

Effects of hanyu pinyin on pronunciation in learners of Chinese as a Foreign Language

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Abstract

This paper provides evidence that the hanyu pinyin representation of the phonology of Chinese affects the production of Chinese phonology in instructed learners of Chinese as a Foreign Language. Pinyin generally has a one-to-one correspondence between graphemes and phonemes, but its transcription of some Chinese rimes does not represent the main vowel. As a consequence, learners of Chinese as a Foreign Language have non-target-like phonological representations of Chinese rimes, which in turn lead to non-target-like pronunciations.

A hanzi reading-aloud task was used to elicit syllables containing the three rimes /iou/, /uei/ and /uən/ from final-year CFL students. Results show that learners often delete the vowels that are not represented in the pinyin transcription, but they produce the same vowels in the same rimes when the pinyin transcription represents them.

It is concluded that the pinyin orthographic input interacts with the phonological input in shaping the phonological representations and pronunciation of Chinese syllables in intermediate as well as beginner CFL learners. Language teachers should therefore be aware of the effects of the pinyin orthography.

摘要

本篇论文论证了汉语拼音对外国学习者的汉语发音产生影响的问题。汉语拼音通常是字母与音位一一对应的，但有一些汉语韵尾的主要元音在汉语拼音中没有得到准确的表示，因此，学习汉语的外国学习者接触到的是不准确表示汉语发音的书写形式，这些书写形式会导致他们出现非目标的发音。本研究要求学习汉语的中级阶段的外国学生大声朗读包含/iou/、/uei/ 或 /uən/ 韵尾的汉字。结果显示，在汉语拼音中得不到表示的元音经常被学生遗漏，反之，在汉语拼音中得到表示的元音，学生的发音就会出现此元音。本研究的结论是，在中级、初级学习者掌握汉语音节的书写形式和发音的过程中，汉语拼音的输入会影响发音。因此汉语教师应当对汉语拼音的这一作用有所认识。