

Study on Light and Heavy sounds in Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language (TCFL)

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ABSTRACT. *Under the belt and road initiative, the number of International students coming to China for learning has broken through 460,000 since 2013. On this background, the learning of spoken Chinese plays a crucial part in the development trend of teaching Chinese as a foreign language (TCFL). In this study, the article analyzes the learning issues about the light and heavy sounds in teaching Chinese as a foreign language, put forward some proposals and explore some approaches to improve Chinese learning for International students.*

KEYWORDS: *Teaching Chinese as a foreign language (TCFL); Heavy sounds; Light sounds*

1. Introduction

Phonetics, as the basis of language, determines the practicability and sustainability of language learning, because it is related to whether language learners will be confident to communicate in a different cultural background. In phonetic learning, Chinese light and heavy sound is an advanced stage in the process of speaking for language learners. Chinese phonetic is composed of 4 tones that language learners have to constantly practice with intonation. On account of confusing tones and intonation, language learners have to study hard and focus more on Chinese light and heavy sound based on a different language background.

2. Discussion on the study of light and heavy sounds in phonetic teaching

(1) The definition of Chinese light and heavy sounds

In the research of standard Chinese (mandarin), the definition of light and heavy sounds are not in uniform on the definition of the concept of light and heavy tones. In terms of the definition of light tones, most experts tend to elaborate from the perspective of volume and try to judge the light tones based on the principle of sound production, the muscle tension of the articulation organs and the degree of airflow strength. With regards to this fact, the experts conclude in the characteristics

of light tone and came to draw the conclusion that is, “short and light”. In terms of the definition of heavy tones, most experts tend to define it from pitch, length, intensity and quality and ranked the influences of the four factors on heavy tones. Among them, length has the greatest influence, followed by pitch, intensity and quality and by referring to the characteristics of light tones, the experts concluded the characteristics of the heavy tone as “heavy and strong”.

(2)The importance of learning light and heavy sounds

Light and heavy sound are important features of Chinese phonetic learning which can help us correctly understand Chinese semantics, phrase structure and sentence composition. Light and heavy learning can reflect in the light reading and reading formats within the sentence which expresses the core focus of the sentence and also solve the primary and secondary relationship between the internal phrases of the sentence, which can also allow the vocal language expression more logically rigorous, emotional and more prominent in making the language to be more fluent and beautiful. In the teaching of Chinese as a foreign language, the study of light and heavy sound can effectively improve the effectiveness of Chinese language learning, can also lead to the correct pronunciation of the foreign students to correctly handle Chinese language information, and provide the students with the help in speech synthesis and speech recognition in Chinese.

(3)The light and heavy sounds in the phonetic teaching include several major classifications such as accent, word stress, grammar accent, sentence accent, and focus accent. According to the Chinese-English Dictionary of Modern Chinese Dictionary, the explanation for accent is that, the accented words in a word, phrase or sentence, such as the word “cup, stone,” the first syllable is reread. The accent in the sentence generally needs to be based on the sentence component and grammatical structure in different positions in the same sentence and the accent will express the different meaning structures, such as “no rain today” stress accented on “today”, stress accentuating the weather in “rain”. Different emphasis on the position of the light and heavy sounds is the different and the international students need to express the meaning and grasp the learning of light and heavy sounds.

(4)Highlight semantic emphasis by contrast between light tone and accent

The soft sound is in opposition to the semantics grammar and accent in nature, semantics and grammar, the emphasis is more prominent in the discourse because of the pitch contrast and the role that light tone plays is not to be ignored because it is an important aspect in phonetic teaching. For example, “lover (ai ren)” and “case (an zi)” forms a certain contrast through the mix of heavy tone and light tone, which also plays an important role for the international students to get rid of their foreign accent, accurately grasp the grammar structure and as well understand the meaning of sentences.

3. The problem in the study of light tone and accent

(1)Lack of summary of rules of light and heavy learning

In the Chinese language teaching materials, it is generally simplified to understand the stress as “in Chinese two-syllable words and polysyllabic words, There is always one syllable that is been stressed and this stressed syllable is called word stress”. Most of the words are stressed based on the last syllable, such as “Chinese, Pronunciation, English, Week, University, Culture”. There are also some words with the stress on the first syllable, such as “Name, Doctor, Student”. However, the provisions of the textbooks are more general and vague and as well lacking specific rules. Therefore, students cannot find the rules of the change in stress and it is difficult to determine the language sense of stress. Taking the Chinese course (revised edition) as an example, the stress is taught lightly, which poses some obstacles for foreign students to deeply study the Chinese grammar. For example, when the grammar “is... “emphasizes the time, place, manner, purpose, object, etc. in which an action has occurred or been performed, the grasp of this grammar does not identify the stress in the textbook nor does it distinguish the affirmative sentences which is different from the expression of the negatives sentences and the Foreign students are prone to understand and read with their own sense of language, and to find out the accent at will, resulting in foreign accent in language in order to discover the light and heavy sounds at will, and the language of foreign language will appear to be inconsistent with Chinese localized language expression.

