

## Task Variation and Accuracy Predictor in Interlanguage Phonology Production

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### 1. INTRODUCTION

Research on style-shifting has its roots in Labovian sociolinguistics. Since Labov (1966, 1969) demonstrated that there is no single style native language (NL) speaker and further claimed that style-shifting occurs along the single dimension of attention paid to the form of speech, numerous attempts have been made to see if a similar phenomenon is to be observed in interlanguage (IL) as it is in natural language. Dickerson (1975) was among the first to explore such a supposition in her examination of ten Japanese speakers of English on the production of the English /z/ on a longitudinal basis. She analyzed the subjects' utterances in three different tasks and found that the subjects used more target or targetlike variants in a task where they could pay more attention to their speech. Since other studies exploring style-shifting in IL produced similar results (e.g., Dickerson and Dickerson, 1977; Schmidt, 1977; Sato, 1985), it would seem reasonable to surmise that, in ESL settings, IL speech production does vary at least primarily according to the amount of attention the speaker is paying to the speech. On the other hand, in EFL settings, although it has been informally observed that even students who manage to pronounce isolated words in the targetlike manner often fall back on the native-language-like variants once in free speech, empirical data concerning this phenomenon among EFL learners does not seem to be sufficient. Whether and to what extent EFL learners demonstrate style-shifting according to the oral task is of great theoretical and pedagogical interest. This is the first area this study addresses.

Another finding common to many of the style-shifting studies in ESL settings is that IL speakers progress over time by becoming able to produce more target variants in less formal tasks (e.g. Dickerson, 1975; Sato, 1985). However, the present writer's observations over nearly ten years of more than 2000 Japanese learners of English in Japan, ranging from junior high 1st year students to senior high 3rd year students, somewhat contradicts this finding. The writer's observations indicate that, in EFL contexts, the learner's pronunciation accuracy fossilizes at a relatively early stage of their English learning, i.e., in the first one or two years, and does not

improve over a longer time period. In other words, learners' pronunciation accuracy seems to have little to do with the length of time they have spent learning English. For example, individual differences among high school 1st year students seem to be much greater than that between the average 1st year student and the average 3rd year student. Whether or not the writer's observations are accurate is also investigated in this study.

In order to account for individual differences in phonological attainment, diverse variables have been presented. For example, in Suter (1976) and its follow-up study Purcell and Suter (1980), where the correlations were calculated between English pronunciation accuracy scores and a battery of 20 variables for 61 nonnative speakers of English, the meaningful variables were found to be : native language, aptitude for oral mimicry, residency, and strength of concern for pronunciation accuracy. The first three of these variables are beyond teachers' control. Of particular interest to English teachers, then, is how the last variable, the speaker's strength of concern for pronunciation, influences EFL learners' pronunciation accuracy. This is the third area this study addresses.

## 2. THE STUDY

### *The Purpose*

The purpose of this study is to investigate task variation among EFL learners in relation to the number of years they have spent learning English and in relation to their strength of concern for their pronunciation. It attempts to shed some light on the overall picture of EFL learners' IL phonology by exploring the occurrence of one specific segmental phoneme /r/. The choice of this particular consonant is based on the assumption that, due to the lack of /r/ vs /l/ distinction in Japanese, it is one of the sounds most focused on in classrooms. Therefore, the accuracy of /r/ production is assumed to reflect to some extent the overall pronunciation accuracy of the learner. The specific research questions this study attempts to answer are:

- (1) Does style-shifting occur in EFL learners? Does pronunciation accuracy of /r/ vary according to different oral tasks in an EFL context?
- (2) Does pronunciation accuracy of /r/ improve over time in an EFL context?
- (3) How does the learners' strength of concern about their pronunciation relate to pronunciation accuracy of /r/ in an EFL context?

## *Hypotheses*

Based on the review of the literature and the writer's observation over time, it is hypothesized that, in the case of Japanese learners of English in Japan (an EFL situation) :

H1: More targetlike production of /r/ is observable when more attention is paid to the form of language.

H2: There is no significant correlation between the subjects' pronunciation accuracy of /r/ and the number of years they have spent learning English.

