

# Phonetic Learning Strategies for Chinese as a Second Language

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**Abstract:** In the process of international Chinese teaching, pronunciation is the key and difficult point of second language learners, due to the lack of real language environment, learners are affected by factors such as negative transfer of their mother tongue, and the phenomenon of foreign accents is common when learning pronunciation. Based on the characteristics of modern Chinese pronunciation, this paper aims to explore the factors influencing foreign learners' acquisition of Chinese phonetics, and to find ways to improve learners' pronunciation accuracy and fluency.

**Keywords:** Second Language; Practice; Phonics; Bias; Learning Strategy.

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## 1. Introduction

The task of teaching Chinese as a second language is to enable learners to master the basic knowledge of Chinese phonetics and the correct and fluent pronunciation of Mandarin Chinese, so as to lay the foundation for communication in spoken language. Teaching methods are mainly communicative and task-based, and most scholars believe that the cultivation of students' communicative ability does not need to emphasize the accuracy of pronunciation, as long as it does not affect communicative ability. If learners cannot grasp accurate pronunciation in the primary stage and the phonetic biases are not corrected in time, in the long run, students will feel that their pronunciation is very accurate, which will eventually lead to the "fossilization" of these biases, which will have a great impact on the subsequent Chinese learning and communication.

Therefore, it is of great significance not only for phonetics teaching, but also for the further learning of Chinese and the communication ability of learners to improve the accuracy of pronunciation and cultivate learners' sense of language at the primary stage.

Learning strategies are the various plans, approaches, steps, methods, techniques and adjustment measures adopted by linguistic learners to effectively master the language rule system, develop language skills and language communication ability, and solve problems encountered in the learning process. Based on the cognitive theories of mental processes and information processing, O'Malley and Chamot divide learning strategies into metacognitive strategies, cognitive strategies, and social/emotional strategies. Metacognitive strategies are strategies for evaluating, monitoring, and managing the use of cognitive strategies for students' own cognitive processes, general strategies that directly affect second language learning and are used in various activities to learn language, and social emotional strategies provide learners with more opportunities to contact and use language.

Studies have shown that the most common learning strategy used by second language learners in the initial stage of learning is cognitive strategies, and learners practice the learned pronunciation points repeatedly under the guidance of teachers to master accurate Chinese pronunciation. However, in the process of acquiring a second language, many Chinese learners who have reached an intermediate or even advanced

level of Chinese language proficiency still have a non-standard Chinese pronunciation, which is what people usually call the phenomenon of "foreign accents", which is also the biggest problem in pronunciation teaching. The main reason for this phenomenon is that on the one hand, teachers only focus on phonemic teaching and ignore the flow of speech, and on the other hand, the duration of phonetic teaching is short, and most teachers believe that as long as it does not affect daily communication, it is understandable that pronunciation is inaccurate.

Learners' learning strategies can be trained, and the teacher's teaching method directly affects the teaching effect, and the teacher's teaching method will directly affect the student's ability to use the learning strategy well, so as to learn a language faster.

Based on the phonetic characteristics of modern Chinese, this paper aims at the two most common problems in the learning of phonetics of second language learners who speak Chinese as a second language, and finds effective teaching methods, so as to improve learners' phonetic learning strategies, better cultivate learners' communicative ability, and lay a solid foundation for the teaching of various elements in the future.

## 2. Effectively Use the Output Hypothesis According to the Characteristics of Chinese Pronunciation, Cultivate Chinese Language Sense, and Improve Students' Pronunciation Fluency and Accuracy

In the 80s of the last centuries, Krashen proposed the famous language input hypothesis, arguing that intelligible input is a necessary condition for second language acquisition, and that sufficient intelligibility input is the only way to acquire language. Subsequently, Swain questioned that "comprehensible input is the only reason to promote second language acquisition" and proposed the "comprehensibility output hypothesis", arguing that language skills cannot be truly acquired by mere input, and successful second language learning requires both input and output. In international Chinese teaching, pronunciation teaching is in the initial stage

of teaching, the language is practiced, not taught, and students are likely to gradually form "dumb Chinese" if they are simply input without output. Phonics teaching requires students to constantly output, but it also needs meaningful output.

The ultimate goal of second language teaching is to cultivate learners' communicative skills, and output plays an important role in the process of learning Chinese, especially phonetics, and meaningful output can not only help learners improve the accuracy of language use, but also cultivate their sense of language in learning Chinese, so that they can speak Chinese more fluently and gradually improve their language use ability.

