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The Chinese Accent 1 中国人的英语口语: 单音篇

Wang Fei: 大家好, 欢迎收听 Question and Answer of the Week 《你问我答》节目。我是王飞。今天我们要回答一个很多中国听众都很关心的问题: 中国人的英语口语。Now let's hear the question from Clare.

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Chinese learners of English are more likely to speak English with a Chinese accent. I would like to find out what these specific syllables are, and what I should pay attention to when speaking?

Wang Fei: Clare 想知道我们中国人说英语的时候那些音容易出错呢? 中国的英语学习者应该在口语的哪些方面下功夫呢? In order to answer this question, I've invited a colleague who has lived and worked in China. Now let's welcome Alice.

Alice: Hi everyone. My name's Alice Castle. I work for BBC Learning English but I lived and worked in China on and off for about two years. 我爱中国。I love China!

Wang Fei: I love China too. Alice 在中国前前后后生活了两年。所以非常了解我们今天的话题。So Alice, which sound do you think is most difficult for Chinese learners to pronounce?

Alice: Well, I've noticed that some people have problems with the sounds /θ/ and /ð/, as in "three" and "they".

Wang Fei: Hmm, so how do they usually pronounce them then?

Alice: "Three" becomes "sree" and "they" becomes "zay".

Wang Fei: Alice, the thing is that if a learner reads them incorrectly, he or she might not be able to hear the difference either. So what's the key to pronounce them well?

Alice: Well, try this exercise. You have to try to put the tip of your tongue between your teeth. So there's /θ/ and /ð/. I think the second one is harder.

Wang Fei: Yes! 发 /θ/ 和 /ð/ 的时候, 要把舌尖放在上下牙齿之间, 很多中国人发不好这两个音, 是因为他们没有把舌尖放在上下牙齿之间。

Alice: These three brothers threw their things.

Wang Fei: These three brothers threw their things.

Alice: So, there are other sounds that some Chinese people find difficult to pronounce. Let's hear from Liz Chiu. She's an English tutor at the Humanities Department of Imperial College in London.

Wang Fei: 下面的采访来自 Liz Chiu, 她是伦敦帝国理工大学人文学院的学术英语教师。她发现她的很多的中国学生有一个音发不准。是什么呢? 我们一起听一听?

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We have got two Is, we've got the I at the beginning of a word and the I at the end of a word, so if you listen to a word like 'little' you've got two different Is there. The first I is quite easy to say but the last one usually causes difficulties. So instead of 'little' we have 'litto' – like a vowel instead of an 'l', which is the consonant l. If you then put the word into a sentence, something like "all I know" it becomes "or I know" and that is quite difficult for English speakers to understand.

Alice: She found out that if a word ends with an /l/, it's more difficult to pronounce. So 'little' becomes 'litto', 'all' becomes 'or'.

Wang Fei: Yes. That's true. 我感觉中国学生十之八九都发不好这个音, 这是因为我们汉语中没有以 /l/ 结尾的发音。同时我们也很难听出 little 和 litto, all and or 的区别。

Alice: But for British people "all" and "or" are too different words, aren't they? So the key to pronounce the ending l – an l at the end of a word – is to raise the end of your tongue to touch the place where your front teeth meet your gums. /l/

Wang Fei: 要想发好结尾是 /l/ 的音, 你就必须在发音结束的时候, 让你的舌尖轻触到口腔上腭靠近上牙齿根的地方, 如果没有接触上, 那你就肯定没有发好这个音。

Alice: All the little girls called me into the hall.

Wang Fei: All the little girls called me into the hall. 如果你发不好 /l/ 这个音, 那就试着练习这个句子。记着要让舌尖接触到口腔的上腭。

Alice: Let's hear from Liz again and see what other sounds Chinese learners might find a bit difficult.

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One lesson that I have to give again and again is for the sound /v/, the v as opposed to the w. I'm not sure why there's such a confusion. So it's important to make sure that, to make a /v/ whenever you have a v in the spelling, you need a /v/ sound and if your teeth don't touch your lips and vibrate you're not getting a v sound.



