

Comparing the Effectiveness of a Vocabulary Stress Teaching Method between
Two Groups of English Major Students

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Abstract

Due to a considerable dissimilarity in the linguistic nature of Chinese and English and a serious lack of authentic oral modeling in the classroom, Chinese students of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) usually receive little phonological education. As a consequence, they often, ignore English sounds to the extent that they seemingly become effectively deaf to the English language. To a native English speaker, the improperly accented English words spoken by these students sound hesitant, inarticulate, and sometimes, completely unintelligible. In this study, a strong positive Pearson correlation coefficient between correct word stress placement and word intelligibility supports the notion that correct stress placement increases authenticity in pronunciation thereby enhancing the non-native speakers' intelligibility by native speakers. This study provides substantial and undeniable evidence demonstrating the potential of these stress prediction rules in helping EFL learners improve their Standard American English (SAE) pronunciation. By correctly accenting syllables, non-native speakers of English, particularly Chinese English students, are able to eliminate unwanted foreign accents, reduce the likelihood of miscommunication with English speakers, and improve the overall intelligibility of their spoken English.

Keyword : accent, lexical stress, multi-syllable vocabulary, orthography, comprehensibility