

# Study on Phoniatics Directed at Chinese English Learners from Regions of Prominent Dialects in Anhui Province

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**Abstract:** Based on Optimality theory and the long-term phonetics teaching and experimental teaching, the author probes into the study on optimality theory in English phonetics acquisition of students from Anhui Province with the phonetic investigation. Try to explore and analyze the phonetic phenomenon of negative transfer from Anhui dialects. Then some advices are given to the practical phonetic teaching. summarize students' acquisition of English dialect speech difficulties and pronunciation error characteristics, and try to find a viable Phonetic teaching approach as to promote education.

**Keywords:** Optimality Theory, Dialects in Anhui Province, English Pronunciation, Correcting Strategies

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## 1. Introduction

### 1.1. The Connotation of Optimality Theory

The Optimality Theory is abbreviated form of OT Theory, Originally proposed in 1991 by the American linguist Prince and Smolensky in the American Society of phonological Arizona State University. In 1993, Prince and Smolensky's book "preferred theory: generative grammar limit interaction" on the main content of the preferred, namely constraints elaborated interactions, and that the result of the interaction produced the difference of language. Subsequently, Tesar and Smolensky [2] proposed level of constraints that the First Language Acquisition through the demotion about. the constraints CDA (Constraint Demotion Algorithm). Chinese scholars on the study began in the preferred king Colleen, in his point of view, The Optimality Theory Preferably is based on the interaction of constraints as the main content of the theory, elaborate the constraints and universal grammar generation. Bing [4] described in the detail of the background, theoretical framework and its application about The Optimality Theory. The core concepts of the Optimality Theory are constraints and the level constraints arrangement. The Common constraints fall into two categories: The Marked Constraints and The Faithfulness Constraints. Faithfulness Constraints Item should be consistent of the Entry Requirements Item.

### 1.2. The Content of Optimality Theory

The basic operation mechanism in the phonology about the Optimality Theory as follows: "Inclusive Principles" and "Analysis Of Randomness Principle.", Gen generating means to generate an unlimited number of candidates on the basis of the specific entry; These candidates entered Eval evaluation unit by a qualified and faithfulness constraints constituted hierarchy; According to "the principle of absolute priority" to maximize satisfy or minimum violate candidates hierarchy of constraints is the final output of the preferred items.

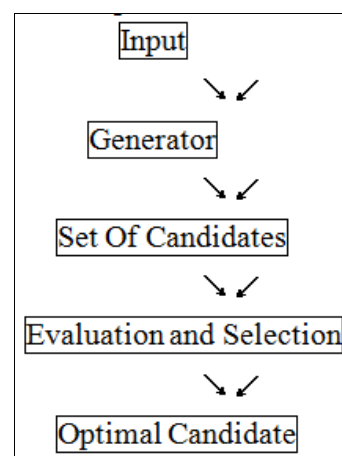


Figure 1. The Structure of the Optimality Theory.

## 2. Research Status at Home and Abroad

The earliest in 1990s, the Optimality Theory is proposed by the Bruce Tesse and Paul Smolensky and form the theory of generative phonology. It is the development of the classic theory of generative phonology (The Sound Pattern of English abbreviation SPE, Chomsky & Halle, 1968), From the date of birth of the theory in the entire field of linguistics has had a profound impact, and become a linguistic theory has been widely used in children's language acquisition, second language acquisition, syntax, semantics, and other fields. China's earliest introduction preferred theorists is Professor Wang Jialing (1995). He published in the "foreign linguistics" and "preferably on" a paper first introduces the basic content of the theory, It is opened a prelude to the research of preferred in China. In the year of 2001, Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press published a book Rene Kager Optimality Theory. Subsequently, some scholars (Zhongrong Fu, 1995; Li Bing, 1998; left rock, 1999; Gong Qi, 2000; Maqiu Wu, 2001; Wang Fu Fang, 2003) and another author on the theoretical framework of the latest developments preferred theory were introduced, Introducing the relevant theoretical work related to the various aspects of the Optimality Theory. This study is a comparative analysis framework OT-Chinese voice system that combines voice Students from Anhui Province in the actual investigation, which study students's voice migration phenomenon, to build a long-term study of the mechanisms and voice teaching reform project feasible corrective voice strategy. The Optimality Theory on research in this area of the country is still in its infancy, to be able to retrieve a small number of research papers, and presentations and mostly theoretical explanation, there is no application of deep-seated. This research studies English Learners RATING dialect area and move the start path-related constraints in the acquisition stage, exploring the internal mechanism under the framework of domination of English learners OT voice Acquisition. Combining experimental phonetics in English and Chinese Acoustics Praat speech analysis, tagging, English words, phrases, sentences strategy stress stressed empirical research to the constraints expressed in the form of a ranking close to the native English speakers.

