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学会阅读： 语音意识和阅读

Learning to Read: Phonological Awareness and Reading

邱建华 ● 著



西南交通大学出版社

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前 言

语音意识是指学生对由不同的单个音素构成的单词的理解能力,也指学生运用音素的能力。这种能力包括对单词进行单个音素的分割、组合或者改变,从而创造出新单词的能力(Chard & Dickson, 1999; Yopp, 1992)。加强对学生语音意识的培养旨在让学生逐步了解和掌握英语单词音与形之间的紧密关系,使学生由音知形,由形知音,音形转换自如。阅读能力包括解码识字的能力和阅读理解的能力。前者是后者的基础。解码识字能力包括语音解码能力和视觉解码能力。英语单词的音与形有一定的对应性,有意识地培养学习者的英语语音意识有助于其掌握拼音规则,对阅读能力的培养十分有利。语音意识和阅读能力之间关系的发现是近 30 年来读写领域最重要的发现之一(Silva & Alves-Martins, 2002)。语音意识直接影响学习者的读写能力(Blachman, 1984; Bradley & Bryant, 1983)。

语音意识在美国的广泛应用始于 20 世纪 40~50 年代在阅读领域出现的一次识字危机。由于长期采用“全语言”(也叫“整体语言”)教学,美国有 95% 的中小學生存在阅读困难,16 岁以上的学生中有 20% 不能完成基本的读写任务。这一危机影响到了大学阶段的学习(鲍承模, 1999)。进入 21 世纪,美国实施了十项教育改革措施,其中最重要的一项就是提高学生的读写能力。为了配合这项教育改革计划,美国政府还开展了“阅读第一”(Reading First)的活动。随后,语音意识的训练和培养被作为最新的研究成果在全美推广。

字母拼音教学也叫作按字母音值拼读法，或者叫作读音法，是西方国家儿童母语阅读的一种最古老、最传统的方法。教师通过直接、系统的方法，教儿童辨认字母与字母发音之间的关系。具体做法为先教儿童学会字母所代表的音值，然后逐个音地把单词尝试拼读出来 (Richards, 2000)。通过这种方法，帮助学生系统、直接地学习和掌握字母及字母组合与发音之间的关系，其实质就是将单词的发音和书写联系起来，将抽象的音素转换成字母及单词，从而提高学生认读单词和阅读的能力。近年来，字母拼音教学不仅在美国得以推广，而且在以英语为母语和第一语言的国家，如英国、加拿大、澳大利亚等，都重新受到重视 (胡庆芳, 2001)。通过字母拼音教学，训练和培养学生的语音意识，加强儿童的基本读写能力，已经成为英语教学中不可或缺的一个组成部分。

整体语言教学也叫“全语言教学”“全语文教学”或“完整语言教学”，强调学习的重点是真实的言语及语篇的意义，语言知识和技能应自然地习得和培养，而不应人为地把语言知识和技能分割开来孤立地进行学习。在整体语言教学中，语音、单词和语法都是通过上下文分散学习，不进行直接和系统的学习。课堂教学大量选题材广泛、程度不一的英语原著作为教材，尽量少用或不用简写读物。广泛采用合作教学，培养学生的独立学习能力和合作精神。

整体语言的教学理念对我国的英语教学也产生了很大影响。20 世纪 90 年代以来，交际教学法统领中小学英语教学。2000 年，国家教育部颁发了《英语课程标准 (实验稿)》，大力提倡任务型教学法。这些教学法的推广和应用，是对传统英语教学法的一次