(2) Lack of correct understanding of light and heavy sound teaching

Phonetic teaching is an important part of language teaching. Correct recognition of speech can help students to understand the meaning of other people's words, and at the same time, correctly express their own ideas, thus completing interpersonal communication. Vocal speech can stimulate memory cells and make memories stronger in practical teaching, the lessons of many dumb teachings tell us that if words and sentences that can be read aloud the traces produced by them in the human brain will be clearer and more memorable. In the teaching of Chinese as a foreign language (TCFL), many phonetics teaching either ignore the study of light and heavy sounds or absolutize it. It believes that if one can't learn light and heavy sounds well, he can't learn Chinese well. They split the learning of Chinese language as a whole and emphasize a part of knowledge unilaterally, which leads to the unsatisfactory effect of phonetics teaching.

(3) The soft tone cannot be connected with a suffixation good sounds

Suffixation sounds and soft sound are also special types of sound in modern Chinese, because its complexity has become a blind spot in teaching Chinese as a foreign language TCSL, based on this the soft and light sound is easily confused and if the foreign students do not master the rules of light and heavy sounds, they are easily lost in the discussion of soft and light accent. Li Yanrui believes that the suffixation sound will not easily disappear in the Mandarin, and it is also possible to expand the use of it surface. From this point of view, you can understand, the lack of knowledge in this field is a big knowledge confusion area that is not conducive to the spread of Chinese culture.

(4) Negative migration effect of mother tongue

In the process of the second language acquisition, learners will subconsciously connect their familiar mother tongue with the target language of learning to discover the “common point” between them, and also use it as a second language acquisition. “Or “regularity” is widely used in language learning and application. In fact, this is the negative migration effect of the learner's mother tongue, in the teaching of Chinese and foreign language because many learners also inevitably have similar problems of equating the intonation and tone of the mother tongue with the light and heavy sounds in Chinese, thus having a wrong understanding of the light and heavy sounds of Chinese language. In the teaching of Chinese as a foreign language, if teachers cannot attach great importance to this phenomenon and adopt a positive strategy to adjust the concept of students, it is easy for the students to always be influenced by their mother tongue and it is difficult for them to truly grasp the correct pronunciation of Chinese light and heavy accents.

4. Ways to improve the learning effect of speech light and heavy sound in teaching

Based on practice of teaching Chinese as a foreign language for many years, the author puts forward some ways to strengthen the learning effect of light and heavy sounds in some basic problems of speech sounds in teaching Chinese as a foreign language and for further understanding and as well be able to discuss it.

(1) Dialectical use of textbooks for teaching Chinese as a foreign language as the summary of strengthening the laws of light and heavy sounds

The textbooks for teaching Chinese as a foreign language can be used as the most important template but careful as well responsible teachers will never absorb the nutrition of this textbook, so the teachers should do good job of accumulating knowledge and study the laws of Chinese phonetics because the author combines practical teaching experience to get the two examples:

Example 1: First, students need to be proficient in the common format of light and heavy sounds and to distinguish between the laws of conventional light and heavy sounds. Second, to clarify the principle of Chinese core semantics, that is, in the no-sound two-syllable words, the re-reading should be on the syllable of the latter word; if it is a soft-sounding word, the re-reading should be on the first syllable. An exception rule that is outside the principle.

For example: “Hello, polite” The first set of words accented in the second word, and the second set of words accented the syllable of the first word because of the soft voice. In the case of a two-syllable and soft-sounding word, and in addition to the normative demonstration, the teacher also needs to clarify the pronunciation of the regular voice and the accent, and continue to strengthen, such as the pronunciation, thank you; goodbye, name, and so on to Constantly and repeatedly communicate to cultivate the students' sense of language.

Example 2: To strengthen the study of the special structure of Chinese phonetics teaching. For example, in the sentence structure of “even...also/all...”, the

preposition “Connect” leads to the part that is to be emphasized and the latter uses “Yes, Du” to echo it, implying the semantics of comparison, even the latter statement should be a repeated statement. For example, it took almost half a year to move to a new home and she didn’t even know what her neighbors looked like. (More in-depth contacts). Another example: This word is very easy to write that, even a child in the kindergarten could write it. The example sentence does not specifically indicate the part of speech which needs to be marked out by Chinese teachers during the teaching process to help students find the feeling of light and heavy sounds.

