

A Native Japanese-Speaking Adult's Second Language Acquisition and Learning

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[1. Introduction]

The purpose of this project was to observe a native Japanese-speaking adult's English language perception, production, and development. I observed how the perception and production of words influenced spontaneous speech. I focused on categorical perception which is after second language learners have mastered their native language sounds, they may not be able to accurately perceive the sounds of the target language because some sounds of the target language do not exist in their native language. I observed my own phonological development by imitating a native English speaker's pronunciation, and by observing my own spontaneous speech.

[2. Informant]

When I started living in the United States in April 1980, I was 32 years old and was far beyond the critical period of natural language learning, and fossilised, which means that my speech characteristics were permanently fixed. Five years later I made the following observation concerning my English perception and production. Until I had gone to the United States, I hadn't had many opportunities to listen to English spoken by native English speakers. It wasn't until I attended California State University at Long Beach and started living with two elderly Americans that I really learned how to speak English.

[3. Procedure I]

For the first procedure, a native English speaker read minimal word pairs and word lists such as "pet-pat," "pin-pen," "sack-sag," "early" etc. and I listened to and repeated them. I recorded this procedure on tape so that I could play it back and listen to my own pronunciation. By means of this method, I wanted to observe how well I could imitate a native speaker's English pronunciation.

[4. Materials: Minimal word pairs and word lists]

1. pet[pɛt]-pat[pæt] pen[pɛn]-pan[pæn] bed[bɛd]-bad[bæd]
2. pin[pɪn]-pen[pɛn] pat[pæt]-pet[pɛt] bait[bet]-bet[bɛt]
3. mitt[mit]-meat[mit] itch[itʃ]-each[itʃ] fit[fit]-feet[fit] it[it]-eat[it]
4. early[ɜli] purple[pɜpl] circle[sɜkl]
5. afternoon[æftənun] faster[fæstə] hamburger[hæmbəgə]
6. brush[bɹʌʃ] sun[sʌn] study[stʌdi] touch[tʌtʃ]
7. pear[pɛə]-bear[bɛə] cap[kæp]-cab[kæb] lap[læp]-lab[læb]

