

Research on the Integration of Natural Phonetic Pronunciation and International Phonetic Alphabet to Improve College Students' Oral English Expression Ability

Ruiqin Zhou, Bin He*, Xiangyue Lu, Xinyao Gu, Xinyue Dai, Jinge Peng, Yuxia Xi

School of Foreign Languages, Taizhou University, Taizhou, Jiangsu, 225300, China

**Corresponding author: 245582995@qq.com*

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Abstract: Phonics is an international mainstream English teaching method, which forms a phonetic corresponding system according to the pronunciation rules of the combination of letters. The International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) is a system used for labeling English pronunciation, and make the English spoken language reach the international standards. At present, the common problems of Chinese college students are lack of the ability of output and the inadequacy of the oral pronunciation. Combined with the current situation of college students' oral English, this paper aims to explore the advantages and the integration of phonics and International Phonetic Alphabet and explore a new set of education method which is suitable for improving oral English ability and have practical teaching significance.

1. Introduction

As socialism with Chinese characteristics has entered a new era, English education has ushered in new opportunities. Modern English should serve to promote the Chinese dream of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation, to accelerate the modernization of English education, to deepen the reform of foreign language personnel training models, to train young people in a new era with an international vision and cross-cultural exchanges, to promote international people-to-people exchanges and cooperation, to promote exchanges and mutual learning among civilizations, and to spread Chinese culture and wisdom to the world. English is the main common language in the world, and the oral English output is an important form of communication in China. In the newly formulated "Compulsory Teaching English Curriculum Standards (2022 edition)", it pointed out that: "We should practice the combination of learning and thinking, and the concept of creative English learning activities. We adhere to the concept of learning through experience, applying in practice, and creating new learning through transfer, and promote language learning and application in a cyclic manner." However, for a long time, English teaching in China still focuses on grammar teaching, still stick to the traditional form of education, focusing on the content of knowledge on paper, and focusing on writing, thus ignoring the cultivation of students' oral ability and language output, resulting in our inability to express like our mother tongue. Therefore, this paper analyzes

the current situation of oral English teaching in colleges and universities, puts forward opinions on improving oral English level in colleges and universities, and puts forward optimization strategies for improving oral expression ability by combining international phonetic alphabet and phonics, so as to achieve the ultimate goal of oral English teaching in the new era.

2. The Connotation of IPA and Phonics

[1] The International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA), also known as the “Universal Phonetic Alphabet”, is a system of phonetic notations designed by the International Phonetics Society as a standardized method of marking spoken sounds. The principle of this set of symbols is that each independent sound has an independent symbol corresponding to it, that the same symbol represents the same sound in any language, that the symbols are used in the Roman alphabet whenever possible, and that other letters (such as Greek and Slavic letters) and diacritics are used only when absolutely necessary. For us English learners, we use the “English phonetic alphabet”, which is a branch of the huge International phonetic alphabet system. Since the introduction of IPA into China, IPA has played an important role in the improvement of oral English pronunciation, word memory and oral ability, and it plays a role in the standardization of international oral English pronunciation.

[2] Phonics, also known as “English phonics”, originated in the United States in the 1890s and has been popular since the 20th century. It is the mainstream English teaching method in the world. Phonics is based on the pronunciation rules of letters’ combinations, the letters’ combinations and the corresponding pronunciation rules are connected to form a phonetic shape corresponding system, and assisted by targeted intensive training to achieve the ideal teaching effect. This method is simple and efficient, and conforms to the law of students’ language learning. It points out that the memorization of words is not by “back”, but by “spelling”, and its purpose is to enable students to achieve the state of being able to read and write words.

3. Integration of IPA and Phonics

When learners understand the meanings of both phonics and IPA, they will find that the IPA is no longer an isolated symbol, but can be connected with phonics. Similar to the Chinese Pinyin, we divide it into initial consonants and vowels, and combine them to form a syllable, and through phonetic transcription learning, we can master the pronunciation of rare and strange words. The same as the English International Phonetic alphabet, which divided phonemes into vowel phonemes and consonant phonemes. Through the combination of different letter phonemes to form the pronunciation of a word and supplemented by the marking of stress, we can read the pronunciation of strange words with the help of the English international Phonetic alphabet just like the Chinese pronunciation of strange Chinese characters, and through repeated contact and repeated practice, Learners will be able to achieve phonetic accuracy as long as the word has a phonetic notation. For example, /keɪk/, /stʌk/, /'hæmbɜ:gə/. We only need to combine the phonetic symbols we have learned in our brain to spell them, and then we can do the correct pronunciation.

