Negative Transfer of Mandarin on English Pronunciation and Strategies  
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Abstract. This paper discusses the effect of Mandarin negative transfer on English speech in the process of English learning. It is pointed out that in the process of learning English pronunciation, there will inevitably be a negative transfer of Mandarin, and both teachers and learners should acknowledge this fact. At the same time, it also points out how to avoid the expansion of Mandarin negative transfer from the teachers’ angle as well as the learners’. Learners should try their best to develop good reading and recording correction habits at the beginning of the school, make full use of the online dictionary and language resources available everywhere, and strive to reduce the negative transfer of Mandarin, so as to grasp the fluent and accurate voice in a timely and effective manner.  

Introduction  
In China, English learning is basically after learners have been able to use Mandarin. In foreign language learning, learners will always be influenced by the knowledge and experience of mandarin to varying degrees, and thus consciously and unconsciously apply the language phenomenon of native language to foreign language expression. In English learning, this happens to varying degrees. How to reduce the influence of Mandarin's language habits on English pronunciation? Different scholars may have many different opinions. This paper intends to discuss the influence of mandarin on English pronunciation from the perspective of negative transfer, and actively discuss its coping strategies.  

Transfer and Negative Transfer  
Lado (1957) pointed out that similarities in the first language and the second language will promote the learning of the second language and positively transfer the acquisition of the second language; and the differences will hinder the learning of the second language, which will produce a negative transfer. In other words, the greater the similarity between the two languages, the easier it is to learn: the smaller the similarity, the harder it is to learn. In the process of language acquisition, positive and negative transfer exist simultaneously and work together in foreign language acquisition. According to behaviorist theories, the main impediment to learning was interference from prior knowledge (Rod Ellis 1997). Rod (1999) argues that because of the commonalities and differences between the target language and any other language that has been learned or not yet fully learned, the result is called transfer. In the process of learning, the learner's native language sometimes has a negative impact, and the errors of the result is called negative transfer. If the transfer of old knowledge helps and promotes the learning of new knowledge, it is positive transfer; on the contrary, if the transfer of old knowledge and experience hinders the acquisition of new knowledge, it is negative transfer, that is, interference.  
In the process of learning English, both positive and negative transfers occur simultaneously. In some respects it is a positive transfer and on the other hand a negative transfer. Buttzkamm, a professor of German English teaching, has a good analogy: “The first language is not a coat. The learner can take it off before leaving the foreign language classroom and leave it outside.” (cited by Guo Minghua, 2002). Therefore, we cannot simply look at the transfer of the first language. We must acknowledge its existence. We must acknowledge that it interferes with the side of second language learning, and we cannot deny its positive transfer. We must admit that it can help us learn second language well.
The Influence of Negative Transfer on English Phonetics

Yu Liming (2004) pointed out that when learners are exposed to foreign languages, their first language system has been established and their native language habits have been formed. However, due to the lack of a language environment similar to first language acquisition, learners need to make painstaking efforts to understand, master and implement language skills into virtual situations. According to the behavioral learning theory, the original habits will affect the development of new habits. Therefore, for second language learners, the first language thinking implanted in the brain may interfere with their second language acquisition. In second language acquisition, negative transfer occurs more often than positive one.

Segment Level

In mandarin, there is no long and short vowels, which also leads to learners’ puzzles in the English long and short vowels, or to the substitution of the phonemes in Mandarin. For example, the diphthongs /ai/, /ei/, /au/ in English are quite difficult to master for some English learners since they are very similar to /ai/, /ei/ and /ou/ in Pinyin. In Mandarin Pinyin, when you produce these vowels, you only need a fixed mouth position. The English diphthong is a long vowel sound made by gliding from one position of the mouth to another within the same syllable. The first vowel is articulate and long, and the second vowel is light and short. And when pronounced, the tongue glides from the first vowel to the second vowel. The diphthong is the vowel of two phonemes. The most common mistake is that diphthongs are produced in the same way as the monophthong, not changing the mouth or tongue position. Similarly, some consonants are also confused with the Mandarin pinyin, such as /θ/ mistaken for /sh/; /ts/ and /dz/ for /ch/ and /zh/ respectively. Even /ʒ/ and /j/ are produced as /y/. This is the result of negative transfer. In the case of similar knowledge and skills, students should be asked to react differently, but the students respond the same. If you compare the Mandarin pinyin with the English sounds, you will find the reason for the negative transfer of Mandarin pinyin to English pronunciation.

Supersegmental Level

The negative transfer of the Mandarin is mainly reflected in tones, stress and intonation, and liaison. Although a Chinese sentence is also divided into different syllables, which is not stressed as clearly as English. Students often say each English word in a stressed tone, in disregard of the rhythm. For example, the Chinese phrases “正负迁移” contains four words, which could be pronounced clearly and articulately for each word. However, the English equivalent, positive and negative transfer, obviously should be pronounced in an alternating way, with stressed followed by unstressed syllables. The stressed syllables are loud and clear, and the unstressed syllables pass by. Many students apply the method of Mandarin yin into English sounds directly. Learners can not easily know the the tone of each word as they do in Mandarin, they can only follow the intuition and read the tone of each word in a flat way. Or all the nine syllables are produced heavily, which is absolutely too far from the rhythm of English.