- nap[næp]-nab[næb] tap[tæp]-tab[tæb] pig[piɡ]-big[biɡ]
 peg[pɛɡ]-beg[bɛɡ] puff[pʌf]-buff[bʌf]
8. and[ænd]-ant[ænt] build[buɪld]-built[bɪlt] bend[bænd]-bent[bɛnt]
 door[dɔːr] window[wɪndo] bottle[bɒtəl] little[lɪtəl] ghost[gɒst]
 gold[gɒld]
9. luck[lʌk]-lug[lʌɡ] sack[sæk]-sag[sæɡ] rack[ræk]-rag[ræɡ]
 snack[snæk]-snag[snæɡ]
10. safe[seɪf]-save[seɪv] belief[bɪlɪf]-believe[bɪlɪv] love[lʌv] variety[vəˈraɪəti]
 knife[naɪf] gloves[glʌvz] laugh[lɑːf] leave[lɪv]
11. very[vɛəri]-berry[bɛəri] van[væn]-ban[bæn] verb[vɜːb]-barb[bɜːb]
 vest[vɛst]-best[bɛst] live[lɪv]-rib[rɪb] lover[lʌvə]-robber[rɒbə]
12. both[bɒθ]-boat[bot] thank[θæŋk]-tank[tæŋk] three[θri]-tree[tri]
 there[ðɛr]-dare[dɛr] they[ðeɪ]-day[deɪ] thin[θɪn]-fin[fɪn]
 three[θri]-free[fri] than[ðæn]-van[væn] that[ðæt]-vat[væt]
13. seem[sim]-theme[θɪm] sin[sɪn]-thin[θɪn] sum[sʌm]-thumb[θʌm]
 saw[sɔː]-thaw[θɔː] song[sɒŋ]-thong[θɒŋ] kiss[kɪs]-kith[kɪθ]
 face[feɪs]-faith[feɪθ] bass[bæs]-bath[bæθ] mass[mæs]-math[mæθ]
 worse[wɜːs]-worth[wɜːθ] miss[mɪs]-myth[mɪθ]
14. school[skul] dance[dæns] seat[siːt] horse[hɔːs] seed[sid]
 rest[rɛst] bus[bʌs] cost[kɒst] place[pleɪs]
15. zebra[zɪbrə] zero[zɪrə] zoo[zuː] lazy[leɪzi] easy[ɪzi]
 museum[mjuːziəm] loves[lʌvz] Japanese[dʒæpəˈniːz] knives[naɪvz]
16. sugar[ʃʊɡə] she[ʃiː] machine[məʃɪn] shell[ʃɛl] ocean[əʊən]
 fashion[fæʃən] fish[fɪʃ] lotion[ləʊən] wash[wɔːʃ] wish[wɪʃ]
17. measure[mɛʒə] usual[ˈjuːʒuəl] beige[beɪʒ] garage[gəˈrɑːʒ]
 treasure[treɪzə] camouflage[kæmɒflɑːʒ] mirage[mɪˈrɑːʒ] division[dɪvɪʒən]
18. land[lænd] lily[lɪli] black[blæk] play[pleɪ] kill[kɪl] tell[tɛl]
19. carry[kæri] brown[braʊn] merry[mɛri] red[rɛd] room[rum]
 ride[raɪd]
20. lake[leɪk]-rake[reɪk] let[lɛt]-rest[rɛst] lame[leɪm]-rain[reɪn]
 lust[lʌst]-rust[rʌst] leaf[lɪf]-reef[rɪf] lice[lɪs]-rice[raɪs]
 law[lɔː]-raw[rɔː] lied[lɪd]-ride[raɪd] lime[lɪm]-rhyme[raɪm]
21. leap[lɪp]-weep[wɪp] lent[lɛnt]-went[wɛnt] let[lɛt]-wet[wɛt]
 lane[leɪn]-wane[wɛn] lacks[læks]-wax[wæks]
22. red[rɛd]-wed[wɛd] read[rɪd]-weed[wɪd] ride[raɪd]-wide[wɑɪd]
 rain[reɪn]-wane[wɛn] rise[raɪz]-wise[wɑɪz] row[rəʊ]-woe[wəʊ]
23. picture[ˈpɪktʃə] catch[kætʃ] gesture[dʒɛstʃə] cheese[tʃiːz] each[ɪtʃ]
24. chip[tʃɪp]-ship[ʃɪp] cheap[tʃiːp]-sheep[ʃiːp] chew[tʃuː]-shoe[ʃuː]
 chop[tʃɒp]-shop[ʃɒp] chair[tʃɛr]-share[ʃɛr] chuck[tʃʌk]-shuck[ʃʌk]
25. etch[ɪtʃ]-edge[ɛdʒ] March[mɜːtʃ]-Marge[mɜːdʒ]

- cheap[tʃip]-jeep[dʒip] choke[tʃok]-joke[dʒok]
 cheer[tʃɪr]-jeer[dʒɪr] chest[tʃɛst]-jest[dʒɛst] chin[tʃɪn]-gin[dʒɪn]
 26. engine[ɛndʒən] age[edʒ] cabbage[kæbɪdʒ] huge[hjudʒ] orange[orɪndʒ]
 27. lamb[læm] message[mɛsədʒ] bomb[bʌm] name[nem]
 human[hjumən] room[rʊm] mark[məʔk] salmon[sæmən]
 smile[smɑɪl] same[sem] ham[hæm]
 28. garden[gɑ:dn] town[taun] only[onli] nice[naɪs] no[no] nail[nel]
 animal[ænəməl] sand[sænd] enjoy[ɛndʒɔɪ] sun[sʌn] soon[sun]
 can[kæn]
 29. king[kɪŋ] tongue[tʌŋ] song[sɔŋ] thing[θɪŋ] long[lɔŋ]
 spring[sprɪŋ]
 bank[bæŋk] pink[pɪŋk] singer[sɪŋə]

[5. Results of the imitation]

From listening to my pronunciation, I could observe the substitution of sounds, final consonant devoicing, the deletion of sounds, and the addition of sounds.