At this time, [3] when learners can master the phonetic skills of phonics and understand the basic IPA pronunciation, teachers can adjust their teaching motivation in a timely way and gradually tilt it towards the IPA. The acquisition and mastery of IPA can help learners improve the efficiency of independent learning. When learners learn the pronunciation system of IPA, they can exert their subjective initiative to look up the words themselves and pronounce them accurately, instead of making marks to ask the teacher, and can carry out effective self-exploration and self-judgment. They will take the initiative to correct their original bad pronunciation and improve it, which can effectively avoid the negative impact on learners caused by the inaccurate pronunciation of some teachers, and also stimulate students’ desire to explore their own oral English and word learning. In

repeating practise, learners will have confidence, their oral ability, word memory ability will be improved, and further promote the motivation of learners to learn English.

4. Possible Problems of College Students' Oral English Expressions

4.1 The Weakness of the Foundation of Students' Oral English Expression

From primary school to university, English classroom teaching is still mainly based on the language output of teachers, teachers occupy a dominant position in the classroom, and knowledge learning mainly focuses on textbook content, grammar and phrase collocation. Therefore, the vocabulary teachers want students to master is mostly combined with the test syllabus, and the textbook word list, phrase list and the high-frequency and medium-frequency words in the exam are the main requirements for students to memorize. Therefore, under the traditional teaching mode, students' vocabulary is based on written vocabulary, which is test-oriented and serves for the test. They stay too much on paper and ignore oral output, which eventually leads to the loss of oral English sense and the inability to fluently use their existing vocabulary to output oral English.

In addition, students are used to the teacher-led class mode, which indirectly forms the “silent” class habit. When facing open questions, they will be shy and embarrassed, with a psychological hint of “afraid of making mistakes, but would rather not make mistakes”, unwilling to answer and express themselves actively, and unwilling to interact with teachers orally in class. Even if the language has been organized in mind and repeatedly confirmed, they are reluctant to communicate between teachers and students. Over time, a vicious circle has formed, and teachers and students cannot build a bridge of “language communication”. The ultimate goal of language learning is still to “speak”, and only “speak” can use the acquired international phonetic alphabet to test whether their pronunciation is accurate and whether the expression is fluent.

4.2 The Weakness of the Students in English Speech Discrimination

The ability of listening is differ from different students. When we first came into contact with the English language, we listened to it one word at a time, and gradually we could listen to half a sentence, and then we can understood one sentence at a time. Eventually, when sound discrimination reaches a certain level, you can reach the level of “ecstasy”, that is, you forget that you are listening to English, just as when we listen to Chinese, we never think “I am listening to Chinese”, because we have fully mastered that the brain can locate the meaning of the other person without thinking. A large part of the missing language output of college students is the lack of “sound discrimination”. [4] We are not skilled in the pronunciation rules of the word, so that we can not accurately judge which word is in the end and understand what the other side is saying. In other words, we are “insensitive” to English pronunciation. As a result, we can neither capture auditory information quickly and accurately nor make our own thoughts and responses to auditory information quickly.

4.3 English Corpus Storage is Limited and Memory Time is Short

As college students have limited access to English language communities, they have no access to natural corpus. Most of the corpus comes from the acquisition of book knowledge. With the improvement of the professional level and depth of book knowledge, the shallow understanding of corpus and the set of procedures for rote memorization of corpus adopted in junior and senior high schools are no longer applicable. In the face of tedious word spelling and long difficult sentences, students are often difficult to store it in their minds, which falls into the dilemma of “remember

today, forget tomorrow”. There is no doubt that the richness of the corpus plays a fundamental role in the improvement of oral expression ability. [5]Only when the corpus is rich enough can students produce their own thoughts and ideas in a generous and confident way, just like in Chinese communication, so as not to fall into the dilemma of “using words only when they are used”. The vast majority of college students have not mastered the method of memorizing words and vocabulary skillfully, so they do not have enough ability to enrich and expand their corpus.

4.4 Colleges and Teachers do not Pay Enough Attention to Oral English Teaching

In college English teaching, oral English has not been paid much attention to in terms of course structure and course arrangement. Even though English college students will set up foreign courses, listening and speaking courses, English speech and other relevant oral practice courses, classroom teaching is still dominated by students’ listening. Teachers lack the ability to innovate, to mobilize students’ enthusiasm, and fail to recognize the importance of students’ speaking, leaving students little time and opportunities for oral communication. Therefore, oral communication is not interspersed in the normal class period, and it does not highlight the “timeliness”, “randomness” and “immediacy”. In addition, listening and speaking courses are limited by teaching facilities, and students’ oral expression ability cannot get a good assessment feedback. Overall, it is far from meeting the requirements of students’ oral English training in the new era. For non-English majors, the number of English-related courses is small, and most students learn English for the purpose of obtaining credits. Therefore, both schools and students attach great importance to English learning and the cultivation of oral English are lacking in motivation.

