal error: /d/, /v/ or /z/ and /f/, /s/ or /t/ typically replace /Δ/ and /T/ respectively, but these sounds are still usually understood by native speakers (Kimble-Fry, 2001). Consequently, these two phonemes should not be given a high priority. In this study, the most common error was /Δ/ being substituted by /d/. And, during the semester, two of the five minimal pairs that I chose to practise were /Δ/ and /d/ and /T/ and /s/. In hindsight, it may have been more productive to spend more time on other pronunciation targets. /s/ and /z/ for example, require finer co-ordination than any other phonemes and native speakers tend to be intolerant of even a slight loss of accuracy with these two sounds (Kimble-Fry, 2001). In addition, if L2 speakers substitute an unusual sound for a standard sound, the word can easily be misunderstood (Kimble-Fry, 2001). For example, Koreans often confuse /f/ with /p/, /b/ with /v/ and /r/ with /l/ and vice versa. Since these are ripe to cause confusion, they should be focussed on first.

Adding syllables (other than the intrusive /i:/), incorrectly syllabifying, and words being wrongly pronounced were not specifically focussed on and did not improve significantly in this study. Han (1997, cited in Kim & Margolis, 1999) points out that often this latter mispronunciation is the result of applying the rules of Korean rather than being physically unable to pronounce a word or sound. This may also account for the fact that students can pronounce certain sounds correctly in some words but not in others. In addition, unlike Korean spelling, which is very scientific and clearly based on phonetics, English spelling is arbitrary and cannot be used to predict pronunciation; some letters have more than one

sound, some sounds have more than one letter and some letters do not have any sound at all. Despite this, there are some patterns. And, since teachers cannot possibly teach all vocabulary, students should be encouraged to use their dictionaries as an indispensable resource not only for spelling and pronunciation, but also for word stress and correct syllable formation (Fraser (1999) discerned that Japanese students also have problems with producing the correct numbers of syllables in words.).

In this study, more than one third of the mistakes were not specifically pronunciation errors. Students tended to omit (and occasionally add) sounds and words, most commonly the final '-s' on plurals or the past tense endings, '-d' or '-ed' or small words like articles and prepositions, perhaps not realising that even though these sounds and words may seem small and insignificant, they still have important grammatical meaning (Gilbert, 2002). Students should be made aware of this.

Finally, two other vital factors in language learning are a positive attitude and endless practise (regularly, but not necessarily for a long time); if students are not lucky enough to have a talent for mimicry, this can be compensated for by persistence. And although it is more comfortable to practise at home with books and tapes, true practise is in actually socialising with native speakers (Kimble-Fry, 2001).

In summary, since it is very difficult to learn grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation at the same time, once students have a basic grasp of English, pronunciation practise should begin. Focus on the most frequent errors first (but only those which create listener confusion), bearing in mind that native speakers cope with some errors better than others. Point out that there are some small words and sounds that should not be excluded and encourage students to be positive, to practise as frequently as possible and to use their dictionaries.

So, once we have decided what to focus on, how do we teach it? First of all, by incorporating pronunciation into the coursework, it does not have an artificial quality of being studied in isolation (Kimble-Fry, 2001). It takes very little class time; five minutes or so, plus mentioning individual problems as they occur. And, although there is a lack of consensus as to one best way to teach pronunciation (Celce-Murcia et al, 1996), there are a number of conventional methods, which are still currently being used:

1. Listen, watch carefully and repeat. During this kind of drilling, students may be embarrassed with this physical side of language learning, but if the teacher is doing it with them, they should soon begin to participate.

2. Show students a diagram (or any kind of visual aid) or describe and demonstrate the positioning of the tongue, teeth, etc for a particular sound.

3. Use minimal pair drills where pairs of words differ in only one sound, e.g. **f**at-**p**at. During these kinds of drills, students are often surprised when they discover that the two sounds in a pair are actually different. For each sound, initial, medial and final positions can be practised, e.g. **l**ice-**r**ice, be**ll**y-be**rr**y, ro**l**e-roa**r**.

4. In syntagmatic drills, there are two words in a sentence differing in only one sound, e.g. There is a **l**ight on the **r**ight. Students listen and repeat.

5. For sound discrimination, students listen to a sentence with one of the sounds and choose which sound they (think they) hear, e.g. 1) Collect / 2) Correct the papers. Students can either circle or write the correct word or number.

