

MASTER'S THESIS

N's realization in Hong Kong English interlanguage

Li, Chi Fai

Date of Award:
2005

[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

**/V/'S REALIZATION
IN HONG KONG ENGLISH INTERLANGUAGE**

LI CHI FAI, HENRY

Student No. 03403009

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

HONG KONG BAPTIST UNIVERSITY

JUNE 2005

Abstract

The study investigates the realization of /v/ in Hong Kong English (HKE) interlanguage phonology. 12 Hong Kong intermediate level English speakers from a local secondary school were chosen for the present study.

Two word lists including as many possibilities for the subjects' realizations in word-initial, word-medial and word-final position as possible were created. The subjects had to pre-listen a New Zealander's reading of both word lists. The subjects' voice of both word lists was then recorded, transcribed and analyzed.

Subjects produced two different patterns of realizations. One pattern showed /w/ in word-initial, /w/ and /f/ in intervocalic position and /f/ in coda. Another pattern showed /v/ in word-initial and /f/ in intervocalic and word-final position. It is found out that these two patterns had two different UR, one with /v/, one without /v/. Rules were postulated for these two realizations. Factors favouring the realizations were accounted for separately. Different learners' strategies were explored.

The findings show that there is a tendency for majority of HKE intermediate speakers to have no /v/ in their UR. There are some exceptions that showed /v/. The variability in their UR stems from different levels of English proficiency, with more proficient subjects perceived and produced /v/ and less proficient subjects perceived /f/ or /w/ and produced with them. They were two groups of learners clustered at two different positions in the learning continuum heading towards the same direction of English.

提要

本研究旨在探討中等英語程度學生的「香港英語」唇齒摩擦音 /v/。此次研究選取了 12 位香港中四及中六的中學生。該十二名學生均來自一所中學。每名對象均須朗讀預先設計的兩份生字表。每份表有 39 個精心挑選的英文生字。每一個生字包括一個唇齒摩擦音 /v/，分別在字首、字中及字尾。此研究收錄他們的讀音，觀察及分析他們在字首、字中及字尾讀出的唇齒摩擦音 /v/ 的特徵。

研究發現兩組對象讀出的 /v/ 在字詞不同位置上讀法各異。其中部份受訪對象將 /v/ 讀成舌根濁音 /w/ 或唇齒摩擦音清音 /f/。一些受訪對象將字首的 /v/ 讀成濁音 /v/，而字中及字尾的 /v/ 則讀成清音 /f/。小數受訪對象將字首及字中的 /v/ 讀成濁音 /v/，字尾則讀成清音 /f/。

研究結果顯示唇齒摩擦音的差異正反映他們不同的英語水平。其中一組對象只讀出 /w/ 或 /f/。另一組對象讀出 /v/ 或 /f/，他們的讀法較接近英語為母語人士的讀法，這反映他們有較高的英語水平。小數受訪對象在字首及字中讀出 /v/，只在字尾讀 /f/。這等同英語為母語人士的讀法。研究結果證實香港中等英語程度的中學生有獨特的語音系統。

除此之外，本文亦探討不同結果的成因，學生在不同的語音環境下學習「香港英語」音系的策略，及其他影響學生「香港英語」音系的因素。研究結果有助英語教師加深了解香港中等英語程度學生學習英語的困難。

CONTENTS

| | |
|---|-----------|
| 1. INTRODUCTION | 1 |
| 1.1. Definitions of different concepts | 1 |
| 1.1.1 Hong Kong English (HKE) | 1 |
| 1.1.2 HKE as an Interlanguage | 3 |
| 2. LITERATURE REVIEW | 6 |
| 2.1 The production of labio-dental fricatives /v/ and /f/ | 6 |
| 2.2 Comparison of the fricative systems between English and Chinese | 6 |
| 2.2.1 Cantonese fricatives inventory is smaller than English's | 7 |
| 2.2.2 No voiced fricative in Cantonese | 8 |
| 2.2.3 There is no /v/, but /f/ in Cantonese | 8 |
| 2.3 Substitution of /v/ by /w/ in word-medial position in HKE | 8 |
| 2.4 There is no /v/, only as /f/ or /w/ in HKE | 10 |
| 2.5 Devoicing of /v/ in HKE to correspond to the surface phonetic constraints of NL | 11 |
| 2.6 Factors affecting the realizations | 11 |
| 2.6.1 Realizations of /v/ because of surface phonetic constraint of NL | 11 |
| 2.6.2 Realizations of /f/ or /w/ because of misidentifications in HKE | 12 |
| 2.7 Phonological process | 13 |
| 2.7.1 Voicing | 14 |
| 2.7.2 Substitution | 15 |
| 3. METHODOLOGY | 16 |
| 3.1 Research questions | 16 |
| 3.2 Methodology | 17 |
| 3.3 The subjects | 18 |
| 3.4 The word lists | 19 |
| 3.5 Procedures | 22 |
| 4. DATA ANALYSIS | 24 |
| 4.1 /v/'s realization in different positions | 24 |

