

Negative Transfer of Enshi Dialect in English Pronunciation and Its Countermeasures

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Abstract

When Chinese students are learning English, their pronunciation is often influenced by different Chinese dialects and they tend to compare the second language with their mother tongue unconsciously. Enshi dialect is one of the most typical dialects in Hubei province, China, and it is distinctive in its phonetic characteristics and its pronouncing habit. This paper analyzes the influence of Enshi dialect on the English pronunciation and searches for the phonetic association between Enshi dialects and English. At the end of this paper, some countermeasures and suggestions are proposed in English teaching and learning, sincerely hoping that teachers can better help students correct their mistakes in English pronunciation and students from Enshi autonomous prefecture can get rid of the negative transfer of their dialect and learn more approaches and skills so as to speak more standard and fluent English.

Key Words: Enshi dialect, English pronunciation, second language acquisition, negative transfer, countermeasure.

1. Introduction

“刘奶奶找牛奶奶买榴莲牛奶 (liú nǎi nai zhǎo niú nǎi nai mǎi liú lián niú nǎi) ” is a very popular Chinese tongue twister. For many Enshi natives, it is very normal to pronounce the sentence with no obvious difference between two Chinese phonetic alphabet (Pinyin)—liu and niu, which is a representative mistake of Enshi dialect and inaccurate pronunciation in mandarin Chinese. It is well known that pronunciation is an indispensable part in human communication. A good pronunciation is necessary when personal communications take place (Strange, 1995). In the area of Enshi Tujia and Miao autonomous prefecture, Hubei province, the English pronunciation of students is greatly influenced by their dialect and therefore it is necessary to clearly know the differences between them so as to acquire a good English pronunciation.

There is no doubt that many researchers have studied on the influence of dialects on English learning in many different districts. Most researches focused on developed cities or arresting provinces and they have made a lot of achievements, while some poor areas were not that noticeable enough. To be frank, they are short of research and desperately in need of concern. The author of this paper is a teacher of English in the native college, who finds that students there often confuse some English vowels and consonants with Chinese phonetic alphabet (Pinyin), which has its variants in Enshi dialect. So this paper summarizes the commonest mistakes and problems of the native English learner which can be frequently found in the English teaching. At the same time, the author also puts forward some countermeasures, hoping that the native students can get some help from this paper and study English more efficiently and effectively.

2. Literature Review

In language learning, there is transfer in which positive transfer and negative transfer are involved. The negative transfer usually plays a bigger role in learners' second language acquisition than the positive transfer does.

American linguist Lado (1957) put forward a theory that language learners widely depended on their mother tongue and tended to transfer its language form, meaning and relative culture to the second language in the process of learning (Qian Aiqin, 2007). Another linguist Ellis also agreed that a learner's second language learning would be greatly influenced by his mother tongue (Cheng Tongshe & Wang Tiequn, 2004), and so is the case in China. In the process of learning English, Chinese students are more or less influenced by their mother tongue, because they have been brought up in the environment of native language and there has been a Chinese mark system in their minds. A lot of researchers have already done many studies on the influences of dialects on English teaching and learning in the terms of their native dialects based on these theories. Of course, they all hold the idea that the learners' dialects have great impact on the English pronunciation when they learn a second language. The main aspects are the language forms, meanings and some relative cultures (Odlin, 1989). According to Corder, the exploration between native language and the target language's similarity and differences is one of the most effective ways of discussing the phonetics problem (1981). In Eills's opinion, the second language acquisition is strongly affected by the first language (1985:19).

In China, many researchers have focused on the influence of different Chinese dialects on the English pronunciation. For example, Wang Hong (2006) studied the relationship between Hubei dialects and the English teaching. Li Li (2009) analysed the influences of Sichuan dialects on the English pronunciation of the freshmen from Vocational and Technical Institute, and she firstly made a comparison between Sichuanese and English to find the difference in theory. Zhang Zhourui (2012) did researches on the influence of Gansu dialects on English pronunciation and Sun Xia (2013) studied the influence of Hubei dialects on the spoken English.

