

ENGLISH AND SERBO-CROATIAN VOWEL PHONEMES AND ERRORS MADE

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This paper presents an analysis of the vowel phonemes of English and Serbo-Croatian, indicating points of agreement and disagreement, coupled with the errors made by most learners of either language at the elementary level courses.

Subject

The English vowel system comprises 7 short and 5 long vowels, as well as 8 diphthongal glides. The Serbo-Croatian vowel system, however, comprises only 5 vowels, which can be long or short, with an additional prosodic feature, that is, a specific pitch change, a choice of four melodic accents.

A few phonemes in the two languages can be said to be phonetically similar. There are great differences in sequence and distribution, and particularly in prosodic features. Whereas in English there are diphthongs and even triphthongs, in Serbo-Croatian there are only vowel clusters. Distributionally, five English vowels cannot occur finally, while all the Serbo-Croatian vowels can occur in all positions. Some of the clusters can only occur non-finally. As for suprasegmentals, the English vowels can differ in length only, while the Serbo-Croatian ones differ both in length and pitch change.

Conclusion

English learners of Serbo-Croatian make errors due to the lack of vowel reduction in the target language, the distributional and suprasegmental features. Serbo-Croatian learners of English are faced with a lot of unfamiliar phones.

References

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