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## БОРБОРДУК АЗИЯДАГЫ ЧЕТ ЭЛДИК СТУДЕНТТЕР НЧНН КЫТАЙ ТИЛИН ОКУТУУ СТРАТЕГИЯЛАРЫН ИЗИЛДӨӨ

### ИССЛЕДОВАНИЕ СТРАТЕГИЙ ПРЕПОДАВАНИЯ КИТАЙСКОГО ЯЗЫКА ДЛЯ ИНОСТРАННЫХ СТУДЕНТОВ В ЦЕНТРАЛЬНОЙ АЗИИ

### A STUDY ON CHINESE TONES TEACHING STRATEGIES FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS IN CENTRAL ASIA

**Аннотация:** Кытай тилин эл аралык окутууда кытай фонетикасынын негизги билими катары кытай интонациялары чоң мааниге ээ. Бирок Борбордук Азиядан келген, эне тили тоналдык эмес чет өлкөлүк студенттер нчнн интонация кытай фонетикасын нйрөннн процессинде азаптуу жана оор учур болуп саналат. Бул изилдөө Борбордук Азиядагы эл аралык студенттердин кытай тондоруна болгон бир жактуулугун талдап, талкуулайт жана конкреттнн окутуу стратегияларын сунуштайт: тон билимин нйрөннн инструменттерин визуализациялоо, тон билимдерин нйрөннн формаларын диверсификациялоо жана билим бернннн кеңейтнн нчнн тон билимдерин нйрөннн мазмунун тактоо. эл аралык кытай билиминде фонетикалык тондорду окутуу идеялары жана Борбордук Азиядагы чет элдик студенттердин кытай тилин нйрөннн натыйжалуулугун жогорулатуу.

**Аннотация:** В международном обучении китайскому языку китайские интонации как базовые знания китайской фонетики имеют значительное значение. Однако для иностранных студентов из Центральной Азии, чей родной язык не является тональным, интонация является болезненным и трудным моментом в процессе изучения китайской фонетики. В настоящем исследовании анализируется и обсуждается ситуация с предвзятостью в отношении китайских тонов среди иностранных студентов в Центральной Азии и предлагаются конкретные стратегии обучения: визуализация средств обучения знанию тонов, диверсификация форм обучения знанию тонов и уточнение содержания обучения знанию тонов, чтобы расширить идеи обучения фонетическим тонам в международном китайском образовании и повысить эффективность изучения китайского языка иностранными студентами в Центральной Азии.

**Abstract:** In international Chinese education, Chinese tones as the basic knowledge of Chinese phonetics has a considerable importance. However, for foreign students from Central Asia whose native language is non-tonal language, tone is a painful and difficult point in the process of learning Chinese phonetics. The present study analyzes and discusses the situation of Chinese tones bias among international students in Central Asia, and proposes specific teaching strategies:

visualizing the means of teaching tone knowledge, diversifying the forms of teaching tone knowledge, and specifying the contents of teaching tone knowledge, in order to broaden the ideas of teaching phonetic tones in international Chinese education and improve the efficiency of learning Chinese tones among international students in Central Asia.

**Негизги сөздөр:** Кытай интонациясы; окутуу стратегиялары; Борбордук Азиядагы Эл аралык студенттер; эл аралык Кытай билим берүү

**Ключевые слова:** Китайские интонации; Стратегии обучения; Иностранные студенты в Центральной Азии; Международное китайское образование

**Keywords:** Chinese Tones; Teaching Strategies; International Students in Central Asia; International Chinese Education

**1. Introduction.** With the increasing comprehensive national power of China and the promotion of the —Belt and Road initiative, Chinese, as a carrier of Chinese culture and a bridge for international communication, has become the focus of attention in countries along the Silk Road, and the —Chinese fever continues to rise. More and more international students from countries along the —Belt and Road have realized the importance of learning Chinese and hope to find more development opportunities and space through learning Chinese.

Central Asia is the most important source of international students in China and the most rapidly developing region in terms of education for international students. Through the daily Chinese teaching, we found that most of the international students from Central Asia have reached the intermediate or advanced level of Chinese after four years of undergraduate study, and have the ability to use Chinese proficiently for communication, but the phenomenon of —foreign accent always exists in their oral expressions. The phenomenon of —foreign accent is a common bias in the flow of Chinese expressions by learners of Chinese as a second language, and its root cause is the tone bias in the process of acquiring Chinese phonetics.

According to the presence or absence of tones, languages in the world can be divided into tonal and non-tonal languages. Chinese, as a tonal language, has four tone categories: Yin (first tone), Yang (second tone), Shang (third tone), and Qu (fourth tone). Each syllable in Chinese has a tone, which the meaning is distinguished by the rise and fall of the tone. For example, the syllable —ma: mā (first tone) means mother; má (second tone) means tedious; mǎ (third tone) means horse; and mà (fourth tone) means rebuke, so the meaning of the syllable varies according to its tone.