(1) Substitution of sounds took place in my pronunciation of the following words:

- | | |
|------------------------|--------------------------|
| pen[pɛn]→ [pɛn] | window[wɪndə]→ [wɪndɔ:] |
| early[ɜ:li]→ [ɑ:li] | bottle[bɒtəl]→ [botɔRu] |
| faster[fæstə]→ [fæstɑ] | belief[bɪlɪf]→ [bɪlɪɸ] |
| three[θri]→ [θRɪ] | thin[θɪn]→ [sɪn] |
| than[ðən]→ [zɛn] | van[væn]→ [bɛn] |
| that[ðət]→ [zɛt] | sag[sæg]→ [sɛk] |
| snag[snæg]→ [snək] | believe[bɪlɪv]→ [bɪlibu] |

(2) Final consonant devoicing took place in my pronunciation of the following words:

- | | |
|---------------------------|--------------------|
| bed[bɛd]→ [bɛt] | tab[tæb]→ [tæp] |
| lug[lʌg]→ [lʌk] | snag[snæŋ]→ [snək] |
| seed[sid]→ [sit] | edge[ɛdʒ]→ [ɛtʃ] |
| cabbage[kæbɛdʒ]→ [kæbɛtʃ] | |

(3) Deletion of sounds took place in my pronunciation of the following words:

- | | |
|--------------------|---------------------|
| nab[næb]→ [næ-] | love[lʌv]→ [lʌ-] |
| gold[gɒld]→ [go-d] | ghost[gɒst]→ [go-t] |
| song[sɔŋ]→ [sɔ-] | |

(4) Addition of sounds took place in my pronunciation of the following words:

- | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------|
| save[sev]→ [sevu] | leave[lɪv]→ [livu] |
| believe[bɪlɪv]→ [bɪlibu] | bus[bʌs]→ [bʌsu] |
| bottle[bɒtəl]→ [botɔRu] | |

[6. Procedure II]

For the second procedure, I looked at the minimal word pairs and word lists and read

them. I then recorded them on tape, played it back, and listened to my pronunciation.

[7. Results of my reading]

I could observe the substitution of sounds, final consonant devoicing, the deletion of sounds, and the addition of sounds.

(1) Substitution of sounds took place in my pronunciation of the following words:

bus[bʌs]→ [basu] early[ɜːli]→ [ɑːli]
three[θri]→ [θRi]

(2) Final consonant devoicing took place in my pronunciation of the following words:

bed[bɛd]→ [bɛt] bad[bæd]→ [bæt]
cab[kæb]→ [kæp] tab[tæb]→ [tæp]
lug[lʌg]→ [lʌk] seed[sid]→ [sit]
cabbage[kæbɛdʒ]→ [kæbetʃ] edge[ɛdʒ]→ [ɛtʃ]
red[rɛd]→ [rɛt]

(3) Deletion of sounds took place in my pronunciation of the following words:

gold[gɔld]→ [go-d] ghost[gɔst]→ [go-t]
free[fri]→ [-ri] love[lʌv]→ [lʌ-]

(4) Addition of sounds took place in my pronunciation of the following words:

save[sev]→ [sevu] believe[biliv]→ [bilivu]
love[lʌv]→ [lʌvu] leave[liv]→ [livu]
fish[fiʃ]→ [fiʃu] wash[wɔʃ]→ [wɔʃu]
land[lænd]→ [lændo]

[8. Procedure III]

For the third procedure, I observed my spontaneous speech. One of my classmates interviewed me for her term paper and she recorded my speech. I then used a part of her tape for my project. A record of my spontaneous speech follows:

(A) Spontaneous speech not under pressure

1. [ðɛr wəz no pətɪkjʊlə rɪzən] There was no particular reason.

2. [fəst taɪm aɪ kem tə ðə jʊnaɪtɪd stɛts aɪ wəz ə tʊrɪst]

First time I came to the United States, I was a tourist.

3. [æftə aɪ wɛnt hom aɪ həd ə grɛt dɛzəɪə tə stʌdi so aɪ prɪpərd fɔr ɛntrəns ɪgzæmɪneɪʃən fɔr ə jɪər ənd faɪnəli pʌsd fɔr ə dʒæpənɪz juːnɪvɜːsɪti]

After I went home, I had a great desire to study, so I prepared for the entrance examination for a year and finally I passed for a Japanese university.