H3: There is a significant correlation between the subjects' pronunciation accuracy of /r/ and their strength of concern about pronunciation.

## *Subjects*

The subjects in this study were 60 Japanese learners of English, studying at Otsuma Tama High School in Tokyo. They are all female students, twenty of whom had learned English approximately for 3 years, another twenty for 4 years, and still another twenty for 5 years. They were selected for this study from among 120 students by the following procedure:

A written questionnaire was given to 40 1st year, 40 2nd year, and 40 3rd year students, to measure their strength of concern about their pronunciation of English on a 1-7 point scale (see Appendix A) . The question was presented together with three other camouflage questions so that the subjects would not notice our intent in this experiment. Furthermore, the questionnaire was conducted in a way that the subjects would feel free to answer frankly; they were assigned random numbers which would identify them all through this study without revealing their names.

Based on the result of this questionnaire, 20 subjects from each school year were selected in such a way that the 3 groups obtained were homogeneous in terms of the strength of their concern about their pronunciation (the mean strength of concern was 4.24, 4.30, and 4.25 in the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd year students respectively) and that the members of each group would be heterogeneous with a wide variety of strengths of concern. Henceforth, the group with 3 years of learning experience (1st year students) will be referred to as Group 1, the group with 4 years (2nd year students)

as Group 2, and the group with 5 years (3rd year students) as Group 3. Table 1 shows the distribution of the subjects of the three groups on the seven point scale. A chi-square test revealed that these three groups did not differ significantly ( $\chi^2 = 1.90$ ,  $df = 4$ , ns. ;  $\chi^2(0.05) = 9.488$ ).

TABLE 1: Strength of Concern in Three Groups

	Strength of Concern			Total
	7-6	5-4	3-1	
Group 1	6	6	8	20
Group 2	5	10	5	20
Group 3	5	9	6	20

( $\chi^2 = 1.90$ ,  $df = 4$ , ns. )

### *Data Collection*

The subjects' utterances in three different tasks were recorded in a language laboratory setting. These tasks were (1) free speech, (2) oral reading of a passage, and (3) oral reading of a word list, in that order.

First, the subjects were made to "introduce themselves as if talking to a person who doesn't know them" for about 2 minutes. Before the recording, they were given 1 minute for preparation but not allowed to write anything. Second, they read aloud a 89-word-long passage which contained 18 words with an /r/ sound, three of which had an /r/ in a word-initial position, six of which in an intervocal position and nine of which in a consonant cluster (see Appendix B). Finally, they read aloud the same 18 words isolated in a word list. This list contained not only the target words but also 6 additional words with an /l/ sound so that the subjects' attention would probably be paid to the distinction between /r/ and /l/ (see Appendix C). Furthermore, the subjects were instructed to "be careful about pronunciation" in this final task.

### *Analysis*

All the speech on the tapes for each sample were listened to for words which should contain /r/ sounds. A frequency tally of target and nontarget sound was taken and percentages calculated. In this study, a target /r/ sound was operationally defined as a post-alveolar frictionless continuant when it is not preceded by

voiceless plosives /p,t,k/, and a postalveolar fricative when it is, since these are the allophones which are presented as models in Japanese classrooms. In the case of an /r/-like sound on the border of target and non-target, the criterion for a specific sound to be classified "target" was the tip of the tongue being judged to be not in flap-like touch with the alveolar ridge.

Observed differences in performance by task and by group were tested for significance ( $\alpha = .05$ ) using a chi-square test and the Yates's correction factor. Target sound percentage on each task was correlated with the number of years spent learning English and with the strength of concern for pronunciation. Correlations were also computed between the target sound percentages on each task.

### 3. RESULTS

#### *Task Variation*

Each of the three groups will be taken in turn, beginning with Group 1, the results for which are given in Table 2. It can be seen that the highest percentage of targetlike sound is produced in wordlist reading (60.5 percent), followed by passage reading (45.5 percent) and free speech (43.6 percent). The differences between the three tasks are statistically significant ( $\chi^2 = 20.01$ ,  $df = 2$ ,  $p < .001$ ), due to the significantly higher frequency of target-like sound in wordlist reading than in passage reading ( $\chi^2 = 16.26$ ,  $df = 1$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and in free speech ( $\chi^2 = 10.83$ ,  $df = 1$ ,  $p < .001$ ). The difference between free speech and passage reading is not statistically significant.