革新,英语教学从原来只重视读写能力的培养,转向提高学生听、说、读、写综合能力,这对提高学生的语言运用能力,培养他们的综合素质起到了非常积极的作用。但是,以交际法为主的英语课堂教学,语音教学分散,不重视语音知识的系统传授,新的问题随之暴露出来。很多学生在单词认读和拼写方面出现的问题屡见不鲜。研究证明,语音表征对我国学生的取词有很大影响,学生的拼写错误不仅和不正确的发音有关,而且和词形知识的储存有很大关系(何安平,2001;肖旭月,2001;王雪文、孙蓝,2004)。语音问题不仅在中学生中普遍存在,而且也影响到了学生在大学期间英语水平的进一步提高(罗立胜、张菜湘,2002)。这些问题促使我们在课堂教学中,采取一定的教学措施,加强对学生语音意识和字母知识一体化的训练,从而为培养学生的阅读能力奠定良好的基础。

本书分析了国内外学习者在英语学习中存在的读写问题,系统阐述了语音意识、字母拼音教学、阅读能力以及它们之间的关系;回顾并进行了语音意识和阅读能力之间关系的实验研究。最后,本书对在课堂教学中如何进行字母知识以及字母知识和语音意识一体化的训练,培养学生的语音意识进行了论述。

由于本书涵盖内容较多,加之编者水平所限,难免存在诸多不当和疏漏之处,敬请同行和专家及各位读者批评指正。

编 者

2014 年 12 月

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PART I

INTRODUCTION

Chapter 1

Teaching and Literacy Problems

Abroad and at Home

Reading is the most important academic skill and the foundation for all academic learning. If our children cannot read, they are on the road to academic failure. Teaching children to read must be our highest priority.

—California Task Force on Reading, Every Child a Reader

1.1 Some Problems in English Teaching in Middle Schools in China

In modern society, reading is one of the basic skills for everyone to get success in any field. How to teach students to read well has been one of the controversial issues in the field of English teaching, and it is not an easy job for us English teachers to do. One of the reasons is that English teaching is always affected by different teaching approaches and English teachers are often

confused about what method will be used.

Before 1980s, traditional approach dominated English teaching in China, which attached great importance to knowledge and rules about language, but neglected other functions of language and neglected developing students' abilities in using it. Since 1980s, the communicative approach has come to influence English teaching greatly, and many teachers have come to realize that English should be taught as a kind of tool for communication. In English class, all four skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing should be trained and paid much attention to, among which the skills of listening and speaking have been given special attention to.

Therefore, the teaching concept of whole language approach has become very popular, which stresses that language should be presented as a whole but not as isolated pieces; teachers should attempt to teach language in a real context and situation; all four modes of language are used, thus lessons include all four skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing, rather than a single skill (Richards, 2000). One of the central beliefs is that language should be learned from "whole to part" with word-recognition skills being picked up by children in the context of actual reading, writing and "immersion" in a print-rich classroom, which means that we don't need to teach students systematic knowledge about grammar and pronunciation. The concept of whole language has been widely spread and accepted by many of middle school teachers in China.

Admittedly, since we began to carry out the opening and reforming policy, environments for us to learn English have been greatly improved in China. Students learn English not only from teachers but also from

other media such as radios, records, TV and Internet. They attend kinds of supplementary classes after school to improve English. Furthermore, they can have direct talk with foreigners. We must admit that we have already made great progress in teaching and learning English, because English has become so popular and Chinese students are no longer so deaf-dump in using English as it used to be years ago. Many Chinese students now can speak very fluent and idiomatic English. However, it cannot be neglected that with the acceptance of whole language approach, new problems in English literacy have appeared.

Firstly, it is investigated that spelling errors are quite serious, which brings about so bad results that many students cannot get good scores in some important examinations such as the exam from Junior School to Senior School, or the entrance examination to College (许有国, 2000). The research indicates that 52.7% to 53.5% of the errors are greatly related to students' incorrect pronunciation, 38% of which appeared in the words, which end with the consonant letters. These errors can be divided into the following five types (肖旭月, 2001; 何安平, 2001).

1) Related to the mistake of final consonant of a word. For example, caught—cough; offend—offen; hello—hellow; although—althought; flag—flat; front—frond, etc.

2) Related to the mistake of double writing of consonants in a word, such as difficult—dificult; impossible—imposible; untill—until; mirror—miror; terrible—terible; satellite—satelite; suddenly—sudenly; million—milion, etc.