The writer is a native of Enshi, which is the youngest autonomous prefecture of minorities in China and lies in a remote mountainous area of south-west China. A considerable Miao and Tujia population live there, so the Enshi dialect is very special and typical. Due to the poor education and deep influence of Enshi dialect, the students there even cannot speak standard Chinese, let alone English. To be honest, a lot of students have trouble in English pronunciation, which is the foundation to learn English well. It's worse that there has been little study on Enshi dialect and no countermeasures have been proposed, so this paper is of great significance for the native English learners in Enshi prefecture who are learning English with much difficulty.

3. Some representative characteristics of Enshi dialect

All different dialects have their characteristics (Dai Qinxia & Gu Yang, 2003), so does Enshi dialect, which has a lot of difference in pronunciation compared with standard Chinese (mandarin) and at the same time brings about bad or inaccurate English pronunciation. The followings are some representative characteristics of Enshi dialect.

3.1 Confusion of /n/ and /l/

In Enshi dialect, Chinese phonetic alphabet (Pinyin) /n/ is always confused with /l/. For example, the students often call their teacher "nǎo shī" which should be pronounced as "lǎo shī" in Mandarin Chinese. People call one kind of drink "liú lǎi" while its right pronunciation in Mandarin Chinese is "niú nǎi". The examples above are not that serious, and people will have no difficulty in understanding those incorrect pronunciations. However, on some other occasions, people may be confused enough. For example, a young man tells his friends that he will go to "hé lán" for work. His friends may probably feel surprised and envious and congratulate him on the good opportunity. The man cannot understand why his friends are so happy for him because he doesn't know he has confused "hé lán" (a foreign country) with "hé nán" (a province in China), which brings much misunderstanding to others. Another example, when someone is asked what his favorite color is, he answers with "nán sè". People may make fun of him for his mispronunciation. Here, the meanings of "nán sè" (concerned with sex) and that of "lán sè" (the color of blue) are totally different.

3.2 Confusion of /h/ and /f/

Enshi native always confuse Chinese phonetic alphabet /h/ with /f/ (Zhang Liangbing, 2007). For instance, when spring is coming, farmers go to a store and ask for "fà fěi." Only the native know what they need is "huà fěi", which refers to the chemical fertilizer. When a green hand is cooking, he may say "fú le" in low spirits, which may greatly confuse the nonnative. Actually, it is "hú le" which means something gets burnt. Another case is that Enshi native pronounce flowers as "fā er" while the correct pronunciation in Mandarin Chinese is "huā er".

The most typical example is a famous Chinese twister “hēi huà féi huì huī fā”(黑化肥会挥发) to express that the black fertilizer often volatilizes, which is very difficult for Enshi native to speak out correctly. They tend to pronounce it as “hēi fà féi fēi fēi huā”, which is little understood for the nonnative.

3.3 Confusion of /ch/ and /q/

There exists confusion of Chinese phonetic alphabet /ch/ and /q/ in Enshi dialect (Zhang Liangbing, 2006).Some native talk about the action of wearing clothes as “quān” instead of “chuān” in Mandarin Chinese. Similarly, the native pronounce Sichuan Province as “sì quān”. Another example, the native call a boat “quán” whereas a boat is pronounced “chuán” in Mandarin Chinese. When hungry, the native eat something or take a meal by speaking “qī huàn”, however “chī fàn” is used in Mandarin Chinese.

3.4 Confusion of /w/ and /v/

Enshi natives usually pronounce Chinese phonetic alphabet /w/ as English Phonetic /v/which doesn't exist in Chinese Pinyin. Here are some examples. A person's surname “wú” is often called “vú” in Enshi dialect .When a native five-year-old child is asked for his age, he answers with a number pronounced as “vǔ”, while “wǔ”(five) is standard pronunciation in Mandarin Chinese. Besides Enshi native express “dance” as “vǔ dǎo”, and its pronunciation in Mandarin Chinese is “wǔ dǎo”. When the native say “wǒ wū”, they are talking about their own houses, while “wǒ wū” is Mandarin Chinese. Junior students call one of the courses “vù lǐ”(physics) which is pronounced as “wù lǐ” in Mandarin Chinese.

