

An Acoustic Study on The Acquisition of English Stops Produced by Qingdao Dialect Speakers

Chang Liu

Qingdao Institute of Science and Technology Shandong Qingdao 266000

Abstract: English pronunciation, as one part of language communication, is an inseparable part of language acquisition. In foreign language learning, it is necessary not only to acquire language, but also to acquire the pronunciation of oral communication so as to avoid cultural conflicts and differences as much as possible, and to improve the standardization and accuracy of English language expression. The neglect of pronunciation will lead to obstacles in cultural communication, so it is significant to study the pronunciation of local dialect for English speakers. Qingdao is located in the coastal area of Shandong province with its unique pronunciation, which feature imperceptibly affects the local people's oral English acquisition. The experimental objects are six English stops, [p][b][d][t][g][k]. In this study, we collect stops in Qingdao dialect and English stops produced by Qingdao Dialect speakers. Through VOT and GAP experimental chart analysis, the aims are to a) determine the sound patterns of stops in Qingdao Dialect; b) compare English stops produced by Qingdao dialect speakers and native speakers. The result demonstrates Qingdao dialect do influence their English acquisition. Thus relevancy refers to the aspect of positive and negative transfer impact of Qingdao dialect on acquisition of English stops. For Qingdao local English learners, there is still a potential space for them to completely grasping the accurate way to pronounce English stops.

Keywords: English stops; Qingdao dialect; Contrast analysis; Acoustic influence

There are numerous studies stated that resemblance and dissimilarity between target language and native one certainly have transferring influences in the process of second language acquisition, particularly the impact of Chinese dialect on English phonetic acquisition. The theory of the influence of a language on another language is called the transfer theory^[1] (Dai Xianjun, 2015), in the process of second language acquisition, which comprising of positive and negative transfer. However, among the infrequent acoustic study, the previous experiments mainly concentrated on phonetic deviation, there are few ones conducting the field of sound patterns exploration of Qingdao dialect. Therefore, besides learning vocabulary or grammar, English language learners are supposed to take emphasis on pronunciation in second language acquisition (SLA), the English stops of local pronunciation is also of great value to oral English^[2] (Xiang Ling, 2017).

Through the analysis of the stops of the experimenters, the convergence situation of the image and the preliminary understanding of the Qingdao dialect, we can summarize that the English stops of Qingdao English learning students have the following characteristics.

English learning students in Qingdao basically distinguish aspirated clear stops as tenuis from unaspirated clear stops, but there are still a lot of confusion when pronouncing in reality. If there is a person reminds them in the daily conversation, they can immediately correct the confusion, but if they do not pay more attention to them, they will have pronunciation mistakes.

Generally speaking, learning aspirated stops is better than un-aspirated stops. From the pattern, it can be concluded that the VOT value of the clear voiceless delivery sound is basically similar to that of the native speakers, but the GAP value is higher than the native speaker, which is due to the weakness of the Qingdao dialect, which is said to be weak, and the unaspirated clearing in English is stronger. The aspirated sounds of English learners in Qingdao are generally longer than those of native speakers. From the sense of hearing, the aspirated sounds of native English learners in Qingdao dialect are over corrected.

English learners influenced by Qingdao dialect have seen a little turbidity when they read unaspirated voiceless stops. This is because native language pronunciation affects the learning of the second language. In addition, the use of Pinyin teaching has a certain effect on their pronunciation.

Voice (pronunciation) includes language sound system, accent and rhythm, language flow and intonation. Learning through learning can recognize and distinguish speech system, and the correspondence between voice and written symbols is very important for speech learning. There is a great difference between accent and rhythm in English and Chinese. English is an intonation language, and polysyllabic words, phrases, sentences, etc., have their own pronunciation and weight. At the same time, the rhythm of language is regulated by the light weight of pronunciation. Intonation refers to the rise and fall of sentence tones, which is also an important part of English pronunciation, and plays a role of distinguishing semantics in English. In language flow, different voice, accent and intonation will have different effects.