## 2.1. Characteristics of Disyllabic Phonetic Rhythm Tendency in Chinese

In Chinese culture, there is a wonderful beauty, that is, symmetry. Symmetry and balance have always been the aesthetic ideas advocated by Chinese. It can be seen from many aspects such as architecture, clothing, poetry, couplets and so on. The beauty of symmetry is reflected in the phonetics of modern Chinese, which is a very obvious tendency to be disyllabic. The syllables of modern Chinese have the characteristics of more musical sounds and less noise, and they are very musical. The two-syllable words often have a sense of musicality when read, giving people a catchy feeling, pleasing to the ear, in line with our pursuit of symmetry and balance, harmony and moderation throughout the ages.

Ancient Chinese is monosyllabic-based, developed to modern Chinese, gradually disyllabic, people often add a word in front of or after monosyllabic words, so that monosyllabic becomes two-syllable and for most words, the word added is actually meaningless. Some words with extra two syllables are often shortened into two syllables, such as: "color TV - color TV, No. 1 middle school - No. 1 middle school" and so on.

For most Chinese, when they first come into contact with an article, they can read it more fluently, which is called language sense. In the process of teaching international Chinese, too many teachers pursue step-by-step, from phonemes to syllables, and then to words, phrases, sentences, paragraphs and chapters, so that students' basic skills in modern Chinese are very solid, but when they actually speak Chinese, there are a series of problems of sentence breaking. When students read aloud the text in class, they should consider what the level of the sentence is, and divide the sentence according to the grammatical knowledge of Chinese and the meaning of the words. Therefore, the author believes that in the process of gradual teaching arrangement, teachers may be more conducive to improving students' communicative ability by purposefully cultivating students' sense of language.

Whether we are reciting an article or speaking in ordinary times, it is impossible to read it word by word, nor can we read it in one sitting. A closer look reveals that these sentences can be divided into small speech units, which are more common in the form of two syllables. For example, "He's || one || Teacher. "I'm in || Bathe. "Daddy || Just from || Unit|| Come back. "The use of two-tone phonetic rhythm division, although for some sentences, and the structural relationship of grammatical chromatography division is not consistent, but in most cases, is in line with the language habits of Chinese, so if the teacher tells students the characteristics of Chinese

disyllabic when teaching this part of the content of syllables, it will not cause students to only break sentences according to the grammatical or semantic level, so that students can use it flexibly in ordinary Chinese communication, so as to consciously cultivate the Chinese thinking and language sense of second language learners.

## 2.2. Modern Chinese is a Tonal Language

### (1) Learn phonics from rhyme

For most foreign learners, tone is the most difficulty in learning pronunciation. In some countries, there is no tone in the language, and there are also countries where there are multiple tones, so in the teaching of Chinese as a foreign language, tone teaching has always been a difficult place. Many students have studied Chinese for many years and can speak Chinese fluently, but there is still a phenomenon of "strange tones", and the biggest factor is that the tone is not learned well. Although the pronunciation is full of variety, it presents a harmonious rhythm, and it is not an effective way to let students learn pronunciation in rhythm and cultivate students' sense of language and imagination.

The tones of modern Chinese are not without regularity. From the tonal category, it is divided into four types: Yin Ping, Yang Ping, Shangsheng, and Desheng. Although each character and sentence reads with ups and downs, if you look closely, the tones in Chinese also have their own unique rules and charms. Yin Ping Tone 55 is straight, and the upper tone 214 is tortuous, which is exactly the opposite, and Yang Ping Tone 35 rises up, and Detone 51 falls, which also forms a opposite. So the four tones contrast with each other, high and low, it will be catchy to read, and it will sound harmonious and beautiful. If the teacher is just blindly poisoned in the teaching process, and the students are allowed to freely combine and mechanically train according to the Chinese pinyin they have learned at the beginning, the effect will be minimal. Therefore, in the teaching of the tones of words, teachers need to lead students to feel and understand the true meaning of words and understand the artistic conception of words and sentences on the premise of mastering the meaning of words, so that readers can fully feel the harmonious beauty brought by the combination of four tones and the combination of phonetics and Chinese characters.

