

PDF issue: 2024-08-08

Phonological Awareness in Adult Japanese EFL Learners

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(Degree) 博士 (学術) (Date of Degree) 2019-03-25 (Date of Publication) 2020-03-01 (Resource Type) doctoral thesis (Report Number) 甲第7374号 (URL) https://hdl.handle.net/20.500.14094/D1007374

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(別紙様式3)

論 文 要 旨

氏 名 藤幸 千賀 専 攻 グローバル文化 指導教員氏名 山田 玲子 教授 論文題目(外国語の場合は日本語訳を併記すること)

Phonological Awareness in Adult Japanese EFL Learners (成人日本人英語学習者の Phonological Awareness に関する研究)

論文要旨

Phonological awareness is the awareness that speech consists of sound units such as phonemes, rimes, and syllables. The term also refers to conscious ability of identifying and manipulating such sound units within spoken words. Phonological awareness is known for its strong relation to a success in reading and spelling of one's first language acquisition as well as in second language learning. Several studies have demonstrated that a phonological awareness instruction was beneficial for young English learners who spoke non-alphabetic language as their first language (L1). To our knowledge, no study has investigated general phonological awareness among Japanese English as Foreign language (EFL) learners and examined whether training to enhance phonological awareness is beneficial for them. For many Japanese learners who receive/have received common English education in Japan, phonological awareness training will be a useful tool to compensate the lack of second language (L2) exposure and foster phonological awareness. In this study, with an aim to provide beneficial educational implication for all Japanese EFL learners including both young and adult, we investigated into phonological awareness among adult Japanese speakers and explored how it is related to their English word reading. Furthermore, the effects of phonological awareness training on phonological awareness. English word reading and word-spelling were examined.

Study 1 was conducted to capture the general phonological awareness among adult Japanese learners. It also examined whether phonological awareness training would enhance phonological awareness among adult Japanese EFL learners as well as how it affects on their English word reading and spelling. Twenty Japanese university students participated an experiment adapting a pretest posttest design: ten participants underwent 16-20-session phonological awareness training while the other ten took the tests only. The test results showed: 1. phonological awareness at all levels,

i.e. phonemes, rimes, syllables, had been comparably developed in adult Japanese learners unlike young learners who have stronger phonological awareness than phonemic awareness; 2. Improvement in some of the phonological awareness task was found in the training group, yet the change was not statistically significant. This suggests despite pre-existing phonological knowledge and ability, improving phonological awareness requires a great amount of intensive training for adult Japanese learners; 3. there was a significant positive change in the word-spelling in both the training and the control group, showing no clear evidence of training effects on word-spelling; 4. significant training effects was found on word-reading; the training group has significantly improved their word-reading in terms of segmental properties as well as prosodic ones. In summary, Study 1 indicated that phonological awareness training is beneficial for adult Japanese ELF learners, yet it did not show that the improvement in phonological awareness contributed to better word-reading and spelling.

Study 2 was, then, conducted to explore unique benefits of enhancing phonological awareness for adult Japanese EFL learners. This study compared the effects of phonological awareness training with the effects of word repetition training on learners' phonological awareness, word reading and spelling. It was shown that some of the phonological skills have improved through the phonological awareness training but not through the word repetition training, indicating explicit instruction and training is essential for adult Japanese EFL learners to raise their phonological awareness. Considering young EFL learners received the phonological awareness training along with their regular English lesson at school, using phonological awareness in combination to other types of English learning may increase the training effects on phonological awareness. A correlation analysis revealed moderate associations between some of the measures of phonological awareness and the word reading of adult Japanese learners. Although tentatively, the result provides beneficial implication as to which phonological skills should be tested and improving what phonological skill is beneficial for Japanese learners.

The study also demonstrated that both the phonological awareness training and the word repetition training improved segmental as well as prosodic properties of trainees' word reading. A further examination into the size of improvement revealed that the phonological awareness training improved the prosodic features of word reading more significantly than the word repetition training. As for word spelling, the effects of two training were comparable; both the phonological awareness training and the word repetition training significantly reduced the number of errors in the spelling in general.

In Study 3, we evaluated Japanese learners' English pronunciation using six metrics: phoneme substitution, epenthesis, elision, primary stress, rhythm and overall goodness. The aim of this study was to make an exemplary assessment that examines learners' pronunciation by its segmental and prosodic properties and evaluates in terms of perceived goodness or native likeness. In order to explore the relations between phonological awareness at various levels and trainees' word reading as well as to measure and exhibit the effect of phonological awareness training on trainees' word reading in our study, we needed such a detailed assessment. Following the trend

that native-like pronunciation is neither a realistic nor a suitable goal for leaners of English as a second language most of the studies on L2 propunciation or foreign accents have evaluated the pronunciation only in terms of its effect on intelligibility or comprehensibility of learners' utterances. In this study which evaluated thirty-nine English words pronounced by ten Japanese speakers, various substitutions including /a/ for /ə/, /i/ for /ı/ and /ɪ/ (alveolar flap) for /ı/ as well as epenthesis of /u/ were frequently observed. A correlation analysis between overall goodness and the other metrics suggests that both segmental (substitution) and prosodic (primary stress and rhythm) features were associated with overall goodness. Among the metrics, rhythm had the strongest correlation to overall goodness, which suggests listeners' judgement of pronunciation goodness depends on rhythm more than the accuracy in primary stress or segmental errors. Interpreting the result from leaners perspective, acquiring tense-lax distinction may open the door to an immediate improvement in pronunciation, since successful production of weak vowels are associated with good rhythm. This study demonstrates that a multi-metric pronunciation evaluation can precisely describe learners' pronunciation and can provide instructive feedback. Advanced non-native speakers, for whom an evaluation only in terms of intelligibility or comprehensibility is no longer helpful for improving their pronunciation, could benefit from this type of detailed assessment. Furthermore, accumulating systematic pronunciation assessment like this study is beneficial not only for a deeper and broader understanding of learners' English but also to the development of pronunciation teaching. Computer-based pronunciation assessment and feedback, for example, will be more precise and instructive by integrating knowledge gained from such data.

