

Pronunciation Teaching for European and American Students with “Occidental Dialect”

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Abstract: With the increasing international status of China, more and more foreign students are coming to China to study, so it is necessary for them to learn Chinese. However, even foreign students with high Chinese proficiency still have the feeling of “foreign accent and foreign tone” when speaking Chinese, which is inseparable from foreign students' mastery of Chinese pronunciation. Based on the phonetic problems in the process of teaching Chinese as a foreign language, this paper chooses European and American students as research object, takes the form of listening records, and extensively collects some other survey materials for reference, in order to obtain more objective and accurate data results. Then the paper focuses on the analysis of the pronunciation problems of European and American students. Firstly, a simple understanding of Chinese pronunciation is made. After that, through the comparison of Chinese and foreign students' mother tongues, errors that easily occur to students are summarized. Finally, several specific and feasible teaching methods and techniques are put forward for foreign students' pronunciation errors. It is hoped that the above analysis and research can provide some help to the teaching of Chinese as a foreign language.

1. Introduction

Speech learning is the basis of learning Chinese. It is difficult for foreigners to standardize their pronunciation when they learn Chinese. Many foreign students at intermediate and advanced Chinese level still speak Mandarin with a strong accent. We call this pronunciation problem “foreign accent and foreign accent”[3]. Chinese phonetics is a very important part of learning Chinese. It is an important means to master the basic knowledge of Chinese, to train the basic skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing, and to use Chinese for social communication. Chinese pronunciation is the most intuitive expression of a foreign student's Chinese proficiency. It can reflect the students' vocabulary and grammar level. It is also the basic tool of expression and survival communication in the Chinese environment. Therefore, we should pay attention to the teaching of Chinese pronunciation, especially for beginners, so that they can master the correct pronunciation of Putonghua, cultivate good pronunciation habits, and try their best to overcome their “foreign accent and foreign intonation” problems.

2. Problems in Teaching Chinese Phonetics as a Foreign Language

2.1 The Characteristics of Chinese Phonetics

2.1.1 Consonants and Initials

Consonants are those whose airflow is blocked in a certain part and which break through the blockage in a certain way. Chinese has 22 consonants. When pronouncing, the position where airflow is blocked is called the pronunciation part. According to the pronunciation part, it can be divided into seven categories: bilabial (b, p, m), lip-toothed (f), pronunciation (z, c, s), median (d, t, n, l), pronunciation (z h, ch, sh, r), pronunciation before the tongue (j, q, x), pronunciation after the tongue (g, k, ng, h) (commonly known as “root of the tongue”). Putonghua initials are consonants at the beginning of Chinese syllables. There are 22 consonants in Putonghua. The consonant ng is

removed and a zero initial is added.

Foreign students generally have errors in the pronunciation of apical hind tone, facial tone and lip-tooth tone, while there are fewer errors in other parts. The apical hind tone is relatively rare in all kinds of linguistic phonologies, and it is seldom used in Chinese dialect areas. There are two kinds of deviations in the pronunciation of lingual pronunciation: one is to palate the pronunciation z, C and s of the tip of the tongue into a “sharp sound”, the other is to pronounce the pronunciation of lingual pronunciation into a lingual lobe sound.

2.1.2 Vowels and Finals

Vowels are the vocal cords of airflow vibration, which are a kind of phonemes formed in the oral cavity without hindrance. The formation of different vowels is due to the difference of mouth shape and tongue position. There are 10 vowels and 13 complex vowels in Putonghua. There are seven lingual vowels in Putonghua (a, o, e, i, u, ü, sister-in-law). It can be analyzed from the following three aspects: the height of the tongue (the size of the opening), the front and back of the tongue, and the roundness of the lip. Specific pronunciation can be referred to the tongue vowel lip shape map.

The apical vowels of the tongue are - I [q], - I [q], and the rolling vowel er. Complex vowels refer to the vowels whose tongue position and lip shape change during pronunciation. They are divided into pre-consonant (ai, ei, ao, ou), post-consonant (ia, ie, ua, uo, oue) and middle-consonant (iao, iou, uai, uei).

As a standard language, the vowel system of Mandarin Chinese shows a “tight” feature. When discussing “tight and loose”, Jakobson and Jakobson Halle pointed out that “tight vowels deviate from the neutral position of vocal tract when pronouncing, i.e. assuming that there is a large distance between the positions which produce very open vowels, so that the tight vowels deviate from the neutral resonance. The distance between peak modes is also large. They also pointed out that when vowels are tightened, the vocal cords are tighter, the lower glottic pressure is higher, the volume is larger, and the duration of tightened vowels is longer in some languages. The vowel system of Japanese and Korean students is much looser than that of Mandarin Chinese, and English vowels are generally looser than that of Mandarin Chinese.