4. [aɪ lænd ɪŋɡlɪʃ lɪtərətʃə fɔr fɔr jɪrz bʌt aɪ wəznt sətɪsfald wɪð maɪ ɪŋɡlɪʃ lɪtərətʃə stʌdɪz so aɪ dɪsəɪdɪd tu kʌm tə ðə jʊnaɪtɪd stɛts tə stʌdi]

I learned English literature for four years but I wasn't satisfied with my English literature studies, so I decided to come to the United States to study.

5. [wɛn aɪ kem tə ðə jʊnaɪtɪd stɛts aɪ wʌntɪd tə bi ə tɪtʃə ɪn maɪ kʌntri dʒæpən]

When I came to the United States, I wanted to be a teacher in my country, Japan.

6. [In dʒæpən ðe ɔlweɪz hæv edʒ limiteʃən so Ivən ðo aɪ wʌnt tə bi ə titʃə no:bɔdi wil haɪə mi]
In Japan, they always have age limitations so even though I want to be a teacher in Japan, nobody will hire me.
7. [so mebi əftə aɪ go hom aɪ wil wə:k fɔr wʌn əv taɪni kʌmpəniz əz əkəʊntənt bəkaʊz aɪ ju:zd tə wə:k fɔr ən əkʊntnt ɔfɪs fɔr ɔlmɔst ten jɪrz]
So maybe, after I go home, I will work for one of the tiny companies as accountant because I used to work for accountant for almost ten years.

(B) Spontaneous speech under pressure and excitement

1. [aɪ fil bɛri strændʒ] I feel very strange.
2. [ɪf ze ask mi ɑr ju əmɛrɪkən sɪtɪzən ɔr ɑr ju fɔrɪnə]
If they ask me, "Are you American citizen or are you foreigner?"
3. [ɪt ɪz ɔke bʌt wɛn ze wʌnt tu no maɪ res blæk ɔr hwaɪt ɔr ɔrɪəntəru ɔr əmɛrɪkən ɪndɪən hwaɪ du ze ask əs]
It is OK, but when they want to know my race, black, or white, or oriental, or American Indian, Why do they ask us?
4. [aɪ fɪru ɛŋgri bʌt aɪm ə fɔrɪnə zət hwaɪ aɪ obe]
I feel angry but I'm a foreigner that why I obey.
5. [aɪ tʃuzu] I choose.
6. [ɪf aɪ wə ən əmɛrɪkən sɪtɪzən aɪ ɪgnɔr aɪ sɪŋk]
If I were an American citizen, I ignore, I think.
7. [bʌt hwaɪl aɪ əm ə fɔrɪnə ənd hwaɪru aɪ əm steɪŋ ðə jʊnaɪtəd stɛts aɪ sɪŋk aɪ ʃʊd fɔro ðɪ əmɛrɪkən ru:ru ɔr ðɪ əmɛrɪkən ro:]
But while I am a foreigner and while I am staying the United States, I think I should follow the American rule or the American law.
8. [maɪ hɒbi ɪz lɪsnɪŋ tə mju:zɪk.] My hobby is listening to music.
9. [zət mju:zɪk ɪz mɪn kɹasɪku mju:zɪk] That music means classic music.
10. [aɪ laɪk ɔrd ɔrd mju:zɪk] I like old old music.
11. [maɪ fɛvərətɒ kɒmpo:zə ɪz bæ:k] My favorite composer is Bach.
12. [ɔ:lsɔ: ɪn mɒnjʊmənt vʌli aɪ kən se ðə sem θɪŋ]
Also in Monument Valley, I can say the same thing.
13. [nɔ: ɛləktɹɒsɪti ɔr nɔ: wɔ:tə ɪvən zɒ təde stɪl ɪndɪənz lɪv ɪn ə mæd haʊs]
No electricity or no water, even though today, still Indians live in a mud house.
14. [wɒt du ze kɔl ɪt hɔ:gən] What do they call it? Hogan.
15. [bɪfɔr aɪ wɛnt ðɛr aɪ ɛkspektəd ðət ðɒz hɒgən wɛr fɔr tʊrɪst ətrækʃən bʌt ɪn ðɪz hɔ:gənz pipl stɪl lɪv]
Before I went there, I expected that those hogans were for tourists attractions but in these hogans people still live.
16. [ðe ju:z bæteri fɔr ɛləktɹɪk θɪŋgz fɔr tɪvi sɛts]
They use battery for electric things for T.V. sets.