Table 2 : Task Variation in Group 1

	Free Speech		Passage		Wordlist		Total	
	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%
Target	55	43.6	164	45.5	218	60.5	437	51.6
Nontarget	71	56.4	196	54.5	142	39.5	409	48.4
Total	126	100.0	360	100.0	360	100.0	846	100.0

(FrSpch.  $\times$  Pssg.  $\times$  Wrldst.,  $\chi^2 = 20.01$ ,  $df = 2$ ,  $p < .001$ )

(FrSpch.  $\times$  Pssg.,  $\chi^2 = 0.14$ ,  $df = 1$ , n. s.)

(Pssg.  $\times$  Wrldst.,  $\chi^2 = 16.26$ ,  $df = 1$ ,  $p < .001$ )

(FrSpch.  $\times$  Wrldst.,  $\chi^2 = 10.83$ ,  $df = 1$ ,  $p < .001$ )

Table 3 shows the results for Group 2. Again, significant variation in targetlike production is evident with task ( $\chi^2 = 19.27$ ,  $df = 2$ ,  $p < .001$ ), with the highest percentage of targetlike sounds occurring in wordlist reading (44.4 percent), followed by passage reading (36.6 percent) and free speech (22.3 percent). Two-task comparisons also reveal significant differences between each pair of tasks.

Table 3 : Task Variation in Group 2

	Free Speech		Passage		Wordlist		Total	
	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%
Target	27	22.3	132	36.6	160	44.4	319	37.9
Nontarget	94	77.7	228	63.4	200	55.6	522	62.1
Total	121	100.0	360	100.0	360	100.0	841	100.0

(FrSpch.  $\times$  Pssg.  $\times$  Wrldst.,  $\chi^2 = 19.27$ ,  $df = 2$ ,  $p < .001$  )  
(FrSpch.  $\times$  Pssg.,  $\chi^2 = 8.43$ ,  $df = 1$ ,  $p < .01$  )  
(Pssg.  $\times$  Wrldst.,  $\chi^2 = 4.51$ ,  $df = 1$ ,  $p < .05$  )  
(FrSpch.  $\times$  Wrldst.,  $\chi^2 = 10.83$ ,  $df = 1$ ,  $p < .001$  )

Results for Group 3 are shown in Table 4. Again, significantly different frequencies of targetlike sound occur in free speech (29.6 percent), passage reading (50.0 percent) and wordlist reading (59.1 percent) ( $\chi^2 = 40.57$ ,  $df = 2$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Furthermore, it turns out that a statistically significant difference emerges between each pair of tasks.

Table 4 : Task Variation in Group 3

	Free Speech		Passage		Wordlist		Total	
	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%
Target	51	29.6	180	50.0	213	59.1	444	49.7
Nontarget	121	70.4	180	50.0	147	40.9	448	50.3
Total	172	100.0	360	100.0	360	100.0	892	100.0

(FrSpch.  $\times$  Pssg.  $\times$  Wrldst.,  $\chi^2 = 40.57$ ,  $df = 2$ ,  $p < .001$  )  
(FrSpch.  $\times$  Pssg.,  $\chi^2 = 19.6$ ,  $df = 1$ ,  $p < .001$  )  
(Pssg.  $\times$  Wrldst.,  $\chi^2 = 6.10$ ,  $df = 1$ ,  $p < .05$  )  
(FrSpch.  $\times$  Wrldst.,  $\chi^2 = 40.56$ ,  $df = 1$ ,  $p < .001$  )

The overall results for task variation are shown in Table 5. It can be seen that the highest percentage of targetlike sounds is produced in wordlist reading (nearly

55 percent), followed by passage reading (44 percent), which is followed by free speech (nearly 32 percent). Differences between these tasks are statistically significant ( $\chi^2 = 68.58$ ,  $df = 2$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Comparing each pair of tasks separately reveals significant differences between free speech and passage ( $\chi^2 = 19.03$ ,  $df = 1$ ,  $p < .001$ ), between passage and wordlist ( $\chi^2 = 24.49$ ,  $df = 1$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and between free speech and wordlist ( $\chi^2 = 63.84$ ,  $df = 1$ ,  $p < .001$ ).