There're still many problems in the practice level of phonetics teaching. The voice learning situation of many students is that the alphabet can read basically, know that the word has stress, and can find out the simple spelling rules. At the same time, many students are studying inaccurately towards the phonetic symbols. The students' spelling ability has the space to enhance, the words can not be recognized and spelled independently sometimes. They can not be read and expressed in the correct rhythm and intonation, so it's necessary for English speaking learners to intensify efforts at reading and expressing, their expression need more expressive, the intonation isn't natural enough; some students are afraid to read aloud in public. To practice the correct pronunciation skills and ability outside the classroom can achieve greater progress.

When it comes to Chinese sound system, it seems that all the stops are in the voiceless pattern, and they can be partitioned into two varieties, the one is aspirated category and the other is un-aspirated one.

According to the data statistics of the acoustic study, we can find that / b / and / p / are as the bilabial stops, there is the clear difference pronunciation of / b / . Additionally, Qingdao dialect speakers produce longer pronunciation of / p / and / d / . What's more, / t / as the alveolar stop, influencing the Qingdao dialect speakers a lot. And / g / and / k / , which are velar stops, they make longer sounds. Qingdao local dialect speakers prone to produce longer voice of / g / , but it seems that as to the sound of / k / , they nearly haven't affected by their local first language based on the experimental figures.

This paper combines the analysis of the sound pattern in consonant with second language acquisition, and try to preliminarily analyse the situation of English learners influenced by Qingdao dialect relating to the English stops of /p/, /t/, /k/, /p^h/, /t^h/, and the consonant of /k^h/. First, we examine the stops of native speakers and analyze their pronunciation characteristics. Then, by analyzing the pattern of stops in Qingdao dialect, we find that the stops in Qingdao dialect are characterized by the aggregation of sounds, and their distribution ranges are broader. As a contrast, we analyze and summarize the sound pattern and pronunciation characteristics of Qingdao local English Learners: they can basically distinguish between the two categories of aspirated pronunciation and unaspirated one, but there is still a certain degree of confusion. The unaspirated voiceless stops of English learners in Qingdao are better than aspirated clear stops, but in the unaspirated voiceless consonants, the voice and pronunciation are tight. In the aspirated voiceless consonant, it shows strong aspirating and long breathing.

So, comparing the different information about the Qingdao dialect and the native English, we may indicate that dialect has a negative transfer toward the English speech, except the pronunciation of /k/, while the disparities are distinct among other phonetic symbols. Considering about the convergence situation of the image, the pronunciation of /p/ is nearly identical, so that Qingdao dialect speakers may produce /p/ appropriately.

For local English pronunciation learners, ones may correctly pronouncing the names and corresponding phonetic symbols of the English alphabet can be found in the English dictionary. It's benefit for them to read out the stressed and syllable syllables of each word correctly, and be clear and natural. When they master the phonetic alphabet and a certain number of vocabulary words, they can read some English texts properly, and they can use the listening equipment to approve pronunciation. Good pronunciation isn't only a single syllable. It's also an understanding of intonation (voice lifting and tone) and stress (pronunciation of some syllables in a word and some words in a sentence louder and clearer).

According to experiment, there are some measurements for Qingdao local English spoken learners. The first is to pay attention to the aspirating time before pronouncing, learners can listen to self when he or she is speaking. If one can't hear his or her pronunciation, it's hard to correct it, especially /b/ /d/ /t/ and /g/, Qingdao EFL should feel confident with the pronunciation of /p/ and /k/. Try to record what one say and compare it with native speakers. The second is to slow down the speed of language. Many English learners often say that speaking too fast is easy to develop their improper habits. Appropriate solutions including practicing some basic languages every day, creating a situation to exercise dialogue and starting with monosyllabic words, etc.

References:

-
- [1] Dai Xianjun. Influence of Qingdao Dialect on the Acquisition of English Frictives[J]. Overseas English, 2015(24):221-222.
[2] Xiang Ling. Influence of Rizhao Dialect on the Acquisition of English Stops: An Acoustic Study[D]. Qingdao University of Science and Technology, 2017