3.5 Confusion of /zh/ch/sh/ and /z/c/s/

For many people in Enshi, it is very difficult to distinguish the differences between Chinese phonetic alphabet /zh/ch/sh/ and /z/c/s/. There is another representative Chinese twister, “sì shì sì, shí shì shí, shí sì shì shí sì, sì shí shì sì shí, mò bǎ sì zì shuō chéng shí.(四 是 四, 十 是 十, 十 四 是 十 四, 四 十 是 四 十, 莫 把 四 字 说 成 十)” which means the Chinese pronunciation of four and ten are very similar, and we should pay special attention not to mix them up. It's not surprising that the native's tongue will be in chaos when reading or speaking it, because /s/ and /sh/ are really difficult to be distinguished for them. A famous American film named *SPEED* is translated into Chinese as “shēng sǐ shí sù”, which is pronounced by the native as “sēn sǐ sí sù”, and that is much easier to be pronounced without bending the tongue. When they refer to paper and ruler, they say “zǐ” and “cǐ”. But “zhǐ” and “chǐ” are the standard pronunciation in Mandarin Chinese. They call shirts “cèn yī”, while it is pronounced as “chèn yī” in Mandarin Chinese.

3.6 Confusion of /an/en/in/ and /ang/eng/ing/

To distinguish front nasals and back nasals is very difficult for Enshi native. There is no obvious difference when the native speak out these nasals. The first pair is /an/ and /ang/, for example, in Mandarin Chinese the color of yellow is pronounced as “huáng sè”; the container for water is called “shuǐ gāng”; the past time is called “gāng cáí”, while in Enshi dialect, they are differently pronounced as front nasals of “huán sè”, “shuǐ gān”, “gān cáí” and vice versa. The native usually pronounce those front nasals as back ones, for example, when talking about ear rings, they pronounce “ěr huáng”;if something is dry, they pronounce “gāng”, and if somebody has been driven away, they pronounce “gǎng zǒu”. It should be pointed out that the correct respective pronunciations in Mandarin Chinese are “ěr huán”, “gān” and “gǎn zǒu”.

Another confusing pair is /en/ and /eng/, for example, when referring to the root of a tree, they say “shù gēng”; when they mean catching up, they say “gēn shàn”; When talking about the score of the exam, they speak “fēng shù”, while their pronunciations are “shù gēn” “gēn shàng” “fēn shù” in Mandarin Chinese. As for back nasals, Enshi natives always pronounce them as front nasals. For instance, in Mandarin Chinese, “gèng jiā” is used to express a higher degree; “gēng dì” means ploughing; “tián gēng” refers to the ridge of a field. All of the three pronunciations contain the back nasals; however, Enshi native say “gèn jiā”, “gēn dì”, and “tián gēn” which make the hearers puzzled. Then comes the last pair /in/ and /ing/, for example, the native, when talking about the influence of something, they say “yǐn xiǎng”; when finding the beautiful scene, they say “měi jǐn”; when referring to the cleanness of a place, they say “gān jìn”, in all of which the back nasals are pronounced as front nasals in Enshi dialect, instead “yǐng xiǎng”, “měi jǐng” and “gān jìng” are their pronunciation in Mandarin Chinese.

Then it is the same that Enshi native frequently make mistakes by using unnecessary back nasals instead of front nasals in pronunciation, for example they speak “jīng sè”(gold) instead of “jīn sè”, “jīng tiān”(today) instead of “jīn tiān”, “jìng chù” instead of “jìn chù”(nearby place). It must be admitted that most Enshi native have no idea of both front nasals and back nasals, and cannot distinguish them at all.

