

The Pausing Pattern in the Speech of EFL College Students in Taiwan  
臺灣大學生口語靜默停頓之研究

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Abstract

In the field of pronunciation teaching, Anderson-Hsieh & Venkatagiri (1994) have initiated a study to quantify degrees of differentiation of pausing among native speakers and Chinese international teaching assistants of intermediate and high English oral proficiency levels. While such acoustic measurement provides a much needed empirical basis to the informal recognition that lower proficiency nonnative Chinese international teaching assistants tend less to produce appropriate pauses at major syntactic boundaries with appropriate pause duration than overproduce pauses, the present study aims to target a more general subject population: EFL learners in Taiwan. This study then produces and analyzes audiotape samples of English oral passage-reading by 96 Chinese EFL learners, first year university students in central Taiwan, allowing comparative analysis of silent pause duration ratio and pause frequency among native speakers and two groups of Chinese EFL subjects at two proficiency levels. Subjects were required to read three passages of 46, 53, and 59 words, respectively. The pause manipulation software PauseEdit, developed in house, was utilized to locate the pauses, to measure the duration of each pause, and to obtain the frequency of pause. The results show that the average pause frequency of subjects of higher proficiency level resembles that of the native speakers, however, their average pause duration does not resemble that of native speakers.

## 中文摘要

Anderson-Hsieh、Johnson、及 Koehler (1992) 透過量化分析，探討音段、超音段特徵、及音節結構與發音的關聯性。研究結果顯示超音段特徵與發音的關聯性遠大於其他兩個因素。然而該研究並未深入探究四種超音段特徵包含重音、節奏、語調、及適切靜默停頓對口語可解度的影響程度。在後續的研究中，Anderson-Hsieh 及 Venkatagiri (1994) 以九個英文句子作為測驗工具，其中三句由四個音節組成，三個由八個音節組成，另三個則由兩個子句，由 17-19 音節組成，來了解靜默停頓對口語可解度的影響。其研究結果顯示中級英語口語能力之外籍華裔助教的停頓次數為高級英語口語能力助教的 3 倍之多，且其平均停頓時間為後者接近兩倍之長。相對地，口語能力較好的助教，其停頓表現則近似於英語母語使用者，因此推論適切停頓應是可以習得的。然而 Anderson-Hsieh 及 Venkatagiri (1994) 所採集的對象為中、高英語口語能力之外籍華裔助教各三名，並未包含初等英語口語能力的學習者，同時這個研究的取樣太小，無法反映此一決定性因素的普遍影響程度。因此本研究以中部某大學九十六名工教系及電機系一年級的學生為對象，比較兩組英語程度大學生與英語母語使用者在朗讀三段字數分別為四十六、五十三、及五十九字文章之靜默停頓的表現。偵測停頓出現位置、次數、及停頓時間長短之工具採用研究者自行開發的電腦軟體 PauseEdit。研究結果顯示，英語程度較高大學生之口語靜默停頓的頻率較接近母語使用者，然而其停頓時間的長短與母語使用者並不類似。

關鍵字：口語靜默停頓；英語