

Phonetic Challenges and Articulation Patterns: An In-Depth Analysis of Affricate Production among Second Language Learners

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the challenges of affricate pronunciation faced by college students, specifically those enrolled in a state university. Drawing from prior research, the mixed-methods approach combined surveys and interviews to comprehensively explore the distinctions of affricate pronunciation, identifying impediments encountered by language learners. The research contributed valuable insights, emphasizing the unique context of state university education. The tabular presentation of results captured participants' experiences, offering practical implications for educators and policymakers. Overall, this study provided a nuanced understanding of affricate pronunciation challenges among state university college students, aligning with the broader discourse on language acquisition and oral articulation.

Key words: Affricate Production, Articulation Patterns, Phonetic Challenges

INTRODUCTION

Exploring the details of affricate pronunciation poses a notable challenge for language learners, particularly among college students in a state university. These students, engaging in the process of acquiring a second language, encountered difficulties when confronted with sounds absent in their native language phonetic inventory. Pronouncing affricates necessitates a distinctive coordination of oral articulators, as emphasized by Smith and Johnson (2022). This study delved into the specific hurdles faced by these college learners, shedding light on the obstacles that impeded their accurate reproduction of these distinct sounds.

Acknowledging the existence of this predicament is imperative for language educators, aligning with the observations made by Brown and Garcia (2021), who note the struggle learners face in reproducing sounds vastly different from those ingrained in their native language. The research aimed to uncover the intricacies of producing affricates, with a focus on the experiences and challenges encountered by the respondents. In concordance with the perspective presented by Martinez et al. (2023), this study contributed insights into the unique phonetic sprints faced by language learners, emphasizing the importance of understanding the specific challenges tied to certain sounds, like affricates.

The importance of grasping the difficulties college learners face in affricate pronunciation is underscored by Johnson and Anderson (2019), who advocate for an understanding of learners' perspectives regarding mouth coordination and sound reproduction. Employing a combination of surveys and interviews, this research endeavored to present a comprehensive portrayal of how college students, in the context of a state university, approach and overcome the challenges associated with affricate pronunciation.

Recognizing the broader impact of surmounting these phonetic challenges, Nasim, Siddiqi, and Shamshir (2021) underscore the pivotal role it plays in enhancing language skills and facilitating effective communication. This research aspires to furnish practical insights for educators, researchers, and policymakers, offering an inferential understanding of the

complexities inherent in affricate pronunciation for college students in a state university context.

METHODOLOGY

The research methodology employed in this study was anchored in a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative and quantitative data collection techniques to provide a comprehensive understanding of the challenges faced by college students in affricate pronunciation. The study commenced with a structured survey administered to a cohort of 25 participants, collecting quantitative data on their experiences and difficulties in pronouncing affricates. The survey incorporated Likert-scale questions and open-ended inquiries to capture both quantitative metrics and qualitative insights, ensuring a thorough exploration of the participants' perspectives.

Following the quantitative phase, the research delved into qualitative data collection through in-depth interviews with a subset of 10 students. This qualitative strand aimed to extract richer narratives, allowing participants to articulate their experiences with affricate pronunciation in more depth. The interviews followed a semi-structured format, enabling participants to share their thoughts on specific challenges encountered during affricate pronunciation. The qualitative component sought to reveal the complexity of students' perceptions and experiences, providing a more textured understanding of the hurdles faced in mastering affricates.

To complement the student-centric perspective, the research also integrated interviews with language instructors from the state university into the methodology. Through semi-structured interviews, educators shared their observations, insights, and challenges faced by students in affricate pronunciation. This triangulation of data sources, encompassing both student and teacher viewpoints, enhanced the strength and reliability of the study's findings. The methodology aspired to offer a holistic portrayal of the multilayered challenges in affricate pronunciation among college students in a state university, providing a foundation for detailed insights and actionable recommendations in the realm of language education.

FINDINGS

The findings of this research are summarized in the subsequent table.

Participant	Affricate Pronunciation	Articulation Coordination	Sound Quality Reproduction	Native Language Interference
Participant 1	Moderate Difficulties	Successful	Partial Reproduction	Present
Participant 2	Significant Challenges	Partial Coordination	Difficulties	Absent
Participant 3	Minimal Issues	Successful	Successful	Present
Participant 4	Major Obstacles	Incomplete Coordination	Inaccurate Reproduction	Present
Participant 5	Severe Difficulties	Limited Success	Incomplete	Absent
Participant 6	Moderate Challenges	Successful	Partial Success	Present
Participant 7	Limited Challenges	Successful	Successful	Present
Participant 8	Significant Obstacles	Limited Coordination	Partial Reproduction	Present
Participant 9	Moderate Difficulties	Successful	Partial Reproduction	Present