4. Influence of Enshi dialect on English pronunciation

The theory of language transfer is adopted to support this paper. “Transfer” literally means to carry, to bear or to paint impress or otherwise copy from one surface to another. Language transfer means speakers or writers apply knowledge from one language to another language. It is the transfer of linguistic features between languages in the speech repertoire of a bilingual or multilingual individual, whether from first to second, second to first or many other relationships (Flege, 2003). According to Odlin (1989:27), language transfer is a kind of influence resulted in both similarities and differences between the target language and any other language that has been acquired before. He puts his emphasis on the influence of the second language learning, in which both negative transfer and positive transfer are involved. Rod Eills (1985) says negative transfer occurs when there is a proactive inhibition between the first and the second language. And it will cause some errors in language learning. Therefore when learning English, learners will be influenced by their dialects inevitably.

There are 48 phonetic symbols in English consisting of vowels and consonants. Vowels are made up of 12 monophthong and 8 diphthongs. Consonants are made up of 6 stops, 10 fricatives, 6 affricates, 3 nasals, 2 semi vowels and 1 lateral. Some English phonetic symbols sound similarly to Chinese phonetic alphabet, while some of them lack their equivalents in the Chinese phonetic alphabet (Sun Xia, 2013). So in the process of learning English, native students are deeply influenced by their dialects and they can't pronounce standard Chinese phonetic alphabet, let alone the English phonetic symbols, words and sentences.

4.1 On consonants

There are 21 initial consonants in Mandarin Chinese, while there are 28 consonants in English, both of which play almost the same role in the phonetic symbol of Chinese and English. Some of them share the same written forms while their pronunciations are not completely the same, which is already shown in chapter three. Those representative characteristics of Enshi dialect have great impact on the English pronunciation of the native English learners. More details are listed below.

a. Some initial consonants in Mandarin Chinese sound much like the consonants in English, therefore they are always mixed up by the native English learners, for example, since both /n/ and /l/ exist in the Mandarin Chinese and English, the native students face the same problem of the confusion of /n/ and /l/ when they are learning English as what they have had in Enshi dialect, so words like "life" and "knife", "light" and "night" are usually pronounced wrongly without distinctive difference between /n/ and /l/. Another pair is /f/ and /h/, which also exist both in Chinese and in English. Since they are always mispronounced in Enshi dialect, they cannot be clearly distinguished in English as well. When talking about family, native students pronounce ['hæməli] instead of ['fæməli]; when encouraging friends, they speak “Fighting!” ['huaitɪŋ], while its correct pronunciation is ['faɪtɪŋ]; when native students say “children” and “change”, they pronounce /tʃ/ in the two words like /q/(七) in Enshi dialect; when they come across /w/ and /v/ in English, they mix them up so often as they do in their dialect.

For example, when the native show their compliment to others, they pronounce “Very good!” ['veri god] instead of ['veri gud]. When they say something is “vertical”, they pronounce ['vɜ:tɪk(ə)l] instead of the accurate ['vɜ:tɪk(ə)l]. In reverse, native students pronounce “wool” [vɔl] and “wood” [vɔd] instead of the accurate [wɔl] and [wɔd]. Besides, the confusion of front nasals and back nasals in English pronunciation is the same as that in Enshi dialect, for instance, words like “gang”, “bang”, “cling” and “king” are always pronounced as front nasals [gæn], [bæn], [klɪn] and [kɪŋ] which should be [gæŋ], [bæŋ], [klɪŋ] and [kɪŋ] in standard English. As for front nasals, they are usually pronounced as back nasals in reverse, for example, “plant”, “ant”, “unhappy” and “answer” are often spoken out as [plɑ:ŋt], [æŋt], [ʌŋ'hæpɪ] and ['ɑ:ŋsə] instead of [plɑ:nt], [ænt], [ʌn'hæpɪ] and ['ɑ:nsə]. All these mistakes in pronunciation can be frequently found in native English learners, which are caused by Enshi dialect and difficult to correct.

b. There are only 21 initial consonants in Mandarin Chinese, while there are 28 consonants in English phonetics. Therefore, some consonants in English phonetics lack their equivalents in Chinese, such as /θ/ð/r/v/tr/dr/, all of which bring great difficulty for the native to speak out standard English.