Table 5 : Task Variation Overall

	Free Speech		Passage		Wordlist		Total	
	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%
Target	133	31.7	476	44.0	591	54.7	1200	46.5
Nontarget	236	68.3	604	54.0	489	45.3	1379	53.5
Total	369	100.0	1080	100.0	1080	100.0	2579	100.0

(FrSpch.  $\times$  Pssg.  $\times$  Wrldlst.,  $\chi^2 = 68.58$ ,  $df = 2$ ,  $p < .001$ )  
(FrSpch.  $\times$  Pssg.,  $\chi^2 = 19.03$ ,  $df = 1$ ,  $p < .001$ )  
(Pssg.  $\times$  Wrldlst.,  $\chi^2 = 24.49$ ,  $df = 1$ ,  $p < .001$ )  
(FrSpch.  $\times$  Wrldlst.,  $\chi^2 = 63.84$ ,  $df = 1$ ,  $p < .001$ )

To grasp a fuller picture of the task variation, inter-correlation between each task was computed, the results of which are presented in Table 6. As was expected, the correlations are fairly strong; all of them are statistically significant at  $p < .001$  level. The strongest is between passage reading and wordlist reading ( $r = .727$ ), followed by free speech and passage reading ( $r = .646$ ). The weakest is between free speech and wordlist reading ( $r = .447$ ).

Table 6 : Correlation Coefficients Between Targetlike Production Percentage of Each Task  
N = 60

	Passage	Wordlist
Free Speech	.646***	.447***
Passage		.727***

\*\*\*  $p < .001$

However, at a closer look, it turns out that not every subject followed the expected variation pattern; twelve out of sixty subjects showed a higher percentage of target-like production in free speech than in passage reading (see Table 7), and in

eleven other cases, the percentage was higher in passage reading than in wordlist reading (see Table 8).

Table 7. Subjects with Higher Percentage of Targetlike Production in Free Speech than in Passage Reading

Subject Number	Free Speech			Passage Reading		
	Target	Nontarget	%	Target	Nontarget	%
105	2	2	50.0	6	12	33.3
111	7	1	87.5	10	8	55.5
117	8	5	61.5	6	12	33.3
125	10	1	90.9	16	2	88.8
126	4	0	100.0	10	8	55.5
131	3	1	75.0	8	10	44.4
132	10	0	100.0	14	4	77.7
118	2	0	100.0	13	5	72.2
215	5	2	71.4	10	8	55.5
224	3	2	60.0	0	18	0.0
232	2	3	40.0	6	12	33.3
329	4	1	80.0	10	8	55.5

Table 8. Subjects with Higher Percentage of Targetlike Production in Passage Reading than in Wordlist Reading

Subject Number	Passage Reading			Wordlist Reading		
	Target	Nontarget	%	Target	Nontarget	%
108	9	9	50.0	3	15	16.6
126	14	4	77.7	12	6	66.6
137	5	13	27.7	4	14	22.2
207	10	8	55.5	7	11	38.8
209	17	1	94.4	14	4	77.7
227	14	4	77.7	8	10	44.4
228	14	4	77.7	13	5	72.2
312	13	5	72.2	5	13	27.7
318	5	13	27.7	4	14	22.2
320	11	7	61.1	7	11	38.8
323	3	15	16.6	0	18	0.0



*Length of Learning Experience*

Percentages of targetlike production in each task for the different groups are shown in Table 9. In free speech, the highest percentage is by Group 1 (43.6 percent), followed by Group 3 (29.6 percent), and then, by Group 2 (22.3 percent). In the passage reading task, the highest percentage was by Group 3 (50.0 percent), followed by Group 1 (45.5 percent), which, in turn, is followed by Group 2 (36.6 percent). In the wordlist reading task, the highest was by Group 1 (60.5 percent), followed by Group 3 (59.1 percent), followed by Group 2. As for the total score, the most accurate was Group 1 (51.6 percent), which was close to Group 3 (49.7 percent). The least accurate was Group 2 (37.9 percent). Without running any statistical test, it is evidently not the case that the accuracy rate is higher in students with longer learning experience.