## 3. The Pronunciation of English and Chinese

Language consists of speech sounds and its function lies in communication. The main form of it is oral communication which has a close connection with pronunciation. The pronunciation of English can not overreach the category of limited segment and phoneme or it will lead to error of pronunciation. Anhui province traverses Jiang-Huai areas with a result that its has various dialects. Roughly speaking, it can be divided into Central Plains Mandarin in northern Anhui province, Jianghuai Mandarin in central Anhui, Gan dialect in western Anhui, Xuanzhou Wu dialect in southern Anhui, Huetseu dialect in southern Anhui and Hakka dialect in southern Anhui. The negative transfer of Anhui dialect affects

the learning of English pronunciation, especially on its segments and phonemes. The Optimality Theory is employed to study Chinese phonetic phenomena, such as tone, nasalization, retroflex suffixation. The Optimality Theory demonstrates a new and special advantage in dealing with many underlying problems which are complicate for traditional methods and theories. On the other hand, as a new theory and hypothesis, the Optimality Theory inevitably has its own disadvantage as follows. First and foremost, it attaches great importance to output and thus neglects input. Secondly, there still exists difficulties in explaining the connection between limitations of various levels and generating device.

### 3.1. Language Transfer Plays a Significant Role in Language Learning of Second Language Acquisition (SLA)

Meanwhile, it is also a cognitional process influenced and restricted by many factors. Language transfer can be classified into positive transfer and negative transfer on the basis of its function. The positive transfer refers to facilitating effects, namely, the language has already been obtained by individual, especially the first language promotes and accelerates the second language acquisition. Conversely, the negative transfer refers to detrimental effects, in other words, the first language impedes and interferes the second language acquisition. Anhui dialect refers to the dialect which is spoken in Anhui province, which traverses Huaihe River, Yangtze River and Xin anjiang River. As a result, there is a big difference between the northern and southern culture.

The dialect phonetic, influenced by phonetic system of Chinese dialect, refers to the pronunciation of initial consonants, vowels and tone kept by people speaking dialects when they speak Standard Spoken Language (Putonghua).

### 3.2. Anhui Dialects Have the Negative Transfer Effects in English Phonetics Study

It mainly reflects in the phoneme and phonological change that include assimilation, elision, weakening, stressing, liaison and incomplete plosive. The assimilation, stressing and liaison are greatly influenced by the dialect and the specific negative transfer effects are as follows: segment is classified into vowel and consonant.

#### 3.2.1. Vowel

(1) Regardless of the English Long and short sound: [i], [i:], [ɔ], [ɔ:], [u], [u:], [a:], [a] and so on, which is in a sustained length of time as the boundary point. For example, hot pronounced [hɔt], ball pronounced [bɔ:l], it easily leads to semantic and accents errors.

(2) Can not grasp the degree of mouth opening. [œ] and [ʌ] and the diphthong [ai] and [au]

(3) We misread the [ei] as [e].

#### 3.2.2. Consonants

(1) It is difficult to grasp [θ], [ð], [ʃ], [ʒ], [tʃ], [dʒ] accurate pronunciation, mainly in Fuyang, Huaiyuan, Huainan Wuhu area.

(2) The areas, which is difficult to distinguish between English [n] and [l], mainly in Anqing, Lu'an, Hefei area.

(3) The area, which is difficult to read [r] precisely, mainly in Bengbu, Fengtai, Shou, Ying, Huoqiu, Jinzhai area.

(4) Pronunciating confusion, between [W] and [v], the area concentrated in some cities and counties Jianghuai Mandarin area.

(5) Pronunciating confusion, between [h] and [f]. the area concentrated mainly in Fengtai, Shou, Shitai, Huainan, Jing County, Taiping, Jingde area.

### **3.3. The Analysis on Reasons of Anhui Dialect's Transfer Function for English Pronunciation of the Academician**

The negative transfer phenomenon for Chinese pronunciation generally existed in Chinese learners' pronunciation, as a result of regional differences, there existed dialect's pronunciation negative transfer phenomenon for English pronunciation. The learners of local dialect are deeply rooted in their own language, education at the middle school is for the purpose of test training, which loses the attention for pronunciation and without pronunciation system training by the numbers, so many students have less pronunciation training, inappropriate training methods for strengthening again and again, and English teachers of local dialect with dialect by their own, therefore learners transfer dialect's pronunciation into English pronunciation, which cause the negative transfer phenomenon for dialect's pronunciation. Dialect's pronunciation negative transfer phenomenon takes disadvantage in English speech, listening comprehension and communication ability in college, the learners will be easily anxious about the study, which causes lack of confidence and barrier for communication deeply.