17. [ðe həv tə kæri wɔtə frɒm ə fɑr dɪstəns ənd kɪp ðer wɔtə ɪn ðə tæŋk]
They have to carry water from a far distance and keep their water in the tank.
18. [ɪnsaɪd ðə hɔ:gən ðer ɪz nɔ: rʌg ɔr ðer ɪz nɔ: mæt ɔnli dæt]
Inside the hogan, there is no rug or there is no mat. Only dirt.
19. [ɪt lʊks rɪli pʊr] It looks really poor.
20. [ðæt taɪm aɪ θɒt ɪf sʌmwʌn bɪlt hɒtəlz ɔr rɛstərʌnz əraʊnd ðer ðe kæn gɪv ə lɒt əv dʒɔbs tə ɪndiənz ðe kæn hɛlp]
That time, I thought if someone build hotels or restaurants around there, they can give a lot of jobs to Indians. They can help.
21. [ɔlso ɪf ðe bɪld mɒtəlz ənd hɒtəlz əraʊnd ðer mæni tuərɪsts wɪl kʌm]
Also if they build motels and hotels around there, many tourists will come.
22. [ɪt wɪl hɛlp ɪndiənz laɪvs ɛkənɒmɪkəli] It will help Indians' lives economically.

[9. Results of the spontaneous speech]

From my conversation, I could observe the substitution of sounds, the deletion of sounds, and the addition of sounds.

(1) Substitution of sounds took place in my pronunciation of the following words:

(A) Spontaneous speech under neither pressure nor excitement

particular [pɑ:tɪkjʊlə] → [pətɪkjʊlə]	passed [pæsd] → [pɑsd]
they [ðe] → [ze]	the [ðə] → [zə]
always [ɔlweɪz] → [o:lweɪz]	office [ɔfɪs] → [o:fɪs]
limitations [lɪmɪteɪʒnz] → [lɪmɪteɪnz]	

(B) Spontaneous speech under pressure and excitement

very [vɛri] → [bɛri]	they [ðe] → [ze]
Valley [væli] → [bali]	though [ðo] → [zo]
American [əmɛrɪkən] → [əmɛrɪkən]	oriental [ɔrɪəntəl] → [ɔrɪəntəRu]
feel [fi:l] → [fiRu]	angry [æŋgri] → [əŋgri]
favorite [fevərit] → [fɛvəɾəto]	think [θɪŋk] → [sɪŋk]
while [hwaɪl] → [hwaɪRu]	follow [fɔlo] → [fɔRo]
law [lɔ] → [Ro:]	hobby [hɔbi] → [hobi]
hobby [hɔbi] → [hobi]	composer [kəmpozə] → [kɒmpo:zə]
classic [klæsɪk] → [kRasɪku]	no [no] → [nɔ:]
that [ðæt] → [zæt]	rule [rul] → [RuRu]
also [ɔlso] → [ɔ:lsɔ:]	

(2) Deletion of sounds took place in my pronunciation of the following words:

(A) Spontaneous speech under neither pressure nor excitement

There were no problems.

(B) Spontaneous speech under pressure and excitement

race [res] → [re-]

(3) Addition of sounds took place in my pronunciation of the following words:

(A) Spontaneous speech under neither pressure nor excitement

There were no problems.