It is the consensus that Chinese characters belong to ideograms and originated from pictures. But what people tend to ignore is that speech also has the function of expression and emotion. Taking onomatopoeia as an example, there are a large number of onomatopoeias in Chinese, and the pronunciation of these words comes from the simulation of the sounds of nature. For example, the word "drip-drip-da-da" is generally used to describe the sound of rain, and in the process of explanation, the teacher will generally tell the students how to use this word, and demonstrate the regular reading of this word, but how to make students memorize it deeply? There are many ways to read this word: the first is to extend the pronunciation of each word, "drip-drip-da-da-", using exaggerated methods, so that students can understand how the original pronunciation of the word is pronounced; the second is to extend the pronunciation of the last word, and the second word is "drop" The third is to smile and pronounce each word briskly, such as "listening to the sound of the rain outside the window", revealing a feeling of loving the sound of rain. As a teacher of Chinese as a foreign language, we should be able to express these artistic conceptions to students through sound and intonation, rather than just explaining the

meaning of words, so that students can feel the beauty of the rhythm of Chinese pronunciation from the bottom of their hearts. In the teaching of pronunciation, teachers should pay attention to guiding students to understand the cultural connotation of modern Chinese pronunciation and the beauty of Chinese pronunciation in the field of prosody.

#### (2) Learn pronunciation by reading aloud

Modern Chinese has its specific tone, and the tone can distinguish meaning, and reading aloud is to transform the stiff written text into a subdued and frustrated sound through language, which plays an important role in the teaching of Chinese courses in primary and secondary schools in China, and the effect is also very prominent, which can effectively cultivate students' sense of language. However, in international Chinese teaching, it has not been fully utilized, and there is a lack of systematic training of learners. Chinese is a tonal language, foreign learners in the study of Chinese, often difficult to grasp in the intonation, when reading a single word there is no phonetic, intonation problems, but once the conjunctions into sentences, paragraphs, into articles, often there will be a variety of problems, at this time, if the reading aloud as an auxiliary means to learn pronunciation, so that learners in the flow of language to learn Chinese, truly appreciate the musicality of Chinese pronunciation and the beauty of tone, for improving the learner's pronunciation and intonation has an important role. In the process of Chinese audio explanation, teachers can use a variety of reading methods to teach.

#### 2.1) Model method

The model method is the most common and common teaching method in international Chinese reading aloud teaching, also known as imitation method, which is suitable for almost any student, usually the teacher first model reading, and the students imitate the teacher's tone of voice. In addition, teachers can make full use of modern information technology to broadcast audio-visual materials and movie lines that students are interested in for students to imitate. In the teaching of Chinese pronunciation, it is necessary to fully implement the teaching principle of combining factor teaching and flow teaching, and proceed step by step from phonemes, words, sentences, paragraphs, passages, etc., so as to improve students' opening rate and pronunciation accuracy, and gradually improve their communicative ability.

#### 2.2) Contrasting method

The contrast method is generally to ask students to read a piece of text, record it, and after a period of reading training, then listen to the recording repeatedly, so as to find the problem of their own pronunciation. In addition, teachers can also select the content of the lecture in class to record and send it to the class group, and students can compare it with the teacher after recording according to the content of the material, so as to find their pronunciation problems more intuitively. In the selection of recording materials, teachers should pay attention to the possible phonetic biases in the learner's country, select typical recording materials, so as to better correct the learner's pronunciation, and also select the pronunciation materials related to the content learned in class to improve the efficiency of pronunciation teaching. The contrast method is more suitable for students who have a strong interest in reading aloud, and can be used outside of class, through which learners can find their own

pronunciation problems and further adjust.

### 3. Conclusion

The communicative ability of the learner is practiced, and the learning of pronunciation also requires a lot of practice to master, the two are not in conflict, the ancients said, the speed is not reached, and the accuracy of the student's pronunciation cannot be ignored in order to quickly cultivate the student's communicative ability. On the other hand, according to the characteristics of Chinese disyllabic and musical, students will develop a sense of speech in terms of phonetics. In view of the two most common problems in learning pronunciation of second language learners who use Chinese as a second language, according to the characteristics of Chinese pronunciation, this paper cultivates the phonetic learning strategies of learners, so that cognitive strategies and metacognitive strategies can play a role together, so that learners can learn to learn independently, master effective methods of Chinese learning, and improve the accuracy and fluency of learners' pronunciation at the primary stage, which will be of great benefit to learners' subsequent Chinese learning.

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