6. For contextualised minimal pairs, the minimal pairs are in a short story or dialogue. For example:

Jerry      : Just outside the village there's a very dangerous bridge.

John       : Yes. Charles told me two jeeps crashed on it in January. What happened?

Jerry      : Well George Churchill was the driver of the larger jeep, and he was driving very dangerously. He'd been drinking gin.

John       : George Churchill? Do I know George Churchill?

Jerry      : Yes. That ginger-haired chap. He's the manager of the travel agency in Chester.

John       : Oh, yes. I remember George. He's always telling jokes. Well, was anybody injured?

Jerry      : Oh, yes. The other jeep went over the edge of the bridge, and two children and another passenger were badly injured.

John       : Were both the jeeps damaged?

Jerry      : Oh, yes.

John       : And what happened to George?

Jerry      : George? He's telling jokes in jail now, I suppose! (Baker, 1981)

7. Tongue twisters can be any sentence that literally 'twists your tongue', e.g. Please tell Phyllis to phone her parents in San Francisco.

8. In Korea most students know the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) and this can be very useful when using a dictionary to check the pronunciation of words.

9. Students recite or read a text or dialogue aloud in order to practise their pronunciation.

10. (Unknowingly) record a learner during spontaneous speech, free conversation or a role-play and then listen to the recording afterwards to check pronunciation.

The last two methods may have students reading from (sometimes contrived) scripts. In contrast, the first eight methods, all of which were used in this study, focus on sounds at the word level and, according to the statistics here, had some degree of success, suggesting valuable potential for pronunciation teaching and learning. Further research is required however, in order to investigate whether or not this pronunciation improvement flows over into spontaneous conversation.

In the mid-late 70s, when the communicative approach was in its infancy, the ten methods above were actually rejected outright in favour of teaching the suprasegmental features of language (Celce-Murcia et al, 1996). Today, the pendulum has swung half way back to the more balanced view of teaching both segmentals (phonemes) and

suprasegmentals (Celce-Murcia et al, 1996). And suddenly, on the basis of empirical and anecdotal evidence, pronunciation has become important once again because there is a certain threshold level that non-native speakers must attain in order to be able to communicate (Celce-Murcia et al, 1996). In the last decade, pronunciation has become pivotal (Fraser, 2002) because, although English teachers are generally accepting of mistakes, native speakers often are not (Dalton, 1997). Nonetheless, native speakers do tend to overlook awkwardness in expression if a non-native speaker's pronunciation is clear. Conversely, inadequate pronunciation can hide otherwise good language skills (Fraser, 1999). It goes without saying that the main goal should be to understand and be understood, without regard for accent because there is, after all, a distinction between a foreign accent and poor pronunciation (Fraser, 2000).

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## APPENDIX A

### Speaking Practise

Name: : Sujin Lee      S/N: 036952      Class: W5

|  | Mon | Tues | Wed | Thur | Fri | Sat | Sun | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 2 |  | 미옥10 |  | 수근12 |  | 다영13 |  | 35 |
| 3 | 주영11 |  | 미숙14 |  | 아라10 |  |  | 35 |
| 4 |  | 다영12 |  | 아라15 |  | 주영10 |  | 37 |
| 5 | 다영13 |  |  |  | 수근15 |  | 미옥9 | 37 |
| 6 | 미숙10 |  | 미옥9 | 미숙10 |  |  |  | 29 |
| 7 |  | 주영11 | 미숙14 |  |  |  | 아라10 | 35 |
| 8 | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 9 |  |  | 미옥10 |  | 다영13 |  | 다영12 | 35 |
| 10 |  | 미옥9 |  | 다영13 |  |  | 수근15 | 37 |
| 11 | 주영11 |  | 미숙10 |  |  | 아라10 |  | 31 |
| 12 |  | 미숙10 |  |  | 수근12 | 미옥9 |  | 31 |
| 13 |  |  | 미숙10 | 주영10 | 수근12 |  |  | 32 |
| 14 |  | 주영11 | 미숙14 |  |  |  | 아라10 | 35 |
| 15 | 미옥10 |  |  |  | 미숙14 | 아라15 |  | 39 |
| 16 | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  |  |  |  |  | Semester Total |  |  | 448 |