Study 1, 2 and 3 together, we believe, will make a great contribution to the development in pronunciation teaching and training for Japanese EFL learners.

[課程博士用]

論文審査の結果の要旨

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論 文 題 目	Phonological Awareness in Adult Japanese EFL Learners (成人日本人英語学習者の Phonological Awareness に関する研究)							
判 定	合格・不合格							
論文チェック ソフトによる 確 認	□ 未確認 理由:							
審	区 分	職名		氏	名			
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別紙の通り								

更 旨

本論文は Phonological awareness (以下、PA) に焦点をあて、日本語を母語とする英語学習者 (以下、日本人英語学習者) の英語音声に対する PA の特徴を実験から明らかにし、その PA を高めることができるか、どのような効果があるかを訓練実験を行って検証したものである。PA とは音声言語 (単語やフレーズなど) が音素や音素のかたまりである音節で構成されているという認識、また音声言語内の音素、ライム、音節を識別、操作ができる能力を示している。

第1章では、PAに関する先行研究をまとめたうえで、本研究の必要性と目的について述べている。PAと読み書き能力との関係、第2言語習得においてもPAのインストラクション・トレーニングが有効であることが多数報告されている。本論文では、しかし、これまでに日本人英語学習者を対象とした研究はこれまでなされていないこと、対象が就学前後の児童としている場合がほとんどであることを指摘し、成人日本人英語学習者の英語力を向上させるためにPAの訓練は有効である可能性を述べる。このような背景から、本論文では日本人英語学習者のPAの特徴について調べ、さらにトレーニングが有益かを検証するため、以下の点を明らかにする実験を行った。

第2章 (実験1)では20名の日本人大学生、大学院生をPAトレーニングを受けるグループとコントロールグループに分けた。両グループとも、Pretest、Posttest において、3つのテスト:PAテスト、word・pelling テスト、word・reading テストを受けた。その結果、Pretest 時のPAテストの両グループ合わせた平均正答率は54%と日本人大学生のPAが高くないことが明らかになった。PAテストとして実施された8種類の課題の平均正答率間に有意差はなかった。PAトレーニンググループでは、訓練によりいつくかのタスクの正答率が上昇したが、統計的な有意差はなく、成人日本人英語学習者が訓練によってPAを高めるのは容易ではないことが示唆された。一方、Word・reading テストでは両グループで平均正答率が有意に上昇したが、Word spelling テストは向上せず、PAのテストや訓練が英単語の読み(本論文においては発音の良さ)に良い影響を及ぼすことが示唆された。

第3章 (実験 2) では PA トレーニングと他の発音トレーニングの効果を比較するため、10 名の大学生、大学院生に一般的な練習方法といえる単語復唱トレーニングを実施し、実験100 P Aグループと比較した。その結果、どちらのグループにも単語の読みに上達がみられたが、単語の読みの韻律的なな要素において PA トレーニングが単語復唱トレーニングよりも高い効果があることが示唆された.

第4章 (実験3)では実験1、2で用いた発音の評価方法について検証した。成人日本人学習者による英単語発音を6つの評価項目を使って多角的、詳細に評価し、分節レベル、韻律レベルのどちらの要素がより「発音のよさ」に関係しているのかを調べた。その結果、どちらも発音の良さと高い相関があることが示されたが、韻律的なな要素の方が相関が高かった。この結果により、発音のリズムを改善、上達させることが、日本人英語学習者の発音が「よく」なるための近道であることが示唆されたと言える。

第5章では、3つの実験の結果から成人日本人英語学習者は英語音声のPAが低く、トレーニングによって改善されにくい一方、英単語の読みには訓練効果が般化する可能性があること、その際、発音のリズムの改善が重要であること等が示されたことを総合的に考察している。

本論文では、外国語の音声知覚、生成、学習については。音韻や韻律に着目して研究が進むなか、より根本的な PA に着目し、成人日本人英語学習者の PA の特徴を明らかにした点で新規性を高く評価することができる。実験参加者や発音評定者の数が十分ではないという問題点が残るが、優れた実験計画により、PA の特徴と今後の研究の指針を明らかにした今後の発展が期待できる研究と言える。また、PA テストでは、一般的に使用されている子供向けのテストを、課題、使用単語、共に成人向けに改訂し、8種類の課題からなるテストプロトコルとパソコンによるプログラムを開発した点で、独創的といえる。

以上のことから、本研究は人間のコミュニケーションの基礎となる音声言語の基本的な単位に着目し、実験を通して日本人英語学習者の英語音声知覚、生成の問題点の基本的な要素を浮き彫りにし、外国語学習において音韻の重要性を示す知見を得た学術的価値のある研究と評価する。なお、本論文に関連する査読付き論文も公表され、国内外での口頭発表の実績も積んでいる。

よって、学位申請者の藤幸千賀は、博士(学術)の学位を得る資格があると認める。

(以上)