(B) Spontaneous speech under pressure and excitement

feel[fil] → [fiRu] rule[rul] → [RuRu]
 favorite[fevərit] → [fɛvəɾəto] oriental[ɔriɛntl] → [oRIɛntəRu]
 while[hwaɪl] → [hwaɪRu] save[sev] → [sevu]
 love[lʌv] → [lʌvu] fish[fiʃ] → [fiʃu]
 classic[klæsɪk] → [kRʌsɪku]

[10. American English Vowel Phoneme Chart]

		Front	Central	Back
High	Tense Lax	i (beat) ɪ (bit)		u (moon) ʊ (pull)
Mid	Tense Lax	e (say) ɛ (set)	ɜ̄ (bird) ə (after) ʌ (hut) ə (up)	o (over)
Low	Tense Lax	æ (sat)	ɑ (father)	ɔ (fall)

[11. American English Consonant Phoneme Chart]

		Bilabial	Labio-dental	Inter-dental	Alveolar	Alveo-palatal	Velar	Glottal
Stops	vl vd	p b			t d		k g	
Fricatives	vl vd		f v	θ ð				h
Sibilants	vl vd				s z	ʃ ʒ		
Affricates	vl vd					tʃ dʒ		
Nasals		m			n		ŋ	
Liquids	Lateral Retroflex				l r			
Glides						j		w

(vl=voiceless sound, vd=voiced sound)

[12. Japanese Vowel Phoneme Chart]

		Front	Central	Back
High	Tense Lax	i		u
Mid	Tense Lax	e		o
Low	Tense Lax		α	

[13. Japanese Consonant Phoneme Chart]

		Bilabial	Labio-dental	Inter-dental	Alveolar	Alveo-palatal	Velar	Glottal
Stops	v	p			t		k	
	vd	b			d		g	
Fricatives	v	Φ						h
	vd							
Sibilants	v				s	ʃ		
	vd				z	ʒ		
Affricates	v					tʃ		
	vd					dʒ		
Nasals		m			n		ŋ	
Liquids					l			
Glides						j		w

(v| = voiceless sound, vd = voiced sound)

[14. Analysis of American English phonemes and Japanese phonemes]

The Japanese vowel and consonant systems are different from those of English; for example, the Japanese vowel system consists of [i], [e], [α], [o], and [u], and the consonant system consists of [p], [b], [t], [d], [k], [g], [Φ], [h], [s], [z], [ʃ], [ʒ], [tʃ], [dʒ], [m], [n], [ŋ], [l], [j], and [w]. On the other hand, the English vowel system consists of [i], [ɪ], [e], [ɛ], [æ], [α], [ɔ], [o], [ʊ], [u], [ə], [ʌ], [ə], and [ɜ], and its consonant system consists of [p], [b], [t], [d], [k], [g], [f], [v], [θ], [ð], [h], [s], [z], [ʃ], [ʒ], [tʃ], [dʒ], [m], [n], [ŋ], [l], [r], [j], and [w].

If we compare vowel and consonant sounds between the Japanese and the English languages, [ɪ], [ɛ], [æ], [ɔ], [ʊ], [ʌ], [ə], [ɜ], [ə], [f], [v], [θ], [ð], [l], and [r] are missing in the Japanese language. There is a bilabial fricative sound [Φ] ([Φusuma] ふすま) in the Japanese language but there is no [Φ] sound in the English system. There is no [l] and [r] sounds in the Japanese but there is [l] in Japanese.

[15. Conclusion]

William T. Littlewood cites in his Foreign and Second Language Learning, “For many people, it is almost axiomatic that children can learn a second language better than adults. They refer especially to immigrant families where children have learnt the language of their new community with native or near-native proficiency, whereas the adults always show traces of foreignness. Also, studies of immigrants to North America (e.g. Ramsey and Wright, 1974) and West Germany (e.g. Klein and Dittmar, 1979) provide concrete evidence that the younger a person is on arrival in the new country, the more proficient he or she is likely to become in the new language.” (Littlewood, page, 65) Littlewood also states, “The most common explanation for these observations is that there is a ‘critical period’, during which the brain is flexible and language learning can occur naturally and easily. Since this period ends around puberty, adolescents and adults can no longer call upon these natural learning capacities. The result is that language learning becomes an artificial, laborious process.” (Littlewood, page 65) Moreover, he also cites, “Normally, we expect a learner to progress further along the learning continuum, so that his ‘interlanguage’ moves closer and closer to the target language system and contains fewer and fewer errors. However, some errors will probably never disappear entirely. Such errors are often described as fossilised meaning that they have become permanent features of the learner’s speech. Obvious examples are the pronunciation errors which form part of the ‘foreign accent’ retained by most adolescent and adult learners. (Littlewood, page 33 & 34)