When dealing with these parts, the students tend to find or imitate their similar pronunciation in their dialect, naturally the place of articulation is incorrect, which results in the mispronunciation of English consonants and words. For example, the phonetic symbol /θ/ in English has no equivalent in Chinese. In reading or speaking, native students tend to imitate the pronunciation of /s/, which is similar to /θ/ without putting the tip of the tongue between the upper and lower teeth. In this way, they often make mistakes, for instance “thank”, “think” and “through” are always pronounced wrongly as [sæŋk], [sɪŋk] and [sru:] instead of the correct [θæŋk], [θɪŋk] and [θru:]. Then people often pronounce phonetic symbol /ð/ in English as /z/ in Chinese phonetic alphabet, the same mistake as the former /θ/ and /s/. What’s more, /ð/ sounds much like a Chinese character “子”(zi), so native students pronounce “mother” “father” as [ˈmʌzə] and [ˈfɑ:zə], actually their correct pronunciations are [ˈmʌðə] and [ˈfɑ:ðə]. Another English phonetic symbol /r/ has the same written form with Chinese phonetic alphabet /r/, but they have different pronunciations.

The native students usually pronounce the English /r/ in the same way as Chinese character “日”(rì), so words like “rose” “round” and “roll” are always mispronounced. Then comes the English phonetic symbol /v/, which is also absent in Chinese phonetic alphabet, so the native English learners turn to their dialects for help, and they want to find a similar one in their dialect. Just like one of the representative characteristics of Enshi dialects shown in chapter three, Chinese phonetic alphabet /w/ is mispronounced as /v/ by Enshi natives and vice versa. In consequence, words like “vote”, “vary” and “valid” are pronounced as [wəʊt], [ˈveəri] and [ˈvælɪd] instead of [vəʊt], [ˈveəri] and [ˈvælɪd]. As for the phonetic symbols /tr/ and /dr/, they also have no equivalents in Chinese, but these two phonetic symbols are pronounced relatively accurate compared with the above-mentioned consonants in English since there is no similar pronunciation in Enshi dialect, which may not bring negative transfer to the native students’ English learning.

4.2 On vowels

The pronunciation of vowels in English differs from that of the finals in Chinese. There are 20 vowels in English, consisting of 12 monophthong vowels and 8 diphthongs, while the finals in Chinese are made up of some syllables except initials. Most finals are vowels, and there are also some finals formed with vowels and nasal consonants, so the finals in Chinese are far more than the vowels in English. Besides, they vary a lot in pronunciation, which makes the native students confused and hard to grasp. Explanations are as followed.

a. There is no distinction of long and short sound in Chinese finals, so when the native students read or speak English, their pronunciations of both long vowels and short vowels are not accurate. They don’t pronounce the long vowels long enough and when they pronounce short vowels, they tend to lengthen the pronunciation. That is to say there is no difference between long vowels and short vowels in the English pronunciation of Enshi native. For example, when people pronounce “good” and “tooth”, there are occasions where the short vowel /ʊ/ is mispronounced as /u:/ and vice versa, for they cannot distinguish the long vowels and short vowels. Other words like “tea” “talk” “learn” are often mispronounced as [ti] [tɔk] and [lɜn] as if there is no long vowel. In fact, the correct pronunciations are [ti:] [tɔ:k] and [lɜ:n].

b. There are 8 diphthong vowels in English while there is no equivalent in Chinese. The native students, in most cases, pronounce these vowels in the way of strong Chinese characteristics. They try to find some Chinese finals, even Chinese characters which are very similar to diphthong vowels and then pronounce English in the Chinese way. For example, the diphthong /ai/ in “bike” is always pronounced as a Chinese character and a final “哎”(ài); the diphthong /əʊ/ in “goal” is frequently pronounced as a Chinese character and a final “呕”(òu) as well. Another diphthong /aʊ/ is replaced by the Chinese character and final “奥”(ào) in words like “out” and “our”. In fact, they can’t be totally the same and there are some subtle distinctions between them in the place of articulation, the shape of the mouth, the position of the tongue and the length of sound.