2.1.3 Tones

There are four types of tones in Putonghua: Yinping, Yangping, Shangsheng and Qusheng. There are hardly any tones in a foreign language, so it is very difficult for them to learn tones. Foreign students' tone errors are mainly manifested in the narrow tone range, which is obviously lower in the upper tone range of 1, 2 and 4 tones. They think the Chinese tone is a little exaggerated, like “singing” [2]. As mentioned earlier, the vowel pronunciation of foreign students is loose, so the tone range will be low. Even though foreign students have a strong ability of monosyllabic tone, entering two-character group, three-character group or even longer language will lead to confusion, mainly in the process of tone connection, which is not connected with each other, incoherent, such as pronouncing a word, it will be pronounced into two words, but sometimes in order to connect, the original tone will be very non-standard. In the long run, students' tone learning will be confused and lose confidence in learning tone.

2.2 Analysis of Learning Objects - Errors Easily Made by European and American Students in Chinese Learning

2.2.1 Initial Acquisition Errors

As for the non-aspirated clear fricative Z [ts] before the tip of the tongue and the C [ts'] before the tip of the tongue, students often read Z as DS [dz] in English and sometimes as [z] in English. In English, [dz] is a voiced sound. That's why many students in Europe and America struggle to read Chinese characters starting with Z. The pronunciation of C [ts'] in Chinese is the same as that of TS [ts'] in English, but TS never appears at the beginning of a word in English, while in Chinese, C is only at the beginning of a word. So it is very difficult for European and American students to read

Chinese characters at the beginning of C.

The two most problematic initials of students in Europe and America are j and zh. J is the consonant in front of the tongue and zh is the consonant after the tip of the tongue. They are pronounced as [d] and [t] in English. Initial J can only be matched with Qikou and Qikou vowels, while zh can only be matched with Qikou and Qikou vowels. These rules increase the difficulty of students' learning and lead to a lot of errors. For example, 90% of the students in Europe and America can hardly distinguish the words “Jia-Zha, Jin-Zhen, Jing-Zheng”.

There are three corresponding voiced sounds in English: unaspirated b, d and g. Many students always have great difficulty in pronouncing Chinese characters with b, D and g. This is because they turn unaspirated sounds into voiced sounds.

2.2.2 Vowel Acquisition Errors

Many foreign students cannot distinguish u from u, especially when u meets j, q, X and y, it will be written as u, which will cause confusion among students. Some students will also spell u with zh, ch, SH and make very awkward sounds.

In both English and Chinese, there is the “ai” sound, but in English, the former is long and clear, the latter is short and vague, and the tongue position of the first vowel is lower than that of Chinese. Although Chinese is also louder than the former, it is not as long as English.

2.2.3 Tone Acquisition Errors

According to the “Five-Degree Marking Method” invented by Mr. Zhao Yuanren, the tone of Putonghua is 55 in Yinping tone, 35 in Yangping tone, 214 in upper tone and 51 in deafening tone.

According to the survey, Chinese hair is 55 tones, sometimes between 4 degrees or 4 degrees to 5 degrees. In the initial and intermediate stages, the foreign students' intonation is generally about 3 degrees, while in the advanced stage, the foreign students' pronunciation is relatively standard; in the pronunciation, the level tone is generally between 2 and 3 degrees, and the emphasis is between 4 and 5 degrees, which is an obvious upward tone. Most of the foreign students have a low starting point, a low rising range, and no obvious span space; the overall pitch of the upper voice is lower, the falling part is longer pronounced, and the rising part is shorter and more obvious. Overseas students do not grasp well, the starting point is too high, the falling is not in place, the rising part will read very long, 214 tune into 324, 325, 335; voiceless and English stress is similar, because the influence of their mother tongue will increase 51 tune several times to read, it seems very laborious.

3. The Methods and Skills for Teaching Chinese Phonetics as a Foreign Language

3.1 Imitation

Imitation can be divided into collective imitation and individual imitation.

3.1.1 Collective Imitation

Collective imitation is the whole class or part of the students imitate the sound recording and the teacher's pronunciation together. Everyone can speak, which can improve the rate of opening, and there is no tension. But the teacher cannot hear each student's pronunciation clearly, and it is difficult to find individual problems, which is not convenient to teach for individual students' problems. Collective imitation should enter individual imitation after several times.

3.1.2 Individual Imitation

Individual imitation refers to students' individual imitation of recording or teacher's pronunciation. Teachers can understand each student's pronunciation situation and give targeted guidance and correction. They can also let other students practice listening and correct their own pronunciation errors automatically. But we should pay attention to eliminating students' tension, and do not imitate and magnify students' mistakes, in order to avoid causing confusion to students.

3.2 Demonstration

3.2.1 Chart and Blackboard Presentation

In phoneme teaching, we can use consonant table and vowel table to explain consonant and vowel. We can use the rule table of vowel-vowel combination to explain the rules of combination. For some difficult pronunciation, we can use the pronunciation organ chart to direct pronunciation intuitively. In tone teaching, four-tone up-and-down chart can be used to demonstrate the change of tone, and five-degree mark chart can also be used to show the tone value of four tones. For blackboard writing, it can be designed in advance and should be flexible so that students can easily understand it and facilitate teaching.