Table 9 : Targetlike Production Percentages by Different Groups

	Free Speech	Passage	Wordlist	Total
Group 1	43.6	45.5	60.5	51.6
Group 2	22.3	36.6	44.4	37.9
Group 3	29.6	50.0	59.1	49.7

Table 10 shows correlation coefficients between targetlike production percentage and number of years spent in learning English. . . None of the correlations have statistical significance.

Table 10 : Correlation Coefficients Between the Number of Years Spent Learning English and Targetlike Production Percentage  
N = 60

	Free Speech	Passage	Wordlist	Total
Year	- .167	.066	- .019	- .040

*Strength of Concern about Pronunciation*

Correlation between each subject's strength of concern and her targetlike production percentage is presented in Table 11. It can be seen, in individual tasks and overall, that correlations are significantly strong. There is an approximately 26 percent overlap ( $r^2 = 26.11$ ) between the subject's strength of concern and her

total targetlike production percentage.

Table 11 : Correlation Coefficients Between the S's Strength of Concern about Her Pronunciation and Targetlike Production Percentage  
N = 60

	Free Speech	Passage	Wordlist	Total
Concern	.391**	.486***	.408**	.511***
	** p < .01	*** p < .001		

#### 4. DISCUSSION

Hypothesis 1 (Targetlike production of /r/ varies with task) was supported. Among the subjects as a group, the highest percentage of targetlike sound was produced in wordlist reading; the next, in passage reading; and the lowest, in free speech. This would seem to substantiate the claim that style-shifting occurs significantly in EFL contexts as well as in ESL contexts. Moreover, because there is a strong correlation between tasks, the data can be said to show that subjects who are adept at one task will tend to be skillful at others. Although the intention here is by no means to make a causal claim, if the intercorrelations between tasks are so strong, it is possible that, as Dickerson (1974) speculates, an improvement in the formal style may result in an improvement in the casual style.

Nonetheless, this finding concerning Hypothesis 1 is not without limitations, because not every subject followed the clear variation pattern; 12 out of 60 subjects showed a higher percentage of targetlike production in free speech than in passage reading, and in 11 other subjects, the percentage was higher in passage reading than in wordlist reading.

The first deviant case, the higher percentage in free speech, may be attributed to the fact that, due to their proficiency level, the subjects did not produce a great enough incidence of /r/ in free speech (6.98 /r/ per subject) as opposed to the other two tasks ( 18 /r/ per subject ), and that in many cases, the subjects were producing mostly those words which they were extremely familiar with (e.g., *very*).

A task which elicits a greater number and a greater variety of words containing the target sound while still retaining the "careless" characteristics of free speech must be developed in order to confirm the findings of this study.

The second deviant case, where the targetlike percentage was higher in passage reading than in wordlist reading, is rather more difficult to account for, since these

two tasks were controlled for the number and the variety of words containing /r/, the only difference being the amount of attention likely to have been paid to the form of language. A more detailed analysis of the raw data reveals that, in these cases, several words pronounced correctly in passage reading are pronounced incorrectly in wordlist reading. Research indicates that a careful style is more permeable both to the NL and the TL and that when a particular variant takes on a sociolinguistic prestige in the NL, the production in the careful style follows the NL norm ( Beebe, 1980 ). However, since no variant of /r/ or /l/ is associated with any sociolinguistic connotation in the NL of this study, Japanese, this theory does not hold true for this study. What may be happening here is that /r/ in these specific linguistic contexts is not yet stabilized for these subjects and thus, when they were told in the wordlist reading task to “pay attention” to the distinction between /r/ and /l/, which were not as yet under their full control, they became confused and, therefore, “backslid”. Tarone seems to be right when she states that “when attention is overloaded, ... there is style-shifting (backsliding) away from the superordinate norm and towards the vernacular norm” (1982:80). In a similar case, where the data included a greater incidence of targetlike production in conversation than in reading, Sato (1985) casts doubts on the definition of style solely in terms of the attention paid to language form.