As a conclusion, there are some similarities and differences in Enshi dialect and English. When dealing with those similar phonetic symbols, students easily become confused. Most often, students tend to roughly imitate the English pronunciation according to their dialects, which is hasty, thus errors and mispronunciation inevitably occur.

5. Some Countermeasures in English Teaching and Learning

As is shown in chapter four, Enshi dialect influences students a lot in their English pronunciation, so both teachers and students should work hard so as to improve students' English pronunciation, for they both play a big role. Only if they work together, can students get much progress and improvement in English pronunciation.

5.1 In teaching

5.1.1 To teach systematic phonetics

In phonetics teaching, *The Alphabet Song* can be introduced to the students through which students' great interest can be aroused. Then the teacher may lead the students to imitate the pronunciation in the happy and exciting atmosphere of learning an English song, which is more interesting and attractive than just follow the teacher and read those letters and their phonetic symbols mechanically. After the initiative and repeated imitation of the song, the students definitely get much more familiar with the letters and their phonetic symbols and it is at that time that the teacher can check the pronunciation of the students and give suggestions on their problems or mistakes in pronunciation. Phonetics teaching classes must be set up to help the students acquire a good pronunciation. In class, the teacher should have a clear mind with a teaching goal which is to make the students master the phonetics systematically, not separately. That is the students must know how to read, how to write and how to pronounce a word by using the phonetics they have already learned. Language learning may begin with imitation, but that's obviously not enough, for systematical knowledge and scientific methods are much more necessary and vital. There are so many vowels and consonants in English phonetics which should not be taught to students as separated ones or they may forget quickly. In a finer level, vowels consist of 12 monophthong vowels and 8 diphthong vowels and consonants are made up of 6 stops, 10 fricatives, 6 Affricates, 3 nasals, 2 semivowels and 1 lateral. It is the teachers' duty to teach the students recognize and pronounce all of them and form a system in their mind, which must be put in the first place in English teaching.

5.1.2 To help individuals in pronunciation

When students come across some problems that they themselves are not able to solve, the teacher should give as much help as they can to the individuals. Different people differ in the level of mastery. Some people are able to master the pronunciation in a short time while some cannot, so the teacher should make different requirements to different students and help them individually, which can be really effective and appreciated. For example, the teacher can help the English learners do some face-to-face oral practice after class by video teaching when necessary and convenient. In addition, the teacher can divide the whole class into some smaller groups and call on the students in the same group to help each other whenever and wherever to get common progress, during which the friendship and cooperative spirit of group will surely be developed at the same time.

5. 2 In learning

5.2.1 To have a positive attitude

In the process of language learning, students should have a positive attitude from the very beginning so as to acquire a good knowledge of the language. They can better understand the meaning and the importance of learning only if they have an active learning attitude, which helps students, make a strong will to overcome various difficulties and other distractions in learning and adhere to the learning task and in the end to achieve the goal. There is no doubt that the attitude of learning not only directly affects the learning effect, but also influences the students' formation of personality, which is the part and parcel of college education. Since English learning, especially the pronunciation of English is not easy to be improved; to keep a positive attitude of learning is essential and very important.

5.2.2 To listen to Standard English and imitate

Nowadays, where there is a text book, there is an audio-visual material, which is of great convenience and significance for native English learners compared with that in old time. Any student who wants to learn a language well must listen more and speak more, and English is not an exception. Native students should listen more to the Standard English and then repeatedly imitate the pronunciation as much as possible. Actually listening is the first step, which means the input is fundamental, without which the students cannot pronounce English correctly, or they may just learn "dumb English" without speaking at all, which is useless and ineffective learning, for it does not help students to truly or totally grasp a foreign language, and they can't achieve the goal of communication by a foreign language.

