

MASTER'S THESIS

The system of diphthongs in the interlanguage phonology of young educated Hong Kong speakers of English

Ng, Doris Shiu May

Date of Award:
2000

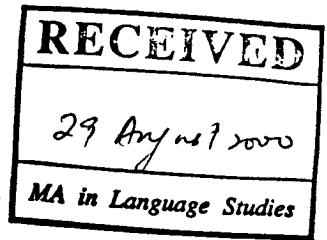
[Link to publication](#)

General rights

Copyright and intellectual property rights for the publications made accessible in HKBU Scholars are retained by the authors and/or other copyright owners. In addition to the restrictions prescribed by the Copyright Ordinance of Hong Kong, all users and readers must also observe the following terms of use:

- Users may download and print one copy of any publication from HKBU Scholars for the purpose of private study or research
- Users cannot further distribute the material or use it for any profit-making activity or commercial gain
- To share publications in HKBU Scholars with others, users are welcome to freely distribute the permanent URL assigned to the publication

C.O.



THE SYSTEM OF DIPHTHONGS
IN THE INTERLANGUAGE PHONOLOGY
OF YOUNG EDUCATED HONG KONG
SPEAKERS OF ENGLISH

NG SHIU MAY, DORIS
STUDENT NO. 98401858

A Dissertation Submitted In Partial
Fulfilment Of The
MASTER OF ARTS IN LANGUAGE STUDIES

HONG KONG BAPTIST UNIVERSITY

AUGUST 2000

Abstract

Not many studies have been made on the phonology of Hong Kong English. Among them, only a handful covered the phonology of vowels. This study describes and analyses the system of diphthongs in the interlanguage phonology of young educated Hong Kong speakers of English.

Data were taken from the recorded readings of ten students from the Hong Kong Baptist University. The subjects were distributed by sex, discipline, and year of study. A total of 101 words and 12 sentences covering ten diphthongs placed in all possible single consonant coda environments were read by each subject. The phonetic realisations of the diphthongs shared by a majority of the speakers are examined and their distribution under different environments are analysed.

Nine diphthong phonemes are found and their phonological features discussed. It is found that their phonetic realisations vary in certain environments common to certain groups of phonemes, notably stops in closing diphthongs. Variations take the form of monophthongisation, or a shortening of the vowel length. A comparison is made with the diphthong inventory of the target (Standard English) and native (Cantonese) languages. The influence of Cantonese phonology is discussed. The independent characteristics of the diphthong system in the interlanguage is emphasised.

摘要

有關香港英語語音系統的研究為數不多，至於研究元音音系的就更少。本論文描述及分析香港的年青知識份子使用英語時，語際語音系中的雙元音體系的特徵。

研究資料取材自香港浸會大學十位同學的錄音。實驗對象包括不同性別，不同學系和不同年級的同學。每個實驗對象讀出共101個字和12句句子，當中包含了十個雙元音。每個雙元音分別處於所有可能存在的單輔音音節尾前。本文審查了大部份實驗對象讀出的雙元音時，共有的語音體現，並分析這些語音體現在不同環境的分佈情況。

是項研究發現香港英語有九個雙元音音位，並探討它們的語音系特徵。在某幾組音位的某幾個共同環境中，尤其是在閉合雙元音的塞音前，這些雙元音音位會產生不同的語音體現。此等變體的形成是由於單元音化，或元音長度被縮短所致。本文就香港英語的雙元音項目，與目標語（標準英語）和本地語（廣東話）的雙元音項目作出比較，並探討廣東話語音系對香港英語語音系，在雙元音體系方面的影響。文中強調在這語際語中，雙元音體系的獨特性質。

CONTENTS

1.	Introduction	1
1.1.	Definition of concepts	1
1.1.1.	Interlanguage	1
1.1.2.	Interlanguage phonology	2
1.1.3.	Hong Kong English as an interlanguage	2
1.1.4.	Hong Kong English phonology	5
1.2.	The present study	5
1.3.	Chapter summaries	6
2.	Literature review	8
2.1.	The prescriptive approach	9
2.2.	The descriptive approach	18
3.	Methodology	24
3.1.	Research questions	24
3.2.	The reading list	25
3.3.	The subjects	26
3.4.	Data collection	27
3.5.	Processing of the data	28
4.	Data analysis	29
4.1.	Definition and description of a diphthong	29
4.2.	Number of diphthongs realised in the data	31
4.3.	Analysis by diphthong groups and their environments	33

4.3.1.	The diphthong ɐɪ group	33
4.3.2.	The diphthong aɪ group	37
4.3.3.	The diphthong ɔɪ group	40
4.3.4.	The diphthong ɔʊ group	42
4.3.5.	The diphthong aʊ group	46
4.3.6.	The diphthong ɪə group	49
4.3.7.	The diphthong ɛə group	51
4.3.8.	The diphthong ʊə group	52
4.3.9.	The diphthong ɪʊ group	54
4.3.10.	The diphthong ɔə group	57
4.4.	Summary of observations	57
5.	Discussion	62
5.1.	The system of diphthongs in HKE interlanguage phonology	62
5.1.1.	The number, pattern and realisations of diphthong phonemes in different environments	62
5.1.2.	Comparison of the diphthong phonemes in the target language (TL) and the native language (NL)	64
5.1.3.	An interlanguage system	70
5.2.	The extent of Cantonese influence on the system of diphthongs	71
5.2.1.	Diphthongs without variants	71
5.2.2.	Diphthongs with variants	71

5.2.2.1. Open Syllables	72
5.2.2.2. Diphthongs followed by fricatives, affricates and lateral	72
5.2.2.3. Diphthongs followed by stops (plosives and Nasals)	72
5.2.2.4. The diphthong aɪ	74
5.2.3. Findings from other researches	75
5.3. Implications of the study	76
5.4. Limitations	78
6. Conclusion	80

Appendices

Appendix I: A preliminary word list according to diphthong groups

Appendix II: A jumbled-up word list for reading by the subjects

Appendix III: A list of sentences for reading by the subjects

Appendix IV: A list of morphologically related words from the reading list

Appendix V: Transcriptions of recordings

Appendix VI: Tabulated transcriptions of recordings by diphthong groups

Appendix VII: Table showing counts of majority realisations

References