- Wang Fei:** Liz 说她不得不一遍又一遍地教她的中国学生如何读 /v/ 这个音。因为学生总是被这个读音所困扰。
- Alice:** Hmm. Some people I've met pronounce /v/ as /w/. For example, instead of 'invite' they might say 'inwite'.
- Wang Fei:** Alice, that's because in Chinese pronunciation we don't have the /v/ sound. We only have a /w/ sound. 所以很多中国人就听不出来 /w/ 和/v/ 的区别。所以也就读不出来了。那怎么才能发好 /v/ 这个音呢？
- Alice:** Liz told us a very good skill to pronounce it well. Whenever you need a /v/ sound, make sure that your two front teeth touch your lower lip and actually vibrate. /v/...
- Wang Fei:** /v/...
- Alice:** Very nice.
- Wang Fei:** 看来发好这个音的关键是你的上牙齿要咬到你的下嘴唇，然后发出颤音。/v/
- Alice:** The girl in white invited me to watch a video.
- Wang Fei:** The girl in white invited me to watch a video.
- Alice:** Perfect.
- Wang Fei:** Welcome back. 刚才我们说了一些中国人最容易出错的一些辅音。下面我们来谈一谈元音。
- Alice:** I noticed one vowel sound that some Chinese learners find difficult to pronounce. For example, some people read 'like' as 'lack'.
- Wang Fei:** Like not lack. 其实，我们汉语中有一个音和 /ai/ 很接近，就是“爱”这个音。但是“爱”很短没有多大变化，而英文中的 /ai/ 是一个比较长并且有变化的音，包括了 /a/ 和 /i/ 两个音。
- Alice:** I like riding my bike at night.
- Wang Fei:** I like riding my bike at night. 这个练习可以让你读好 /ai/ 这个音。
- Alice:** Now let's listen to Jim Hitch, an experienced English teacher in London.

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Chinese doesn't have as many vowel sounds as English does. And this is also true interestingly with Spanish as well. So for example, we have different sounds in the sounds been and bin. So, in other words, I have been to see the football match and I put the paper into the bin. Now many Spanish and Chinese would find it difficult to hear the difference between been and bin.



- Alice:** Jim thinks one of the reasons that Chinese people find it difficult to pronounce English vowels correctly is that Chinese doesn't have as many vowel sounds as English has.
- Wang Fei:** 对。汉语中比英语中的元音要少。
- Alice:** He gave an example of been, b-e-e-n and bin, b-i-n. One is long /i:/ sound, been, and the other is short /i/ sound, bin.
- Wang Fei:** 一个长音 been, 一个短音 bin. 由于汉语中没有长音和短音的区别, 所以很多中国人就会觉得很难分清长音和短音。
- Alice:** And another example with a long vowel, the difference between fool and full.
- Wang Fei:** Fool 傻子; full 满的, 如果读不准的话, 就会让听者产生歧义了。
- Alice:** That fool put the beans into the full bin.
- Wang Fei:** That fool put the beans into the full bin. 这句话里有 /u:/ 也有 /u/, 有 /i:/ 也有 /i/. 你可以重复这句话来练习长音和短音。
- Alice:** And of course, there are many other sounds that Chinese learners might find difficult to pronounce. We've just looked at some of them today.
- Wang Fei:** 我们在今天的节目中讲了一部分中国人比较容易发错的音, 是不是把所有的音都发对了, 就没有了中国口音呢?
- Alice:** This is an interesting topic, so let's hear from Liz again to hear about a problem she's found when Chinese learners try to master English pronunciation.

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So I teach them the sound and I find they can say it perfectly. Just one sound. Put the sound into words, suddenly that sound starts to move a little bit. Put the words into sentences and it can go anywhere. So, it's about trying to control the sound.

- Alice:** She said her students can say each individual sound perfectly, but if the sound is put into words, the sound starts to move a little bit; their pronunciation of the sound isn't as good.
- Wang Fei:** 很多中国学生可以把每个音发得很好, 但是放到单词里就走音了。
- Alice:** And she said that if the word is put into sentences, it can go anywhere; it changes again.
- Wang Fei:** 然后把单词放到句子里的话, 发音就乱七八糟、找不到方向了。
- Alice:** So the important thing when practising English pronunciation is to try and control the sound.

Wang Fei: Control the sound. 控制发音。练习英语发音的重要一点就是如何在单词和句子中控制好你的发音。我们在下期节目中还会邀请专家和大家谈一谈如何在单词和句子中控制好你的英语发音。

Alice: I hope to see you next time. Bye for now.

Wang Fei: Bye bye.

