

Learning Chinese Suprasegmentals for a Better Communicative Performance

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Abstract : Chinese has become a powerful worldwide language and millions of learners are studying it all over the world. Chinese is a tone language with unique meaningful characters, which makes foreign learners master it with more difficulties. On the other hand, as each foreign language, the learners of Chinese first will learn the basic Chinese Sound Structure (the initials and finals, tones, Neutral Tone and Tone Sandhi). It's quite common that in the following studies, teachers made a lot of efforts on drilling and error correcting, in order to help students to pronounce correctly, but ignored the training of suprasegmental features (e.g. stress, intonation). This paper analysed the oral data based on our graduation students (two-year program) from 2006-2013, presents the intonation pattern of our graduates to speak Chinese as second language -high and plain with heavy accents, without lexical stress, appropriate stop endings and intonation, which led to the misunderstanding in different real contexts of communications and the international official Chinese test, e.g. HSK (Chinese Proficiency Test), HSKK (HSK Speaking Test). This paper also demonstrated how the Chinese to use the suprasegmental features strategically in different functions and moods (declarative, interrogative, imperative, exclamatory and rhetorical intonations) in order to train the learners to achieve better Communicative Performance.

Keywords : second language learning, suprasegmental, communication, HSK (Chinese Proficiency Test)

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