Hypothesis 2 (There is no significant correlation between the accuracy of /r/ and the number of years the subjects have spent learning English ) was fully supported. Mean targetlike production percentages did not indicate any significant difference among subjects with different lengths of learning experience. Correlations between targetlike production percentages and the number of years spent on learning English were far from significant. In fact, in two out of the three tasks (free speech and wordlist reading), the non-significant correlations were in the negative; the longer the learning experience, the less accurate the pronunciation was. Needless to say, the present study is a cross-sectional one, and any claim based on this study concerning over time development has a severe limitation. In addition, although the subjects as a group were controlled for the strength of concern, the number of subjects in each group is too small for them to be claimed to be representative of students with respective lengths of learning experience in Japan. However, what is of interest is that this result is in accordance with our daily impressionistic observation. It seems likely that the cases are not rare where learners do not at all develop their accuracy over time.

It now remains to be discussed why the subjects did not show the same develop-

mental pattern which was demonstrated in research in ESL contexts (e.g. Dickerson, 1975; Sato, 1985). One big difference between an ESL and an EFL context is the amount of target language (TL) input learners receive outside the classroom. While learners in an ESL context are continually exposed to TL sounds outside the classroom, the learners in an EFL context only get minimal, if not zero, input outside their classroom. Many studies indicate or imply that change in learners' interlanguage phonology is gradual and, therefore, teachers should not worry too much about learners' deviant production because they are part of the natural course of progressive development ( Dickerson, 1975; Parish, 1977; Pennington and Richards, 1986 ). However, when we see that our subjects in an EFL context, where they are not immersed in an environment full of target sounds, do not show any evidence of progressive change over time, it would seem that the gradual improvement in ESL settings are mainly due to the rich outside-classroom environment and that this is not the case in an EFL setting. Another important difference might be class size. In Japan, where average class size exceeds 40 students, it is extremely difficult for the teacher to give appropriate feedback concerning pronunciation to each and every student, thus allowing many students to fossilize with deviant pronunciation.

Hypothesis 3 ( There is a significant correlation between the pronunciation accuracy of /r/ and the strength of concern about pronunciation ) was also supported. This finding provides additional empirical support for Suter (1976), who reports a correlation coefficient of .46 between pronunciation accuracy and the strength of concern about pronunciation. There seems to be little difference between ESL and EFL contexts in this regard. However, Suter's speculation that "the strength of concern reflects an 'overall conscientiousness' that shows up in other endeavors as well" may not necessarily apply to our EFL classroom in Japan. It is widely accepted that good performers in other skills are not always accurate pronouncers. In Japan, acquiring accurate pronunciation often is not as important as acquiring other subskills. This could be accounted for in two ways. First, English is rarely used as a means of communication outside the classroom, and the average learner is not confronted with a situation where he would be led to feel that "pronunciation always affects what we communicate and how well we communicate" (Beebe 1978, as cited in Beebe 1984:166) or that pronunciation "makes the speaker vulnerable to his hearers . . . on account of the social inferences that they may draw concerning him" (Stevick 1978:145). Secondly, leaving aside pronunciation, speaking skills themselves are rarely, if ever, assessed in junior high, senior

high, or university examinations; learners understandably have little instrumental motivation to improve their pronunciation. Therefore, it seems to be the case in Japan that, irrespective of their overall proficiency, only learners who are personally concerned about their pronunciation for some reason develop their pronunciation accuracy, and this has little to do with “overall conscientiousness”.

## 5. CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

The data presented here indicate that (1) task variation occurs in IL phonology of Japanese learners of English in Japan and that (2) their pronunciation accuracy is related more to their strength of concern about their own pronunciation than with the number of years they have spent learning English.

