

Effects of Northern Shaanxi Accent on English Pronunciation

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Abstract: China is a country with long history, and multinational community of multi-ethnic, multi-linguistic and multi-cultural components. Although people speak mandarin, many of them also have accents when they talk. Along with the progress and development of the society, more and more Chinese learn and use English, it has been a trend to speak Standard English fluently. Speaking English with accent will get some troubles when communicating with others. This thesis is to research the pronunciation of northern Shaanxi to find mispronunciation and the way to solve the problem in order to help learners to speak English more standard and fluently.

1. Introduction to Northern Shaanxi Accent

Both English and Chinese have lots of common in pronunciation but in another way they are different. There are 20 vowels, 28 consonants in English and 21 initials, 29 finals in Chinese language.

Phonetic transferability is a common phenomenon in learning a foreign language. Overcoming the negative transferability of dialect phonetics to the English pronunciation and intonation is important and difficult in teaching and learning phonetics. In recent years, more and more attention is paid to the pronunciation of English, as the hold of Olympic Games and more communication in economy and culture have occurred between China and English-speaking countries. Nonstandard oral English has become the obstacles for frequent English communication. As a result, researches of English pronunciation with transference of local dialect spring up like mushrooms, and this thesis concerns about the transference of Northern Shaanxi dialect.

People who study English bear their own accents. However there are 34 provinces in China, each of them has their own dialect, and it influences people's code of language for a long time. Today, China become more and more international. And English also plays an important role in China. More and more people use English in their daily life.

Northern Shaanxi locates in the north part of Shaanxi province. There are 25 counties governed by Yanan and Yulin. Northern Shaanxi has 81765 square meters and the population is more than 3700000. Northern Shaanxi is a large district and has big population. It was a poor area compared with the middle and south part of shaanxi Province.

Due to they are less contact with the outside, there are many kinds of accents in northern Shaanxi dialect, with complex phonetics and they are very special. So it causes many troubles like phonetics culture and so on. The emergence of these problems are mostly because of the history.

Northern Shaanxi dialect and culture have close relationship. On one hand, northern Shaanxi dialect reflects the culture. We can understand the local cultural phenomenon, it contains history communication, geography and environment, daily customs, religions idea and mode of thinking. One the other hand, cultures give accents many profound impacts on using and development.

In fact, there are many kinds of northern Shaanxi dialects. People in different districts speak different dialects and each has his own characteristics. "Living in the same area, three miles away." This typically describes the rariety of northern Shaanxi accent.

There is a typical example in the north of Shaanxi, because there is no front nasal consonant [n] in northern Shaanxi dialect. Whoever read by former nasal consonant [n] at the end of the syllable, all the terminal [n] lost or instead of [ng].

Northern Shaanxi dialect pronunciation is in the back-end in oral cavity. More of the tongue is high, the small opening. Most openings in English pronunciation were full of vowels they cannot

accurately place. It is not obviously that the length of the northern Shaanxi dialect sound opposition. They cannot distinguish the long vowels and the short vowels well when they pronounce a word. Northern Shaanxi dialect [v], [w] regardless, students often read [w] as [v], although can read [v] right, but the word contains a [w] reading words, but by the dialect tone interference, unconsciously brought it to the pronunciation of English words.

2. Features of Pronunciation in Northern Shaanxi Accent

In detail, there are 24 consonants in this dialect, 3 more special than standard Chinese. As for vowels in this dialect, there are 58 while standard Chinese has 39. Actually, northern Shaanxi dialect could be categorized according to the administrative divisions, and every county has its own dialect, which differs from each other. Among so many dialects, study dialect is the most representative one. It contains 25 consonants and 58 vowels, covering all standard Chinese consonants and vowels. In addition, it has all the prominent features of northern Shaanxi dialect, such as nasalized consonants, uvula, and entering tone. Therefore, study dialect, as the example, could reveal the character of northern Shaanxi dialect.

So it makes northern Shaanxi dialect more independent than others. The third problem is the influence by the migration of population. It is the most important impact of northern Shaanxi dialect. Different people with different accent, and they communicate with others and learn from each other.

In different parts of northern Shaanxi there are different accents. For example, Yuyang accent in Yulin has 32 initials and 40 vowels, but Baotai accent in Yanan 24 initials and 36 vowels. And Yichuan accent only has three tones, but Huanglong, Huanglin, and Luochuan all has four tones. That is why different areas have different accents, and result in diversity of species in the situation of today's northern Shaanxi dialect.

The second feature is the complexity of the voice. Because different counties have their own accents, which makes northern Shaanxi dialect more diversity than others. We can distinguish different accent though their talking, they have their own features.

The third feature is the specificity of language. The most special is the nasal, because of the geography of northern Shaanxi, there is no front nasal consonant [n] in northern Shaanxi dialect. Whoever read by former nasal consonant [n] at the end of the syllable, all the terminal [n] lost or instead of [ŋ].

Obviously, we can understand why northern Shaanxi dialect was different from others, because of the culture, geography and history are different with others. Although dialect is a language of one place, but accent may change a lot when learners study and use it in daily life. Speaking English without accent will be better, and it will be convenient to chat with others.

3. The Negative Impact of Northern Shaanxi Accent on English Pronunciation

As we all know that northern Shaanxi accent is no front nasal consonants [n]. Whoever reads by former nasal consonant [n] at the end of the syllable, all the terminal [n] lost or instead of [ŋ].