5. Realistic Teaching Strategies for Solving the Problems

5.1 Improve Teachers’ Qualities and Innovate New Forms of the Theory

The “New Curriculum Standards (2022 edition)” pointed out: “We should adhere to the innovation-oriented, pay attention to inheriting the successful experience of China's curriculum construction, but also fully learn from the international advanced education concepts, and further deepen the curriculum reform.” In daily work, teachers should actively explore the latest research results of English teaching methods. First of all, they should understand and master the rules of the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) symbol system and clarify the logical framework of knowledge, so as to teach knowledge. In addition, teachers should constantly improve their professional quality and ability in teaching to keep pace with The Times. They should constantly adjust the teaching strategy. In the process of the integration of the two, they can let the use of international phonetic alphabet not only correct students’ oral pronunciation, but also improve the language practice and oral expression ability; The integrated teaching of phonics and IPA improves the ability of word comprehension and memory. In addition, the university has not set up courses related to English phonics and IPA, so there will be some teachers who know little about the connotation of the two, or even have never heard of such methods, so it is impossible to achieve the effective integration of IPA and phonics.

5.2 Pay Attention to Letter and Alphabet Teaching Improve Discrimination

[6]Similar to Chinese pinyin, each initial consonant and final consonant have their own pronunciation; The same is true of English letters, where individual letters have their own fixed single or multiple sounds, depending on different combinations. For example, when teaching related words of the letter ‘e’, teachers can integrate related words with the same pronunciation rules to

teach students to understand the fixed pronunciation rules of the letter e in different word structures. For example, English words with short 'e' vowels /e/ : bed, egg, and festival. Words with long vowels /i:/ : me, she, he, bee, these. Through a group of examples, students can get an intuitive pronunciation of the letter, and store in their own thinking frame, the pronunciation of the letter 'e' skills will be mastered. Therefore, in the teaching process, through such methods, teachers can compare and list different pronunciations, improve students' sound discrimination ability, and consciously combine letters with phonetic symbols in the teaching process, so as to improve students' sensitivity to letter pronunciations.

5.3 Summarize the Law of the Combination of Letters and Phonics

English words are arranged by different letters together to form the pronunciation of the word, and the combination of letters has a rule to follow, through repeated exploration, it can be concluded that a fixed combination of letters together will produce a fixed pronunciation. For example, the letter combination 'ee' or 'ea' is pronounced as /i:/ in words such as teeth, feet, bee, scream. The letter combination 'th' is pronounced as /θ/, such as mouth, something, thick, truth, author. There are many such examples, teachers can integrate the relevant words, so that students can intuitively summarize which letters together and what sounds. Such as 'ow' is pronounced /əʊ/, 'tion' is pronounced /ʃn/, when students meet such combination: cation, tation, mation, then they spell its pronunciation naturally according to the phonetic rules. By doing so, on the one hand, it can promote students' enthusiasm and interest in learning, and on the other hand, it can enable students to form inductive consciousness and language sense in such a long-term study. Then, in the future learning of new words, when encountering a word that is difficult to remember, the learner can split the word, put the fixed combination of letters and underline, and finally use the phonics method to spell the combination. For example, when memorizing the word "conversation", the word can be divided into: 'con' + 'ver' + 'sation' form, under such a split combination /kɒn/+və/+seɪʃn/, so that students will be able to read accurately, and quickly to memorize the words. Therefore, in this mode, no matter how long and complicated the words are on the surface, as long as learners master the combination pronunciation rule and spelling skills, split the words, and use the skills to read the word and complete the memory of the word. In the long run, it can be done to correct the pronunciation in the existing knowledge base of students, improve the oral pronunciation level, and constantly enrich the reserve of vocabulary bank.

6. Conclusion

Vocabulary is the basis of English language application. Only when sufficient corpus is formed in the brain, can it provide a steady stream of language materials for oral English output. Pronunciation and intonation, is the basis of English output, only master the correct pronunciation, in order to speak fluent, pure idiomatic expression. Phonics and IPA complement each other, and their advantages complement each other, opening up a shortcut for non-native language learners to learn vocabulary and pronunciation and intonation. Phonics provides technical help for the mastery of vocabulary, and the International phonetic alphabet provides normative standards for the spoken output of vocabulary. Colleges and universities should attach importance to oral teaching and its practical value. College teachers should combine contemporary new media technology in oral English teaching, create a good environment for native English speakers, attach importance to oral English training for students, add communicative tasks in a good atmosphere, and reform oral English teaching mode. English education in the new era needs to make English no longer a language that can only be written, but more importantly, a language that can be used for communication. It should highlight the pragmatic function of English language, take promoting

international cultural exchanges, promoting international people-to-people exchanges and cooperation, and passing on “Chinese stories and Chinese wisdom” as the starting point and destination of English education in the new era, and enhance the cultural confidence of major countries. We need to bring in, but also we need to go out.

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