With respect to the first of the above findings, what remains to be explored is the causal relationships among these different tasks; to what extent improvement in more careful tasks transfers into more vernacular tasks. Since it is difficult, by definition, to consciously improve pronunciation accuracy in vernacular speech, the possibility of pronunciation accuracy developed in tasks where attention is paid to the form transferring to vernacular style is of great importance to the teachers.

The second of the above findings, concerning what determines learners' pronunciation accuracy, is somewhat thought-provoking. It implies that, in an EFL context, learners' IL phonology does not develop substantially irrespective of how long they study the language, unless they are concerned about the accuracy of their pronunciation. Here we are led to reflect on the importance of motivation in relation to pronunciation. Formal instruction which does not take motivation or affective factors into consideration is not likely to achieve much. It was Stevick (1978) who articulated most clearly that the learning of pronunciation is a social process which “involves the whole learner and not just the speech apparatus or cognitive faculties” (p.149). Although it is uncertain whether ethnic or group identity factors, discussed by Giles (1979), come into play with Japanese learners, one commonly observed behavior is that many Japanese learners in classrooms try to sound “Japanese” even when they are able to produce more “English sounding” variants. Personal speculation indicates that some of them consciously or unconsciously refrain from producing TL variants in front of their peers for fear of being judged as “showing off” or of standing out. If “deep affective factors may promote, as well as inhibit, mimicry” (Stevick, 1978:147), more efforts should be made to strengthen learners' concern about their pronunciation or to reduce their affective barrier against

standing out from the social group on which they depend for support, instead of the rather mechanical practice of collective mimicry.

Since this study is a cross-sectional one focusing on one particular segmental phoneme, the findings should be interpreted with such limitation in mind. Further research focusing on other segmental phonemes, or analyzing holistic pronunciation accuracy, preferably on a longitudinal basis, is necessary.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Questionnaire ( Question #3 is the target question. )

英語学習に対する意識調査

■この調査は、皆さんの実態を知り、今後の授業や研究に役だてるためのものです。この調査の結果が、皆さん個人の評価や成績に結びつくことはありません。どうぞ安心して以下のコメントに対する自分の正直な気持ちに最も近いところに○をつけて下さい。

1. 「私は英語が大好きである。」

7 ————— 6 ————— 5 ————— 4 ————— 3 ————— 2 ————— 1  
まさに            かなり            すこし            どちらとも            あまり            ほとんど            まったく  
その通り            当てはまる            当てはまる            言えない            当てはまらない            当てはまらない            当てはまらない

2. 「私は今までの学習の中で、語彙の拡充（単語を増やすこと）に努力してきた。」

7 ————— 6 ————— 5 ————— 4 ————— 3 ————— 2 ————— 1  
まさに            かなり            すこし            どちらとも            あまり            ほとんど            まったく  
その通り            当てはまる            当てはまる            言えない            当てはまらない            当てはまらない            当てはまらない

3. 「私は今までの学習の中で、発音に気をくばってきた。」

7 ————— 6 ————— 5 ————— 4 ————— 3 ————— 2 ————— 1  
まさに            かなり            すこし            どちらとも            あまり            ほとんど            まったく  
その通り            当てはまる            当てはまる            言えない            当てはまらない            当てはまらない            当てはまらない

4. 「私は今までの学習の中で、文法を正確に身に付けようと気を配ってきた。」

7 ————— 6 ————— 5 ————— 4 ————— 3 ————— 2 ————— 1  
まさに            かなり            すこし            どちらとも            あまり            ほとんど            まったく  
その通り            当てはまる            当てはまる            言えない            当てはまらない            当てはまらない            当てはまらない



Appendix B: Reading Passage ( Shaded are the target words. )

The history of English began when the Angles and the Saxons arrived in England from Europe about the fifth century.

Today a great number of people around the world speak English. In more than one hundred countries, students learn it at school. Some people learn it by radio or television. When they know the language, their life will be much richer. English can bring them new friends, new interests and new feelings. It is like a bridge to another world. If you cross that bridge, English will really broaden your world.

Appendix C : Wordlist ( Shaded are the target words. )

great	from	leader	interest
history	hundred	richer	blue
alive	lake	century	bridge
arrive	radio	black	cross
around	Europe	bring	broaden
flat	country	friend	really