In the international Chinese education, for international students from Central Asia whose native language is non-tonal language, the lack of corresponding syllable tones in their native language leads to their weak awareness of tones and their relatively weak ability to hear and recognize tones, so tones become a difficult point in learning Chinese phonetics. The present study analyzes the bias in the acquisition of Chinese tones by international students in Central Asia and discusses the methods and strategies of teaching tones.

**2. Theoretical basis.** Based on the theory of bias analysis, the present study summarizes the characteristics of Chinese tonal acquisition and analyzes the causes of bias by analyzing the Chinese tonal pronunciation corpus of foreign students in Central Asia.

The theory of bias analysis belongs to the system of mediated language theory, which was first proposed by the British linguist Corder (1971). Bias refers to the unconscious deviation of second language learners from the target language in the use of the language, which is a systematic and regular error or imperfection manifested by the target language. Bias analysis is a comprehensive and systematic analysis of the biases produced by second language learners in the process of second language acquisition, to explore the rules, characteristics and causes of biases on the basis of

identifying and evaluating biases, to reveal the mediated language system of second language learners, and to understand the process and rules of second language acquisition.

**3. Patterns of Chinese tones bias among Central Asian students.** In this study, we conducted an auditory discriminative analysis of the tonal pronunciation corpora of 30 international students (15 male and 15 female) from Central Asian countries. The characteristics of Chinese tones acquisition among the international students from Central Asian countries were summarized in three dimensions: Chinese monosyllabic words, bisyllabic words and single sentences.

(1) There was universality of tone bias. The tone bias is common among Central Asian students whether they pronounce monosyllables, diphthongs or single sentences.

(2) There was variability in tone bias. The bias rate of monosyllabic tone pronunciation was the highest, followed by the bias rate of bisyllabic tone pronunciation, and the bias rate of monosyllabic tone pronunciation was the lowest.

(3) Tone bias in monosyllables and diphthongs is significantly different from tone bias in speech streams. First, in monosyllabic words, Yangping (second tone) and Shangsheng (third tone) are significantly more difficult to pronounce than Yinping (first tone) and Qusheng (fourth tone). Second, in diphthongs, the combination of Shangsheng (third tone) as the front character tone and Yangping (second tone) as the back character tone is significantly more difficult than the combination of Qusheng (fourth tone) as the front character tone and Shangsheng (third tone) as the back character tone. In addition, the students' mastery of the relative pitch in the bisyllabic combinations is not good, and the tonal range is narrow. Finally, the tone bias of the Central Asian students in single sentences is more prominent, and the four tone categories of Yin (first tone), Yang (second tone), Shang (third tone), and Qu (fourth tone) are all problematic in the speech stream. It can be seen that the acquisition of tones in the speech stream is quite different from the static single-word tones and the relatively static two-word tones.

**4. Causes of Chinese tones bias among Central Asian students.** From the above analysis, it can be seen that there are different levels of bias phenomenon in the acquisition of Chinese tones by foreign students in Central Asia, and there are many reasons for the tone bias.

#### **4.1 Intrinsic causes**

In terms of language acquisition mechanisms, on the one hand, adult second language learners no longer have the advantage of a —critical period of language learning| when learning a second language. According to the Critical Period Hypothesis (CPH) proposed by Lenneberg (1967), there is an ideal period when a language is more likely to be learned by the language environment than at any other time. If this period of development is missed, language skills are unlikely to develop as expected. Later related researches (Asher, 1969; Oyama, 1978) suggests that there are different critical periods for different language skills, such as the belief that phonology is well learned by age 12.

On the other hand, the acquisition of the target language by the native language has a negative transfer. For foreign students from Central Asia who are native speakers of non-tone languages, they have to construct a new knowledge system due to the lack of experience in Chinese tones knowledge, and in the process of constructing a new knowledge system, there is no —nearest developmental areal (Vygotsky & Cole, 1978) to stop at, so they can only learn Chinese tones with the help of the intonation or stress patterns in the native language. This has led to the prevalence of tonal bias.

#### **4.2 Direct causes**

As far as language teaching is concerned, on the one hand, the teaching methods are too traditional. In the process of teaching tones, international Chinese teachers usually introduce the definition, nature, tonal type, tonal class and tonal value of Chinese tones from the perspective of linguistic theory, followed by mechanical pronunciation practice in the order of Yin (first tone), Yang (second tone), Shang (third tone), and Qu (fourth tone), which fails to visualize the abstract knowledge of Chinese tones for international students. In addition, teachers emphasize the explanation and practice of single-character tones, but do not teach the tones in the flow of speech deeply enough, which leads to students' poor understanding of the relationship between Chinese tones and intonation.

On the other hand, the —redundant feature leads to the —fossilization of the tone bias. From an information theory perspective, redundant components are those that do not affect the reception and understanding of information in language communication. The presence of redundant components often affects teachers' teaching, because students' —foreign accent does not affect language communication, which makes teachers more tolerant of students' bias errors and, in the long run, leads to a higher degree of petrification of students' Chinese tones bias.