3.2.2 Demonstration of Mouth and Gesture

Teachers' mouths in pronunciation demonstration are the most intuitive presentation methods, such as the size of opening, the difference between round lip and non-round lip, which can be directly displayed to students. Students can also be advised to observe their mouths in a mirror and make self-correction comparing with teachers. Some sounds, such as the tongue, teeth, soft and hard palate, are difficult for students to see intuitively. Therefore, the hand shape can be used to simulate the voice organs to demonstrate. For example, the left palm curvature can represent the hard palate and upper teeth, and the right four fingers curvature can represent the tongue movement to demonstrate the sharp tongue tones of z, c, s and zh, ch, sh groups. This method can demonstrate the pronunciation position and method of many sounds, which is simple and effective.

3.2.3 Physical and Postural Demonstration

When pronouncing, it is supplemented by physical or physical movements to emphasize the pronunciation method. For example, for aspiration and non-aspiration, a small piece of paper can be placed in front of the mouth, so that students can observe the amplitude of the vibration of the paper to realize the size of the aspiration volume.

When teaching round lip sounds, you can draw a circle in front of your mouth with your hand; when teaching consonants, you can put your finger on your throat to feel the vibration of vocal cords; when teaching tones, you can use your finger to compare the rise and fall of four strokes, or you can use the swing of your head to show the change mode of tones. These external actions can further enhance the effect of the explanation.

3.3 Exaggeration

In order to enhance students' impression, exaggeration should be used appropriately when displaying the parts and methods of pronunciation and instructing students to listen to pronunciation.

3.3.1 Mouth Shape

The purpose of exaggerating oral form is to show the pronunciation part, mouth shape and tongue shape to students clearly, to enhance the image, to facilitate understanding and imitation. The exaggerated mouth shape can also show the difference of each phoneme. For example, when pronouncing a, the mouth can be opened a little wider, indicating that the opening degree is the greatest; when pronouncing i, the corners of the mouth can be pulled to both sides; when pronouncing u, the lips can be protruded forward forcefully, so that students can grasp the difference between the two.

3.3.2 Loudness and Interval

When pronouncing a compound vowel, the loudness can be increased to make the difference between the rhyme, the rhyme abdomen and the rhyme end more obvious. In order to show the pronunciation process of compound vowels, students can pronounce the rhyme abdomen longer so that they can feel the change of interval.

3.3.3 Blackboard Writing

When teaching a single vowel, you can write vowel letters according to the size of the opening. Write bigger openings and smaller openings. When teaching vowels, letters such as ai, AO and UA can be written according to the opening size.

3.4 Tape Method

Use the tapes you have learnt to produce the sounds you want to learn, use easy-to-pronounce tapes to produce the sounds you don't want to pronounce, and use similar sounds in your mother tongue to pronounce the sounds you want to learn. The sounds you have learnt are either in the same or similar parts or in the same or similar pronunciation methods, so you can pronounce the sounds you want to learn smoothly by adjusting the pronunciation parts and methods. For example, the former high Round Lip vowel u is not found in many languages, but I is exactly the same as its pronunciation part, and most foreign students can produce i, so we can use I to bring out the more difficult u sound. The method is to lengthen the pronunciation of I, keep the tongue still, and gradually change the lips from flat to round, so as to produce the sound of U. The same method can be used to learn the vowels of E. Both E and o are second-half high vowels. Therefore, the vowels of E can be brought with the vowels of o, which are easier to pronounce. As long as the tongue position is unchanged, the lips can be narrowed from circle.

Many languages have the consonant s. We can use s to bring out the same z, C and similar zh, ch, SH and R in Chinese. The specific method is to learn s first, and then let the students force their tongue to bounce off the lower edge of the upper teeth, forming a process of blocking and removing blockage, then they can issue affricate z, and on the basis of z, they can issue C by increasing exhalation. On the basis of s, adjust the contact point of the tip of the tongue to the upper gingiva, they can issue sh, and then use sh belt to issue zh and ch, and finally add vocal cord vibration when they issue sh. The sound of R can be made in motion.

The method of banding is also suitable for learning tones, four tones in the first vocal cord or four tones in the lowered vocal cord in English, two tones in four vocal cords and three tones in half three vocal cords.

4. Conclusion

Whether learning or teaching a foreign language, the first thing we encounter is phonetics. If we do not master phonetics well, it will affect the whole language learning. Daily communication will give people a feeling of “foreign accent and foreign tune”. Through the analysis of the phonetic errors of students in Europe and America, we can summarize some common and specific phonetic problems of different Chinese learners. According to some teaching methods and techniques proposed in this paper, teachers of Chinese as a foreign language can teach foreign students pertinently. In addition, we will continue to explore active and effective teaching methods, hoping to play a practical role in the progress of teaching Chinese as a foreign language.

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