**The effects of instruction on pronunciation: the case of an online course**

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Pronunciation instruction has been shown to improve some aspects of second language (L2) learners’ pronunciation – though certainly not all, and numerous empirical studies have been conducted in laboratory settings (e.g., Thomson, 2011) and in traditional language classrooms (e.g., Saito, 2012). However, despite the increasing demand for online course delivery (e.g., Goertler, 2011), there has been no study investigating how online pronunciation instruction can affect second language speech development.

This study investigates the effects of a 15-week French oral communication course on the development of L2 pronunciation of 16 intermediate learners with various L1 backgrounds (American English, Chinese, Arabic, Malay, Spanish). The course targeted segmental and suprasegmental features (including liaisons) and fluency development, along with listening comprehension, cultural awareness, and vocabulary enhancement. The course was administered entirely online with weekly recorded lessons each focusing on one pronunciation aspects (e.g., nasal vowels, liaisons, occlusive…) and a variety of activities including phonetic transcription, conversation simulation (i.e., learners answered video-recorded questions), recordings of words, sentences, and short text, synchronous conversation with a classmate, and listening comprehension.

Pre- and posttest tasks included a picture narration task, a reading task, and a conversation simulation, and participants also completed a pre- and post- questionnaire on their pronunciation awareness. The results reported in this talk focus on the analysis of the participants’ pronunciation in terms of segmental errors, connected speech (use of liaisons and enchainements), and fluency.

Overall findings revealed that improvement in segmental production depended on the tasks, while fluency features (speech rate and pause structure) and the use of liaisons improved significantly over the course of the semester. Results will be discussed in regards to learners’ self-perception and beliefs about their pronunciation and in light of previous studies on (French) pronunciation instruction.

**Keywords:** Pronunciation, Foreign Language Instruction, French-as-a-foreign-language.

**References**

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