#### **4.3 Main causes**

As far as the textbook, which is the bridge between students and teachers, is concerned, it is not clearly oriented enough for teachers to teach Chinese tones and for students to learn Chinese tones. Most of the international Chinese textbooks currently in use usually focus on phonetics at the beginning of the elementary level, with approximately one month of instructional time devoted to phonetics. Even in the limited time available for phonics instruction, the —vowel and rhyme-centered theory is maintained, and the importance of tones is neglected, resulting in students' lack of awareness of tones. In addition, the textbook is stylistically designed to lack examples of prosody, light contextual explanations, and well-targeted exercises designed to reinforce the tone system.

**5. Exploring strategies for teaching Chinese tones to Central Asian students.** The present study proposes the following three strategies for teaching Chinese tones based on the above analysis of the causes of Chinese tones bias among international students in Central Asia.

#### **5.1 Visualize the means of Chinese tones knowledge explanation**

In the teaching of Chinese tones, we can use visual explanation to turn abstraction into image, and teach students by comparing the familiar Russian intonation with the Chinese tones to help them better understand the Chinese tones. For example, when teaching the first tone, we can let students imagine that they have a toothache and open their mouths wide when they go to the dentist to say —Ah!. When teaching the second tone, let students experience the intonation of the question —What?!. When teaching the third tone, let students experience the intonation of concession or hopelessness, —Well, ...!. and when teaching the fourth tone, let students experience the intonation of the expression —Let's go!. By using the familiar knowledge of Russian intonation to support the learning of Chinese tones, the students can visualize the abstract knowledge, which helps them to form the perceptual understanding of Chinese tones and promote the development of rational understanding of Chinese tones.

#### **5.2 Diversify the form of Chinese tones knowledge explanation**

In teaching Chinese tones, diverse methods of explanation can be used to consolidate students' knowledge of Chinese tones. First, the hand gesture method and the head gesture method are used to demonstrate the tonal patterns of the four Chinese tones. Second, the vocal cord control method is used to teach tones. On the basis of showing students the diagram of human vocal organs,

students are allowed to touch their own vocal cords to feel the changes of vocal cord relaxation and tightness during the vocalization of the four tones: when pronounce the first tone, the vocal cords are tightened and always remain tense; when pronounce the second tone, the vocal cords are relaxed and always remain loose; when pronounce the third tone, the vocal cords are suddenly tightened and then gradually relaxed; when pronounce the fourth tone, the vocal folds are kept in a state of no loosening and no tightening, after that, the vocal cords are quickly tightened. Third, use the knowledge of music theory to teach Chinese tones. We can teach tones according to the vocal names —do, re, mi, fa, soll which correspond to the Chinese tones value. The basic scale of vocal music corresponds to the tone value of Chinese tones: the tone value of the first tone is [55], which is expressed by the chant name —sol-soll; the tone value of the second tone is [35], which is expressed by the chant name —mi-soll; the tone value of the third tone is [214], which is expressed by the chant name —re-doll. The tonic value of the fourth tone is [51], which is represented by the chant —sol-doll. The teaching of tones through diversified forms of explanation can help stimulate the interest of international students in learning, increase their desire for knowledge exploration, and ensure the effectiveness of teaching.

### **5.3 Concretize the content of Chinese tones knowledge explanation**

In the past, teachers usually taught tones in the order of Yin (first tone), Yang (second tone), Shang (third tone), and Qu (fourth tone), without adjusting the order according to the students' learning difficulties. According to the above analysis, the pronunciation of Yangping (second tone) and Shangsheng (third tone) is significantly more difficult than that of Yinping (first tone) and Qusheng (fourth tone). In this regard, the order of teaching tones can be adjusted to Yin (first tone) → Shang (third tone) → Qu (fourth tone) → Yang (second tone). Such an order just forms the contrast of —one high and one low, one depressed and one raised, —one high and one low refers to the contrast between the —high flat tone (first tone) and the —zigzag tone (third tone), the two tones form a contrast of —high and low; —one depressed and one raised refers to the contrast between the —full descending tone (fourth tone) and —middle ascending tone (second tone), the two tones form a contrast of —suppressed and raised. This contrast is helpful for learners to master the pronunciation characteristics of Chinese tones more effectively and to overcome the difficulties of learning tones.

In addition, it is important to pay attention to the teaching of Chinese tones in language flow. In the speech flow, due to the influence of adjacent phonemes of adjacent syllables, the tones in some syllables will undergo phonetic changes, which is called speech flow phonemes. In view of the tone change of the language flow, teachers should be good at summarizing different tonal changes and teaching them in a hierarchical and phased manner, so that students can master the rules of Chinese tonal changes step by step and finally achieve fluent and natural expressions using tones.

**6. Conclusion.** In the Chinese system, tone is a feature that distinguishes Chinese from other languages and plays a role in distinguishing the meaning of Chinese, and at the same time, tone is also a difficult part of Chinese learning, and international students often have a —foreign accent due to inaccurate pronunciation of tones. Therefore, teaching Chinese tones is one of the important aspects of international Chinese teaching. Through the analysis of the acquisition bias of Chinese tones among international students in Central Asia, this study propose a targeted strategy for teaching Chinese tones in order to improve the efficiency of teaching Chinese tones in international Chinese education and ensure the effectiveness of teaching Chinese phonetics.

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