3) Related to the mistake of the continuous reading of consonants.

For example,

(1) C+l: flag—fag; explained—expained; puzzled—puzzed.

(2) C+r: cross—coss; across—aross; regret—regeret; drove—dove; surprise—surprise.

(3) n+C: wonderful—woderful; offender—offeder.

(4) Others: against—againt; instead—intead; remember—remeber; surprised—surpride; smiled—similed; crossroads—crossroades.

Except the phonetic factor, 38.5% of spelling errors is caused by the another factor that Chinese students do not know or sometimes misuse the grapheme-phoneme rules in English (何安平, 2001). As we all know, there exist a certain alphabetic principles in English. Each letter or letter combination stands for a certain sound. However, the sound of the letter or the letter combination often changes. That is to say the relation between the sounds and graphemes is single but multiple. For example, the sound /i:/ can be pronounced at least in 11 different ways: *fee*, *me*, *machine*, *sea*, *field*, *conceives*, *key*, *quay*, *people*, *subpoena*, *Caesar*. It has the same conditions that the same grapheme has different sounds in different words. For example, *game* /ei/, *cat* /æ/, *what* /ɒ/, *American* /ə/. Therefore, the writing principles in English are not easy to master. When writing, students may overuse the spelling rules so that some spelling errors happen. For example, *factor*—*facter*; *instead*—*insted*; *peasant*—*pesant*; *phone*—*foan*; *kite*—*cite*; *what*—*wat*; *right*—*rite*, etc.

Secondly, many students cannot read a word according to English orthography or English notation. If they learn some new

words or phrases, teachers must teach them. Without teachers' help, they do not know how to read a word or even a regular word. Because most of them do not know there are certain mappings between the sounds and printed forms of words.

And finally, when they remember words, they cannot use the grapheme-phoneme rules but just remember them by repeating mechanically. For the lack of phonemic awareness, students' reading comprehension will be influenced in some degree.

1.2 Literacy Crisis and Reading Activity in the USA

Actually, these kinds of problems in literacy have also been quite serious in the USA since whole language approach was adopted widely, which is called "literacy crisis" by some American educators. Statistics shows that 95% of American students have difficulty in learning to read. Another 20% to 30% of American students learn to read at ease once exposed to formal instruction. That leaves 60% for whom learning to read is a major problem. As many as 20% of Americans above the age of sixteen are classified as functionally illiterate—unable to use print to perform essential tasks—and the ranks are growing every year (Levine, 1994). It was described in an article named "Why California Kids Can't Read?" that Rebecca, a second-grader, wrote a page, in which there were many spelling mistakes. For example, seed is written "sd", and smile is written "sinil". When you read this page, you cannot determine where sentences end, since the student had not been

taught punctuation. For example, the sentence "I go to my class." is written as "I got gum calls." Without the student's help, you could not finish reading the page.

It is reported that the crisis in literacy also influences students' reading. Many students in the USA can just derive the surface understanding, but pay no attention to details of what they read. Without detailed information, it's impossible for them to gain a real understanding of what the author is saying (Singal, 1991).

As one might expect, students who do not read at an advanced level can't write well either. The average incoming Harvard student has a "utilitarian command of language" resulting in sentences that follow a simple subject-predicate format with little variation or richness of verbal expression. Students' essays in college are often composed without the slightest sense of paragraphing, and writing that can't sustain a thought for more than half a page.

The sharp decline in test scores is another apparent problem, which troubles Americans. For example, the Stanford Achievement Test, which has been served as one of the main instruments for measuring pupil's progress in American school, and the Scholastic Aptitude Test, which retains its well-deserved status as the most important educational measuring device in America, both have gone down greatly.

Evidence is mounting that whole language approach may not be all that effective, and that its underlying premises may simply be false. In the USA, educators and parents have attacked many school districts that have used the whole-language method for a subsequent