

CHAPTER FOUR

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this chapter is to take a look at the research in order to assess what has been achieved and what still needs to be done. In attempting this, I am going to present what I have obtained from my research and also to conclude on my findings.

In analysing language transfer there is a strong assumption that most of the difficulties faced by the L2 learner are imposed by his or her first language. It is assumed that where there are differences between the L1 and L2, the learner's L1 knowledge will interfere with L2, and where the L1 and L2 are similar, the L1 will actively aid learning of L2. The similarities between L1 and L2 will function positively, while the differences will function negatively. The differences may become a difficulty that learner of L2 will face.

In this chapter, I am going to state the differences which become problems for the respondents. It is proved that when the respondents learn or read several English sounds, they still find difficulties on account of the differences between the Mandarin

and the English sounds. Their failure is caused by the different ways of pronouncing the sounds. First of all, some vowel sounds in Mandarin are pronounced as in the English phonology. However, the difference is in the length. In English, the sounds [i:], [ɑ:], [u:] are pronounced longer than the sounds [i], [ɑ], [u] in Mandarin. If we refer to table 1 about the Percentage of the Accuracy of Pronouncing the English Vowel Sounds, in general, more than 70% of the respondents are able to pronounce those three sounds accurately and the rest pronounce them inaccurately. This is due to the fact that such vowel sounds are pronounced much longer in English than in Mandarin. Therefore, when the respondents pronounce the words that contain those sounds, they will pronounce them shorter and it makes the respondents fail in pronouncing the sounds. We can say that the failure is caused by the negative transfer (interference).

The complex difficulties are faced when the respondents pronounce the consonant sounds. Some consonants sounds, i.e. [b], [d], [g] are pronounced inaccurately, the respondents find them difficult because there is no voiced–stop sound in Mandarin.

In addition, most respondents are still influenced by the *Pinyin* writing system. This problem is also troublesome and causes inconvenience to the respondents in reading the English words. In the *Pinyin* writing system some consonant letters are read differently from English, for example the letter b, d, g are not pronounced [b], [d], [g], so that it causes the respondents to read the English words containing those sounds incorrectly.

Other things that have a big role for some respondents' failing to pronounce the English consonant sounds are the differences between the English and the Mandarin sound systems. For instance, in the Mandarin phonology, there is a place of articulation which affects the learner's failure or success, namely retroflex. There are four retroflex sounds i.e. [ʐ], [ʂ], [ʑ] and [ʑʰ]. All of them do not exist in English. Theoretically, when they are pronounced there should be a difficulty. However, the sounds [ʂ] and [ʑʰ] do not become an obstacle for the respondents to read the words containing the sounds [ʃ] and [tʃ]. It is true that the place of articulation of the sounds [ʃ] and [tʃ] is different from [ʂ] and [ʑʰ]; however, the manner of articulation is the same, [ʂ] and [ʃ] are fricatives, whereas [ʑʰ] and [tʃ] are affricates, and when they are produced the sounds are similar. Therefore, most of the respondents are successful in pronouncing the words that contain the sounds [ʃ] and [tʃ].

After examining all the consonant sounds, I also find one sound existing in both the English and the Mandarin phonology, that is the sound [ŋ]. Up to this point, this condition is considered to be a positive transfer; however, when we step further, it is classified into the negative transfer. In this case, the old habit or the pattern of the learner's first language gets in the way of learning this sound. When the respondents pronounce the English words containing the sound [ŋ] in the final position, the sound [ŋ] unites into the vowel preceding it, and the vowel undergoes nasalisation. It is true,

that in the English phonology some vowel sounds also undergo nasalisation, but the difference is that in the Mandarin phonology when the vowel sounds undergo nasalisation, the alveolar–nasal sound [n] almost disappears, whereas in the English phonology the nasal sound still remains.

In chapter three, I classify the sounds into the positive transfer, the negative transfer and the peculiarity. The term peculiarity is concerned with the motivation factor, the learner's intuitive appeal or inner spirit. This factor becomes the most influential one in learning the English pronunciation because of the respondents' jobs.

As a result, the questions concerning the reason for the occurrence of peculiarity have been answered by the motivation factor, and it is true that when the respondents fail in pronouncing a particular sound, the failure is caused by their inability instead of by their lack of knowledge. While recording the respondents' voices, I listen to their voices carefully in an attempt to avoid a failure while analysing the data, and that is why the respondents are able to pronounce the sounds which do not exist in the Mandarin phonology.

Hence, the final conclusion is in general the respondents whose first language is Mandarin, still transfer not only the positive but also the negative transfer. The transfer will continually occur because it is hard to avoid the influence of their mother tongue as it keeps affecting them in learning the English pronunciation.

I am sure those whose first language is Mandarin will find this thesis beneficial when they learn English as a second language. The teachers who teach the English pronunciation to the Mandarin speakers may benefit from this thesis as well.

By contrasting the English phonology and the Mandarin phonology, people whose L1 is Mandarin are able to know the differences, such as in the place of articulation and the manner of articulation, between the English phonology and the Mandarin phonology. Afterwards they can learn the differences and fix their mistakes, so that they are able to pronounce the English words accurately. Moreover, the English teachers can teach those whose L1 is Mandarin about the right way of pronouncing the English words for the purpose of enabling those whose L1 is Mandarin to pronounce the English words accurately.

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