| | | |
|-----------|--|-----------|
| 4.2 | Realization in onset position | 24 |
| 4.2.1 | Realizations of /v/ for F.4 students in the syllable onset | 24 |
| 4.2.2 | Realizations of /v/ for F.6 students in the syllable onset position | 25 |
| 4.2.3 | Comparison of the findings of both groups of students | 25 |
| 4.3 | Realization in intervocalic position | 26 |
| 4.3.1 | Realizations of /v/ for F.4 students in intervocalic position | 26 |
| 4.3.2 | Realizations of /v/ for F.6 students in intervocalic position | 27 |
| 4.3.3 | Comparison of the findings of both groups of students | 27 |
| 4.4 | Realization in word-final position | 28 |
| 4.4.1 | Realizations of /v/ for F.4 students in word-final position | 28 |
| 4.4.2 | Realizations of /v/ for F.6 students in word-final position | 29 |
| 4.4.3 | Comparison of the findings of both groups of students | 29 |
| 4.5 | Summary of the observations | 29 |
| 4.6 | Comparison of subjects in Pattern 1 and 2 in terms of voicing feature | 30 |
| 5. | DISCUSSION | 32 |
| 5.1 | Is there a phoneme /v/ in HKE intermediate level speakers? | 32 |
| 5.1.1 | Voicing features as an indicator of underlying /v/ | 33 |
| 5.1.2 | The phonemes realized in different positions as indicators | 35 |
| 5.1.3 | Different underlying representations | 37 |
| 5.1.4 | The implications | 38 |
| 5.1.5 | There is no /v/ in majority of the subjects | 38 |
| 5.1.6 | There is /v/ in two of the subjects | 39 |
| 5.1.7 | There is a tendency to have no /v/ in majority of the HKE intermediate | 40 |

| | | |
|---------|---|----|
| | speakers | |
| 5.1.8 | Reasons for the discrepancies in the underlying representation (UR) | 40 |
| 5.2 | What are the phonological realizations of /v/ in different positions – word-initial, intervocalic, word-final for the HKE intermediate learners of English? | 41 |
| 5.2.1 | Pattern 1 | |
| 5.2.1 | Pattern 1 subjects' realization in word-initial position | 43 |
| 5.2.1.1 | /v/ and the diphthong /aɪ/ | 43 |
| 5.2.1.2 | /v/ and the diphthong /əʊ/ | 44 |
| 5.2.1.3 | /v/ and the diphthong /ɔɪ/ | 44 |
| 5.2.1.4 | /v/ and the long vowel /ɜ:/ | 44 |
| 5.2.1.5 | /v/ and the short vowel /æ/ | 44 |
| 5.2.1.6 | /v/ and the short vowel /e/ | 44 |
| 5.2.1.7 | /v/ and the short vowel /ɪ/ | 44 |
| 5.2.1.8 | Summary of the observations | 45 |
| 5.2.2. | Pattern 1 subjects' realization in intervocalic position | 46 |
| 5.2.2.1 | /v/ and the diphthong /aɪ/ | 46 |
| 5.2.2.2 | /v/ and the diphthong /ɔɪ/ | 46 |
| 5.2.2.3 | /v/ and the diphthong /eɪ/ | 47 |
| 5.2.2.4 | /v/ and the long vowel /ɜ:/ | 47 |
| 5.2.2.5 | /v/ and the long vowel /i:/ | 47 |
| 5.2.2.6 | /v/ and the short vowel /ə/ | 47 |
| 5.2.2.7 | /v/ and the short vowel /ɪ/ | 47 |
| 5.2.2.8 | Summary of the observations | 48 |
| 5.2.3 | Pattern 1 subjects' realizations in word-final position | 49 |
| 5.2.3.1 | /v/ and the diphthong /aɪ/ | 49 |
| 5.2.3.2 | /v/ and the diphthong /eɪ/ | 50 |
| 5.2.3.3 | /v/ and the diphthong /eɪ/ | 50 |
| 5.2.3.4 | /v/ and the long vowel /i:/ | 50 |
| 5.2.3.5 | /v/ and the long vowel /u:/ | 50 |
| 5.2.3.6 | /v/ and the short vowel /ɪ/ | 50 |

| | | | |
|-----|---------|--|-----------|
| | 5.2.3.7 | /v/ and the short vowel /ə/ | 50 |
| | 5.2.3.8 | /v/ and the short vowel /ʌ/ | 51 |
| | 5.2.3.9 | Summary of the observations | 51 |
| 5.3 | | What factors favors /v/'s realizations? | 53 |
| | 5.3.1 | Factors for the realization in Pattern 1 | 53 |
| | 5.3.1.1 | Phonetically similar phonemes - /f/ and /w/ | 53 |
| | 5.3.1.2 | /f/ may cause misunderstanding in word-initial position. | 55 |
| | 5.3.1.3 | /w/ fits the voiced feature in word-initial position | 55 |
| | 5.3.1.4 | /f/ or /w/ as substitution in intervocalic position | 56 |
| | 5.3.1.5 | Imitate the voicing feature | 56 |
| | 5.3.1.6 | The influence of the neighbouring segment | 56 |
| | 5.3.1.7 | /f/ in word-final position | 57 |
| | 5.3.2 | Factors for Pattern 2's realization | 57 |
| | 5.3.2.1 | /v/ in initial position | 58 |
| | 5.3.2.2 | /f/ in intervocalic position | 58 |
| | 5.3.2.3 | /f/ in word-final position | 58 |
| 5.4 | | What are the variations in the data? | 59 |
| 5.5 | | Why is there a difference in realizations in the data? What implications do it have on intermediate learners' strategies of HKE interlanguage? | 60 |
| | 5.5.1 | L1 transfer | 60 |
| | 5.5.2 | Approximation of the TL system | 62 |
| | 5.5.3 | Misidentification | 62 |
| 5.6 | | What implications do it have on the HKE interlanguage learning? | 63 |
| | 5.6.1 | Two coexisting situations in an interlanguage learning process | 63 |
| | 5.6.2 | Target for this study | 65 |
| 6. | | LIMITATIONS | 67 |
| 7. | | TEACHING IMPLICATIONS | 69 |
| 8. | | CONSLUSIONS | 73 |

| | |
|-----------------------------------|-----------|
| APPENDICES | 74 |
| Appendix I: The first word list | 74 |
| Appendix II: The second word list | 75 |
| | |
| REFERENCES | 76 |