

*The Production of L2 Vowels by Chinese EFL Learners: An Acoustic Perspective on Pre-fortis Clipping**

Weijing ZHOU

Jiangsu University of Science and Technology (JUST), PRC

This study examines the acquisition of pre-fortis clipping by eight Chinese EFL learners (CEFLs). The data were collected in the phonetics laboratory at Cambridge University and analyzed with reference to eight British Received Pronunciation speakers (BRPSs). Three results were found: (1) there are significant differences between the average vowel duration in pre-stop contexts by CEFLs and BRPSs; (2) CEFLs' greatest difficulties lie in the production of /ɪ:/ and /ɜ:/ before the bilabial stops, /ɔ:/ and /ɜ:/ before velar stops, /ʌ:/ before both the bilabial and velar stops, /ɒ/ before bilabial stops, /æ/ before both bilabial and velar stops and /ɪ/ in all the pre-stop contexts; and (3) pre-fortis clipping is the most problematic for CEFLs in the pre-bilabial stop context. These findings have significant implications for the teaching of EFL phonetics in China.

Introduction

Pre-fortis clipping is a very prominent feature of English. In both Received Pronunciation (RP) and American English, the duration of a vowel is influenced by whether the following consonant is voiced or voiceless (Ashby & Maidment, 2005; Collins & Mees, 2008; Ladefoged,

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