

The Importance of Prosody in a Proper English Pronunciation for EFL Learners

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Abstract

The present article deals with the acquisition of Received Pronunciation (RP) English prosodic features namely word- sentence stress and intonation by Algerian learners of English as a foreign language. It aims at identifying ways of helping learners achieve a good pronunciation through the mastery of these features. The work was based on data retrieved from the observation and study of 30 third year students of English at the University of Oran as they majored in BA English. The corpus was collected through recordings which were carried out on two phases, prior and after being taught the prosodic features and their rules in order to evaluate their pronunciation accuracy. Results were analyzed acoustically with Praat software (Boersma, 2001) and show that by placing stress and intonation patterns in the right place in words and utterances, 20% of students achieved nearly a perfect pronunciation, 46% clear and 33% understandable, suggesting that the aforementioned features play an important role in pronunciation accuracy and speech intelligibility. Based on these results the current study makes recommendations for prioritizing supra-segmental features in pronunciation teaching classes, and suggests real and computerized environments to assess students' progress (Hardison, 2004).

Keywords: EFL Orani students, intonation, pronunciation, supra-segmental features, stress

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