Northern Shaanxi dialect pronunciation is in the back-end in oral cavity. More of the tongue is high, the small opening. Most openings in English pronunciation were full of vowels, they cannot pronunciation it accurately. It is not obviously that the length of the northern Shaanxi dialect sound opposition. They cannot distinguish the long vowels and the short vowels well when they pronounce a word.

This problem not only appears in English pronunciation, but also in Chinese. And many of them can't say English well, and make misunderstanding.

Dialect in northern Shaanxi, there is no differences in the finals length of sound. They will speak [sit] to [si:t]. This will directly affect the accurate pronunciation of the words and also causing confusion in the meaning, and bring difficulties to communication.

Single finals are easily confused with compound vowels, there is no compound vowels such as: [ai] [ei] [ao] [uo] in the accent of Northern Shaanxi instead, they always use single finals to instead. And there are many differences in English and Chinese pronunciation, Chinese dialect influenced

English a lot. For example, pronunciation position does not reach the designated position, and there is no round labial in Guangxi. But in English pronunciation it needs round labial. It is difficult for people to communicate with each other in English while there is no round labial.

The phenomenon of mixed dialects is mainly caused by population migration. They usually use [s], [z] to instead of [θ], [ð], and they have the difficult of the pronunciation. Although [θ], [ð] in dialect and English sounds like a same, so they usually pronounce [θ], [ð] replaced [s], [z]. For example, thing [θɪŋ] pronounced [sɪŋ], then [ðen] pronounced [zən], father ['fɑðə] pronounced ['fa:zə(r)].

And in some dialects cannot distinguish the voiceless and voiced consonants. Found in English, therefore, headed by voiceless consonant words tend to play, take to read, [blei], [deik] (equivalent to the Chinese b, d). According to these researches, we can know something different in English and Chinese pronunciation. Chinese dialectic accents influence English pronunciation a lot if we cannot pronounce the word in English clearly. And to speak English well we should practice our mandarin well, and try to avoid our dialectic accent.

So, when we are learning English pronunciation, we cannot ignore the influence of Chinese dialect phonetic pronunciation to us, we need to know their dialect pronunciation rules, on the basis of laws to regulate what we learn, compare, and repeated practice to as much as possible to avoid dialect of negative effects.

4. Suggestions on How to Solve the Problem

Students in some areas have the problems that they can't practice their pronunciation in a good environment. Teachers are the most important part for students who always give the impression for learners. As we all know that interesting is the best teacher for learners. We can use some interesting ways to learn English well, such as watching movies, listening some Standard English news and music. Although these functions can help learners, the best way I think is practice more and being confident.

For some students who have deep dialect accents there is a method helpful. First you should try your best to speak Chinese well. That is to say you should not have dialect when you speak Chinese. Then, you need practice more and don't be afraid when you talk with foreigners. It is necessary to listen more standard English people and become familiar with the pronunciation, and try to imitate it. We need to find their wrong pronunciation and correct it, and reduce the impact of error for their pronunciation, in order to improve their speaking and communication abilities.

In addition, teachers may organize some Oral English Test. By this way, students can contact with their teachers find the problems, then they can correct their own pronunciation and improve their English ability. Also, teachers need to practice the oral English. Only teachers English ability don't have any problems, it may ensure the teaching level. And they must have a strong sense of responsibility, and have a serious work attitude in English teaching, that will be more helpful to English learners. According to the different function of English intonation, teachers can compare with students practice. In addition to listening practice, the most important thing is to recognize and distinguish between phonemes, Oral English practice mainly use the pure English recordings, from simple to complex, slow to fast, let the students practice in the natural language environment.

In the basic speech training process, teachers should pay more attention on students listening and comprehension ability. Distinguish between syllables, ability of stress pronunciation and rhythm. Childrens' songs, tongue twister is also an effective method to check whether students learn distinguishes the sound. They both forming a distinctive rhythm, catchy and plentiful. And is also helpful to English phonetics learning.

5. Conclusion

Although dialects influence the pronunciation a lot when we speak English, we can find some better way to avoid making mistakes. It is too difficult to change our habits about the Chinese dialectic accents. At school teachers can help us. In the daily life we can use many interesting

methods to help ourselves, such as watching English movies, listening English music and study Standard English.

And in my perspective, trying our best to speak standard Chinese without any dialect is the most important. Otherwise, even if we learn more knowledge, there is no help to our pronunciation.

Many ways can influence English pronunciation; there are some examples, dialect sound of voice, Chinese dialects of English learning transfer function and severity. The phonetic characteristics of different dialects and its influence on English phonetics learning Chinese dialects of English learning transfer function and severity.

Not only northern Shaanxi dialect has various accents. Because of the diversity of species, language becomes complexity and particularity. In my perspective, northern Shaanxi dialect is a mix language, it contains many accent, that's all the culture and historic connotation.

In my opinion, using scientific way to improve English speaking is necessary, in this way we can choose what we like. Attitude is the key of learning, more practice and listen Standard English. And teachers also make an important role in teaching, it is possible to help us learning English well.

Today, our country is developing rapidly. English has become an main way of communicating with others. So the fluent oral English is very important to us, we need do our best to avoid our accent.

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