
A study of undergraduate students' errors made in the pronunciation of some technology - related words

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Key words

Pronunciation errors, Technology – related words, Mother Tongue Interference.

Abstract

The emerging technological revolution –especially in electronic communication in different parts of the world has inevitably led to the introduction of a sizeable number of English words. Subsequently, the contemporary Nigerian university students have systematically embraced this tide of 'Techno-Linguistic' globalization which has combined to shape the linguistic engineering process commonly witnessed in most university campuses in Nigeria. This study was therefore undertaken to investigate the extent to which undergraduates of English studying at the National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN) could accurately pronounce some commonly used technology – related words with regard to the English consonant and vowel sounds that often pose pronunciation challenges to the students.

A total of 60 students were randomly selected from the 100, 200 and 300 levels in the department of English and were given the opportunity to pronounce each of the selected words as well as construct simple sentences using the same words. The students' performance was recorded and subjected to qualitative analysis. The result showed that the frequencies of pronunciation errors was high when the words were pronounced in isolation and very high when the words were used in spoken utterances by the students. A clear case of Mother Tongue interference was evident in the data collected. This clearly confirms the fact that many undergraduate students of English in NOUN still experience some difficulty in pronouncing English vowels and consonants not present in their Mother Tongues (L1). This study therefore posits that teachers/lecturers of spoken English in Nigerian universities need to devote more pedagogical and research attention to these 'problem sounds' as such a move will ensure the practicability of training the students to become proficient language users.