The liaison could be demonstrated in the case of postcard/ˈpəʊstka:d/ and goldfish/ˈgəʊdʃɪʃ/, in which learners often read them as /ˈpəʊstka:d/ and /ˈgəʊdʃɪʃ/. It sounds strange because they do not fully understand technique, "incomplete plosion". The first word ends with the consonant and the latter one begins with the vowel. The consonants and vowels could be read in a continuing way, Eg:

A. wait a minute
B. I want an apple.

Liaison makes the sentence fluent and natural. However, due to the prior reading habits in Mandarin, students are not accustomed to continuous reading English, which leads to the isolated production of each word, and lack of fluency and smoothness further. This is the negative transfer of Mandarin in super segmental level.
Strategies

Negative transfer is an objective phenomenon in English phonetic learning and will not disappear in the short run. Only by objectively calmly confronting this phenomenon can English learners be invincible. In English phonetic learning, on the one hand, learners should actively face the negative transfer phenomenon of Mandarin. At the same time, on the other hand, in the bilateral teaching activities, learners and teachers should clearly understand and actively avoid such transfer from different perspectives. Moreover, learners can take advantage of the network tools and language resources available everywhere to keep themselves active.

Facing the Negative Transfer of Mandarin Actively

First of all, it must be acknowledged that the tone of the first language will have a certain negative transfer effect on English learning. The role of negative transfer is different due to individual differences. For English teachers or English researchers, while identifying the causes of negative transfer, rely on scientific research theories to guide English teaching and minimize or improve negative transfer. The English-Chinese contrast teaching method is used to distinguish two similar and distinct pronunciation rules, so as to realize the positive transfer of English phonetic learning. The use of this method in English phonetics teaching allows students to understand the essence of phonetic transcription as a phonetic text on the basis of repeated practice, correcting defective pronunciations, and at the same time, increasing the input of target language listening language materials, and gradually establishing a sense of language. Finally, they can approach the easy production of English pronunciation.

However, there still exists some varieties of English, American English, Canadian English, Indian English, Singapore English and others. Accordingly, Chinese English with the characteristics of Mandarin pronunciation could also be considered as a variety of English. These English variants are increasingly accepted as a result of international economic and cultural exchanges. Therefore, adults who learn English with instrumental purposes do not have to insist on authentic pronunciation and syntactic accuracy. This goal is difficult to achieve and is not necessary for people who only want to communicate in English. At the international level, a certain degree of "Chinglish" can be tolerated. Once an adult has adjusted his mental state to a certain level, their anxiety will be set at an appropriate degree. Correspondingly, the confidence will be strengthened, and the interests will be multiplied, which will beneficially promote a large number of learners’ English pronunciation.

Avoiding the Negative Transfer of Mandarin

From the perspective of English teaching, teachers can inform learners of the possible negative transfer of Mandarin in advance through the teaching experience accumulated by themselves and their predecessors. For instance, when teaching the words contain the sounds, /θ/, /ð/, /æ/, /aɪ/ and /ŋ/ etc, the teachers should point out that they are unique phonemes in English in order that learners could pay special attention to these sounds production at the early stage.

From the perspective of English learning, learners should be reminded that they are in an atmosphere of English rather than Mandarin. From thinking to pronunciation, they should be subordinate to another channel. Therefore, from the very beginning, teachers should actively cultivate the unique pronunciation habits of English, especially the phonemes that are unique to Mandarin in English. Teachers should train the learners’ mouths, tongues and other muscles so that the English production habit could be established. Moreover, the recording habits should be developed at the beginning of the school. Learners, teachers and parents could playback the recording materials repeatedly so that they could analyze the differences between the model and the pronunciation, and consciously improve it in the next recording. Thus, the recording and reading aloud will be better and better.

Making Full Use of Online Tools and Resources

Now that internet and mobile terminals are available everywhere, language learning materials could be easily accessible, in which language learning are not restricted by the time and space. Whether it
is a downloadable language pronunciation or a resourceful dictionary app, or an English-speaking corpus that can be found anywhere on the Internet, the methods and ways of learning English have been expanded infinitely. Although learners are accustomed to the traditional offline classroom, as long as they intend to, they can be surrounded by AI teachers, online teachers, dictionaries, and corpus. The only alternative for the learners is to learn to self-identify and arrange how to effectively apply a variety of learning tools and language resources to quickly improve their English pronunciation skills.

Conclusions

Mandarin’s transfer in English learning is inevitable. Learners and teachers must recognize and face the unfavorable factors brought about by negative transfer and tolerate "Chinglish" to a certain extent. In addition, the internet and mobile terminals can be adopted to fully exploit the error correction function of online dictionaries, online corpus, recording tools, etc., and convert passive language learning into active and effective use of resources, improve learning efficiency, and make English learning a rewarding and interesting event.

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