## **4. The Strategy of Pronunciation Correction**

### **4.1. Master the Basic Theory of Pronunciation Synthesis Training for English and Chinese**

The essence of dialect's pronunciation correction is based on standard of Mandarin, which corrects deviation phenomenon in dialect from the aspects of pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar and so on. Based on the corresponding relationship between Anhui Dialect and Mandarin, pronunciation theory, related knowledge of four pronunciation factor, physiological nature of pronunciation, related knowledge of syllable and phoneme, related knowledge of vowels and consonants, related knowledge of tones, related knowledge of Chinese phonetic alphabet scheme and related knowledge of light stress, erhua, pronunciation Variations should be stressed on.

### **4.2. Strengthen the Pronunciation Skills by Repeated Training**

The learning method of students' simple imitation will be

changed by implementing the comparison theory between English and Chinese into teaching process. Comparisons in segmental and suprasegmental level different features of English and Chinese guide students to focus on the place of articulation, the tongue height and mouth shape, from simple imitation to system learning. Firstly, accurate pronunciation on cacuminal zh - z, ch - c, sh - s, while voicing the cacuminal, learners will upturn tongue and resist the front part of hard palate, then pronunciation in friction is formed by airflow flushes the tongue tip and palate disorder. Secondly, accurate pronunciation on lateral [n] and [l], while voicing the lateral, learners will rise soft palate and uvula to block the path of airflow through the nasal cavity, which flows from mouth to gap on both sides of the tongue. Thirdly, accurate pronunciation on back nasal (n), tongue will be up and then soft palate will be drooped, airflow will be through the nasal cavity.

### **4.3. Dialectical Training on Pronunciation**

While voicing cacuminal (blade-palatal) will upturn tongue tip near rear gingiva or front hard palate, but tongue tip is not bent obviously.

### **4.4. Master Methods of Identification, and Memorize with Finding Phonetic Laws**

If one wants to master vocabulary, master rules, seek skills, parapsychics use, remember the words. First, use phonetic knowledge, spelling rules to memorize words. Such as apartment memory can be divided into three parts: a - part - ment. Second, use synonyms and antonyms, memorizing words weak - strong, thin - heavy. Third, use homophones memorizing words such as sun - son, right - write. Last, use word-formation knowledge to memorize word such as the teacher, driver, the cleaner after a noun.

### **4.5. Develop Special Training and Habit for the Integrated Pronunciation**

Whether pronunciation, intonation and stress pronunciation is standard or not; whether sandhi, pause and connection, intonation is correct or not; whether the reading is smooth or not and the speed of pronunciation is appropriate or not.

## **5. The Implementation Scheme**

### **5.1. Specific Experimental Methods**

This topic is carried out on the method of theoretical research, bibliographic retrieval, questionnaire survey, recording, test, statistics and analyzing. The followings are the specific ideas and methods: First, This research can be carried out in some science and technology college in the Hefei city with 60 college students from different dialect regions in Anhui province to be taken, and these students can be from different majors, but they must have learned English for above 6 years; Second, to make sure whether these

students are from the dialect regions, some surveys have to be made according to their birthplaces and the tone, phoneme and phonetics change of their pronunciation and the subjects must be college students with standard pronunciation of mandarin and English living in places like Hefei, Anqing, Fuyang, for above 10 years. Then, divide the students with accents and those who speak mandarin into two groups, which are test group and control group. The experimental material is a material with 80 English words and the subjects are required to speak out the sentences with words including different vowels, in the same time, recordings will be made. After this, researchers will transcribe the recordings into written materials and sort and count the identification, classification and wrong pronunciation of the words.

### 5.2. Conclusion

This topic is carried out on the method of theoretical research, bibliographic retrieval, questionnaire survey, recording, test, statistics and analyzing, taking the empirical study on the strategy of correcting the English pronunciation of the college students in dialect regions of Anhui province as the case to study the transfer phenomenon in their English pronunciation learning process by contrasting and analyzing the system of English and Chinese through the field study of the condition of their pronunciation. This research also put forward with some feasible correcting suggestions toward the influence of the negative transfer so as to construct a long-acting mechanism and educational reform project for correcting the English pronunciation in dialect regions of Anhui province.

## 6. Improvement Scheme

This study uses the Optimization Theory and the reference of the existing research results at home and abroad to explore voice migration phenomenon existing problems and the reasons of college students in typical dialect area in Anhui Province to formulate new orthodontic teaching countermeasures.

Optimization theory forms a generation of phonology theory. The domestic research in this field is still in its infancy, there aren't many related research papers can be retrieved, and is mostly introduced and theoretical elaboration, deep researches have been observed. Combined with experimental phonetics acoustic software in Praat analysis of English and Chinese phonetic, mark, English words, phrases, sentence stress re-reading strategy for empirical research, in the form of a restricted condition rank, which are close to native English speakers.

Research significance: this study is a comparative analysis between English and Chinese phonetic system within the framework of the OT, combining the actual voice investigation of college students in Anhui dialect area, study students' voice migration phenomenon, build practical speech strategy of long-term research mechanism and to rectify the phonetic teaching reform project.

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