Hatch cites in his Psycholinguistics, “Krashen, Long, and Scarcella believe that the conflict among the studies can be explained in a number of ways. Primarily, they believe that the research should first be separated into studies that look at initial learning and studies that look at ultimate, long-term language attainment. In a careful review of the literature they give evidence for three generalizations regarding age, rate, and eventual attainment in the second language: (1) adults proceed more rapidly through the initial stages of syntactic and morphological development than children; (2) older children acquire language faster than younger children; and (3) acquirers who begin second languages in early childhood through natural exposure achieve higher proficiency than those beginning as adults. Their basic position is that adults do better in initial learning but that younger is better in the long run.” (Hatch, page 196) Klein cites Krashen’s monitor theory in his Second Language Acquisition, “There are two ways for adult learners to gain proficiency in a second language: subconscious acquisition and conscious learning. ‘Learning’ is always effected through a ‘monitor’ or an effort on the part of the learner to control his language output and to self-correct it whenever necessary. The monitor can become effective in a communication situation only if (a) there is enough time to operate it, (b) the speaker is concerned with the correctness of his speech production, and (c) the speaker knows the correct rule.” (Klein, page 28)

From my observation of my own pronunciation, I found that I had difficulty perceiving the distinctions between [ɑ] and [æ] [ə] [ʌ] [ɜ] [ɔ] [ɒ]; [o] and [ɔ]; [R] and [l] [r]; [θ] and [s]; [ð] and [z]; and between [v] and [b]. Therefore, I substituted [ɑ] for [æ] (e.g. van

[væn]→[van]); [ɑ] for [ʌ] (e.g. bus [bʌs]→[bas]); [ɑ] for [ə] (e.g. that [ðæt]→[ðat]); [ɑ:] for [ɜ] and [ə] (e.g. early [ɜli]→[ɑ:li]; faster [fæstə]→[fastɑ:]); [o] for [ɔ] (e.g. hobby [hɒbi]→[hobi]); [o:] for [ɔ] (e.g. law [lɔ]→[lo:]); [R] for [l] and [r] (e.g. rule [rul]→[RuRu]); [s] for [θ] (e.g. think [θɪŋk]→[sɪŋk]); [z] for [ð] (e.g. they [ðe]→[ze]); [b] for [v] (e.g. very [veri]→[beri]); and [ɸ] for [f] (e.g. surf [sɜrf]→[sɜrɸ]).

Japanese words consist of a consonant plus a vowel. Almost all word sounds end with a vowel except the words ending with [n]. Therefore, I added an extra vowel sound after a consonant in some English words; for example, save [sev]→[sevu], bottle [bɒtəl]→[botoru], and fish [fɪʃ]→[fɪʃu]. On the other hand, when I pronounced [v] without adding an extra vowel [u] after [v], [v] was deleted: for example, love [lʌv]→[lʌ-] and leave [liv]→[li-]. I had learned how to articulate the [v] sound, but my exhalation was not strong enough to make this sound audible.

Krashen, Long, and Scarcella mention that adults acquire a second language slowly. Even though I had been living in the U.S.A. for a long time, I still had trouble pronouncing English words but I realized which sounds I had trouble pronouncing. I also knew how to pronounce these sounds: [ɪ], [ɛ], [æ], [ə], [ʌ], [ɜ], [ə], [ɔ], [l], [r], [θ], [ð], and [v]. When I looked at the word lists and read them consciously, I did not make many mistakes. On the other hand, when I spoke quickly and excitedly, I forgot all the phonological rules; therefore, I made a lot of mistakes. Under pressure, I only tried to express my ideas in a pragmatic way and gave my opinions quickly in order to keep my listeners' attention. Under these conditions, I couldn't recognize all the pronunciation rules for individual sounds because I did not have time to monitor them. If I spent more time on pronunciation and spoke consciously and carefully, I could speak and pronounce better English because I could monitor the English that I produced. Even though I acquired and learned English as my second language slowly, my English gradually improved by imitation, reinforcement, cognition, and input of English language rules.

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