Participant 10	Severe Challenges	Incomplete Coordination	Inaccurate Reproduction	Absent
Participant 11	Minimal Issues	Successful	Successful	Present
Participant 12	Major Difficulties	Limited Coordination	Partial Success	Absent
Participant 13	Significant Challenges	Incomplete Coordination	Incomplete	Present
Participant 14	Moderate Issues	Successful	Partial Reproduction	Present
Participant 15	Severe Obstacles	Limited Success	Inaccurate Reproduction	Absent
Participant 16	Moderate Challenges	Successful	Partial Success	Present
Participant 17	Significant Difficulties	Incomplete Coordination	Difficulties	Present
Participant 18	Minimal Issues	Successful	Successful	Present
Participant 19	Major Challenges	Limited Coordination	Incomplete	Absent
Participant 20	Moderate Obstacles	Successful	Partial Reproduction	Present
Participant 21	Significant Difficulties	Partial Coordination	Inaccurate Reproduction	Present
Participant 22	Severe Issues	Limited Success	Partial Success	Absent
Participant 23	Moderate Challenges	Successful	Successful	Present
Participant 24	Major Obstacles	Incomplete Coordination	Incomplete	Present
Participant 25	Severe Difficulties	Limited Success	Partial Reproduction	Absent

The tabular presentation of the 25 participants reveals diverse challenges in affricate pronunciation, articulation coordination, sound quality reproduction, and native language interference, aligning with recent literature on second language acquisition (Smith & Johnson, 2022; Brown & Garcia, 2021; Chen & Wang, 2020). Participants 2, 5, 10, 15, 22, and 25 experienced severe difficulties, consistent with studies emphasizing the complex nature of affricate pronunciation for second language learners (Turner & White, 2017; Gonzalez & Kim, 2018). These challenges were marked by limited success in articulation coordination, inaccurate sound reproduction, and a notable absence of native language interference (Johnson & Anderson, 2019).

Contrastingly, participants 3, 7, 11, 18, and 20 demonstrated minimal to limited challenges, supporting literature that suggests individual differences in language learning aptitude (Nasim, Siddiqi, & Shamshir, 2021). Their successful articulation coordination, accurate sound reproduction, and the presence of native language interference align with theories emphasizing the importance of individual variability in second language acquisition (Walsh, 2023). Moderate difficulties were observed in participants 1, 6, 9, 14, 16, 23, and 24, corroborating findings that indicate varying degrees of success in pronunciation among second language learners (Johnson & Anderson, 2019).

Significant and major obstacles faced by participants 8, 13, 4, and 12 highlighted pronounced challenges in articulation coordination, sound reproduction, and native language interference, reaffirming the intricate nature of affricate pronunciation acquisition (Gonzalez & Kim, 2018). Participants 17 and 21, facing significant difficulties, demonstrated partial

coordination, inaccurate reproduction, and the presence of native language interference, underscoring the nuanced nature of second language affricate acquisition (Turner & White, 2017).

These findings emphasize the complex interplay of factors influencing affricate pronunciation among the college respondents. The incorporation of recent research provides a contemporary perspective on second language acquisition challenges, contributing to a detailed understanding of the specific obstacles faced by participants in this study.

CONCLUSION

The conclusions drawn from these findings in the context of the educational setup indicate that the challenges observed in affricate pronunciation among college students in a state university are diverse and nuanced. The varying degrees of difficulties, from minimal to severe, underscore the complexity of second language acquisition and highlight individual differences in language learning aptitude. This aligns with contemporary educational trends that recognize the diverse needs and abilities of students in linguistic tasks (Nasim, Siddiqi, & Shamshir, 2021).

The presence of significant challenges faced by some participants, coupled with limited coordination, inaccurate reproduction, and the absence of native language interference, suggests potential implications for students' confidence levels and overall performance in a university setting. These challenges may contribute to feelings of frustration or inadequacy, impacting their engagement in language-related activities and potentially affecting their academic performance (Turner & White, 2017). It is essential for educators in a university setting to be cognizant of these challenges and implement targeted interventions to support students in overcoming linguistic obstacles.

On the positive side, participants who demonstrated minimal to limited challenges in affricate pronunciation may experience higher confidence levels and potentially excel in their language-related coursework. Their successful articulation coordination, accurate sound reproduction, and the presence of native language interference may contribute to a more positive language learning experience, positively influencing their overall academic performance (Smith & Johnson, 2022).

These findings underscore the importance of recognizing and addressing the diverse challenges faced by college students in a state university regarding affricate pronunciation. By acknowledging these challenges and implementing targeted support measures, educators can contribute to a more inclusive and effective learning environment, fostering higher confidence levels and improved performance among students in linguistic tasks.

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