(2)Dialectical understanding of the position of light and heavy voices in speech learning

Light and heavy sound learning is an important part of vocal teaching, but it is not the whole of the vocal teaching. The smooth voice tone teaching is to require students to achieve a natural and beautiful voice. Zhao Yuanren once believed that the Chinese intonation is not a pitch change independent of the tone, but a complex of tone and intonation. Therefore, for foreign students, mastering accurate light and heavy pronunciation skills can express their thoughts flexibly. It conforms to the tone of Chinese. Students who master the weight of single words and sentences do not mean that students can speak fluently. Native Chinese. In the Chinese phonetic teaching of students, the mastery of light and heavy sounds must be group-based, mastering the special cases outside the principle, and mastering the laws of Chinese and foreign accent, only to avoid the Chinese language of the foreign language. Many students have a bad voice but a high level of Chinese. This is why we need to use a dialectical perspective to look at the study of light and heavy voices in Chinese phonetics teaching. However, it does not neglect to ignore the knowledge that instills knowledge into an inseparable Knowledge System.

(3)To strengthen the study of light and heavy sounds and suffixation pronunciation, soft distinction and convergence

In the teaching of heavy sound and light sound, the scientific definition of light and heavy sounds, can make the tone more smoothly. The suffixation vocalization is generally not the place of stress but the “small sample” that should be read lightly. “Dialect” the suffixation sound must be slightly read. The light sound is a special sound change in Chinese. The light and short tones are read under certain conditions and they are not clear enough in the current textbooks to deal with the problem of soft and light sounds, so the foreign students finds it more difficult to learn. Especially, some of them that are soft and have the effect of distinguishing their meanings, which also increases the difficulties in learning the light and heavy sounds. The word after the “table” is soft and should be lightly read, so the basic rule is that the soft words are mostly light reading in order to enhance the aesthetics of the language.

(4)Pay attention to distinguishing the difference and connection between mother tongue and Chinese to avoid negative migration

In the teaching of Chinese as a foreign language, teachers are required to work hard to help the students distinguish the difference and connection between mother

tongue and Chinese, and to avoid the negative effects of mother tongue in Chinese learning: First, teachers should fully understand the language system of the learner's mother tongue in order compare them with the Chinese, so as to find out the difference and connection between the two language systems in terms of light and heavy sounds, and should focus on whether to explain or not in teaching; secondly, teachers should pay more attention to reading training, and as well pay attention to exposed the student during the reading process so that the problem of negative transfer of mother tongue and Chinese language is promptly corrected and guided, as well the students will gradually adopt self-reflection in the process, avoiding the negative influence of mother tongue on Chinese-speaking and accent learning, and to play the positive role of mother tongue in learning Chinese assault In order to improve the efficiency of light and heavy sound learning. In the end, the teachers should pay attention to reading and demonstrating and as well encourage the students to pay more attention to the differences and connections between the mother tongue and the pronunciation of Chinese and English in the listening process, so that the students can master the Chinese language according to the teacher's reading demonstration, correct pronunciation of sound, exploring Chinese light and heavy Sound techniques.

Example 3: English and Chinese are divided into two language systems.

English is a tonal language and Chinese is a tonal language. However, due to the similar pronunciation of some morphemes, learners often judge the pronunciation of tones in Chinese by means of the feeling of tone in English, and thus the pronunciation errors occur. For example, the pronunciation of “w” in English is similar to the pronunciation of “five” in “five books”, so there are British learners who take care of the “five” in the “five books”. However, in Chinese, the numerals in the quantitative phrases require re-reading because it is obvious that the British learners are interfered by the mother tongue and there is a negative transfer of English and Chinese. In response to this phenomenon, teachers should consciously help learners to distinguish the relationship between Chinese and English “pronunciation” and “tune” in teaching, so that the British learners can learn the mother tongue elements in “pronunciation” and realize the positive migration of knowledge. “Tune” to get rid of the stereotype of native pronunciation and to avoid the negative transfer of knowledge, thus helping learners to better grasp the pronunciation skills and laws of light and heavy sounds.

(5)Combine the development status of Chinese language and carry out extended teaching

The glamour of Chinese language is inseparable from the mastery of light and heavy sounds. The language of Chinese is constantly accumulating and changing in practice and many vocabulary are gradually been far from the original intention after the baptism of the times, so as the reading of light and heavy sounds may also change. For example, in the sentence of the grammar “Yes...”, “Xiao Ming is admitted to the university is what many people hope for”, the accent is after the “Yes” statement; if the accent is placed on “Xiao Ming”, the meaning of the expression is People want Xiao Ming to be tested rather than others. This requires

that the teaching of speech and accent should be carried out in a pioneering teaching mode, looking for the same laws in the change, in combination with teaching practice, there will be a continue development with time.

5. Conclusion

The light and heavy speech learning is an important theoretical basis of speech in Chinese as a foreign language, on the basis of in-depth research, we should focus on the position of light and heavy sound learning in speech teaching, and also put the study of light and heavy sounds into the large system of Chinese language speech, because the cognition and research will help the foreign students to speak Chinese that conforms to the Chinese language habits and also convey the meaning of Chinese culture, and appreciate the beauty of Chinese language.

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