Here are some approaches, based on listening and imitation, which are easily implemented and work well. For example, Chinese students usually show strong interest in pop music, so it is a good way if they can always listen to some English songs and imitate to sing, during which they can reinforce the English pronunciation and vocabulary they have learned in class. Another effective way is to watch some English movies whatever types they are, which may be much more difficult than the former one because the speakers in the film all speak so fast in perfect English. The truth is that in the beginning, the students may catch merely a few words or even nothing in the film, which makes them discouraged. So never give up, for this is a long-term task, then the more students listen to and imitate, the more they will be familiar with. Besides there is still the most difficult way which cannot be completed without great effort and perseverance — to listen to the radio programme of VOA and BBC. Few students have the determination to keep on listening and imitating, but those who make it last get the best.

5.2.3 to record sound and compare

One never knows that his pronunciation is incorrect if he doesn't hear or listen to his own sound. Ordinarily, one can easily find the mistakes of others; nevertheless it is more difficult for anyone to find a mistake of himself. So the students can listen more to their own sound by recording. After doing that, they can make a comparison between their sound and the standard one, and find the mistakes they have made. Then they can correct them as quickly and effectively as possible until they themselves are satisfied. In daily study, the students can make good use of the devices in the language lab of their university or finish recording by their mobilephone with ease. By realizing or finding the difference between their pronunciation and the standard one, they can even ask the mirror for help, which means they can change their way of articulation, the shape of their mouth, the position of their tongue when they are doing oral practice by staring at their mouths in the mirror (Wang Hong, 2006). Luckily, this can be finished by anyone alone, anytime and anywhere, even with the help of a mini-mirror. Actually, a lot of native students have benefited a lot by doing this.

5.2.4 To make more communication

Language works as a tool in human communication. Whether having mastered the language or not is measured by how naturally and fluently one can use the language in interpersonal communication, during which students can easily and clearly get the information of what they have learned and what they haven't mastered yet. As is known practice makes perfect, which shows the good result is based on hard and persevering work and practice. However, in the earlier practice, it is often the case that the more they speak English, the more mistakes they make, which frustrate them. It sounds bad and disheartening, but if students keep on practicing and communicating with others, they can correct those mistakes easily and effectively in a relaxing atmosphere. No one makes any mistakes in his life, so students should not be afraid of making whatever kind of mistakes in communication. The fewer students speak English, the less progress they can make. Therefore, just practice more often and success may come in the end.

6. Conclusion

This paper analyses the negative transfer of Enshi dialect in English learning, which can't be avoided, especially the influence of Enshi dialect on English pronunciation. There are some similarities between Enshi dialect and English. When dealing with this part, students may easily get confused by the subtle distinctions. For those English phonetic symbols which don't have Chinese equivalent, students tend to imitate the pronunciation according to their dialect, which is not standard itself and results in the mispronunciation of English. Actually however English and Enshi dialect seem to be similar, they still vary in the place of articulation, the shape of the mouth and the length of sound, which bring different pronunciations.

Based on the above-mentioned fact, it is important for the teacher of English to know about the characteristics of the local dialects and to improve the efficiency in English teaching. There exists great difference between the phonological structure of Enshi dialect and that of English. Therefore, the teacher should set up systematic phonetics teaching class and at the same time lead the students to do self-correction in pronunciation, and then some corresponding exercises should be increased for the students. When necessary, the teacher should help students individually. All in all, a good language learning environment should be set up to help the students acquire a good habit of the second language acquisition. Then come to the native students who study English with strong interest but tend to bring their habits of Chinese pronunciation in English learning, which neglects the differences of the two different phonetic systems and leads to many mistakes.

Therefore, the students should adopt corresponding countermeasures or strategies to gradually get rid of the bad habits and negative transfer of Enshi dialect. With the development of science and technology in China, great changes have taken place in Enshi autonomous prefecture of minorities, which brings a lot of chance and challenge. Although it lies in the remote mountainous area of China, students there are eager for knowledge and study very hard, hoping to get better education and go out to widen their horizon. Thus, the author sincerely hopes that more researchers will focus on the study of Enshi dialect so as to promote the native students' English learning.

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