Problematic English Sounds Encountered by Korean Students: (A Case Study of 10 Korean Students Studying English in Jakarta)

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Abstract

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The main purpose of this study is to analyze the problematic sounds for Korean students. The first purpose of this study is to investigate the similarities and differences between English and Korean sounds. And the next purpose of this study is to investigate problematic sounds encountered by Korean students. And the last purpose is to analyze the reasons of the problems. The background that researcher did this research is there are too many problems for Korean students while pronouncing English sounds. It happens not only among the researcher's Korean friends but also it is rather problematic to the researcher. The study conducts problematic English sounds test for 10 Korean students from age 18-23 who are learning English in Jakarta. Each respondent's pronunciation is recorded by recorder player. The study result from contrastive analysis showed that there were many differences between English and Korean sounds. In contrast with the English sounds, the following sounds do not exist in Korean: /f/, /v/, /θ/, /ð/, /z/, /ʒ/, /r/, /I/, / /, /ə/, /ɑ/, /u/, /ɔ/. Due to the difference between English and Korean sound systems, Korean students tend to transfer neighboring sounds of Korean to English in pronouncing English. Therefore they tend to make mistakes pronouncing English. In this study students were found to make 80-90% of errors in pronouncing the selected consonants of 1) /b/: /p/. 2) /f/: /p/. 3) /b/: /v/ 4) /j, ch/: /z, z/. 5) /s/ 6) /l/: /r/. 7) /s/: /th/ . 8) /th /: /s, or z/ and the selected vowels of 1) short "i": long "e", 2) extra "eu" and "ee" sounds, 3) long "o": short "o", 4) short "a": short "e".

To minimize these English pronunciation problems encountered by Korean students, special effort should be exerted at the university and in daily life.

Keyword: pronunciation, problematic English sounds, Korean students, similarities and differences, consonants and vowels

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