## APPENDIX B

Pronunciation Practise

Name: Sujin Lee              S/N: 036952              Class: W5

|     | Mon    | Tues    | Wed    | Thur    | Fri     | Sat     | Sun    | Total |
| --- | ------ | ------- | ------ | ------- | ------- | ------- | ------ | ----- |
| 1   | ---    | ---     | ---    | ---     | ---     | ---     | ---    | ---   |
| 2   |        | /T//s/3 |        | /T//s/2 |         | /T//s/3 |        | 8     |
| 3   | /l//r/2 |        | /l//r/2 |        | /T//s/3 |         |        | 7     |
| 4   |        | /Δ//d/3 | /Δ//d/3 |        |         |         | /l//r/2 | 8     |
| 5   | /v//b/4 |        |        | /v//b/2 | /T//s/3 |         |        | 9     |
| 6   |        | /p//f/3 | /p//f/3 |        |         | /Δ//d/3 |        | 9     |
| 7   | /z/1   |         |        | /z/2    |         |         | /v//b/2 | 5     |
| 8   | ---    | ---     | ---    | ---     | ---     | ---     | ---    | ---   |
| 9   | /Z/3   |         |        | /Z/3    | /z/2    |         |        | 8     |
| 10  |        | /dZ/3   | /Z/3   |         |         | / dZ/4  |        | 10    |
| 11  | /Σ/2   |         |        | /Σ/2    |         |         | /Σ/4   | 8     |
| 12  |        | /T//s/3 | /l//r/2 |        | /Δ//d/3 |         |        | 8     |
| 13  | /v//b/2 |        |        | /T//s/3 |         | /p//f/3 |        | 8     |
| 14  |        | /Z/3    | /Σ/2   |         |         |         | /T//s/2 | 7     |
| 15  |        | /p//f/3 |        | / dZ/3  |         | /Σ/2    |        | 8     |
| 16  | ---    | ---     | ---    | ---     | ---     | ---     | ---    | ---   |

Semester Total    |    103

## APPENDIX C

Pre- and Post-test Sentences

1. /i:/ They meet their teacher every week.
2. /□/ My sister can pick up the tickets.
3. /e/ It is best to check the petrol tank.
4. /{/ She was happy to pack her bags.
5. /A:/ The fast boat starts from the harbour.
6. /ç/ Please come to supper with your mother.
7. /≅/ He took away two jackets and umbrellas.
8. /3:/ Your loud words will disturb those birds.
9. /u:/ She always chooses his boots and shoes.
10. /Y/ They stood and looked at the football.
11. /O:/ We bought only four new horses.
12. /Θ/ I know what the shop has in stock.
13. /α□/ You can fly your kite if you like.
14. /αY/ Don't shout so loudly in the house.
15. /O□/ Your boys should avoid buying oysters.
16. /e□/ He made a mistake on this page.
17. /əY/ The hotel is open for most events.

/m/, /n/, /N/

18. I'**m** hop**ing** the **m**arket ope**n**s at seve**n** this mor**ning**.

19. The you**ng** si**ng**ers are lo**nging** to perfor**m** dow**n**tow**n**.

/j/, /h/

20. **H**er **wh**ole litter of **y**apping pups is be**y**ond the **h**ill.

21. It's dishonest **h**aving **h**alf of **y**our **y**oung staff on hourly rates.

/l/, /r/, /n/

22. He **l**ikes to comp**l**ain as his **r**elatives are te**rr**ibly st**r**ict.

23. We'**ll** p**r**obab**l**y be g**r**ateful the sa**l**e e**n**ds tomo**rr**ow.

/f/, /v/, /w/, /p/, /b/

24. All **f**ive sur**v**ivors **w**a**v**ed after jum**p**ing a**b**out **w**ildly.

25. I **b**uy chea**p** overseas **w**ines **wh**enever **p**ossi**b**le.

Stop clusters

26. Guar**ds** wa**tched** as the obje**cts** were che**cked** and lis**ted**.

27. The enra**ged** ca**ts** were dra**gged** into the crow**ded** cage.

/T/, /Δ/

28. My mo**th**er **th**inks of no**th**ing o**th**er **th**an new clothes.

29. Bo**th** of **th**em saw **th**e man soo**the** his you**th**ful wife.

/s/, /z/, /Σ/, /Z/, /tΣ/, /dZ/

30. The **sh**ow **j**u**dge** per**s**i**sts** in a**s**king **s**ear**ch**ing que**sti**on**s**.

31. **Sh**e **ch**oo**s**e**s** lar**ge** car**s** and e**x**pen**s**ive plea**s**ure crui**s**e**s**.

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