

Exploring Some Pronunciations in English and Chinese Words and Phrases that may Cause the Learning of EFL in Chinese Universities' First Year Students more Difficult

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Abstract This research was carried out at Hanjiang Normal University in the department of Foreign Language studies using the first year students of English major as the research target. These students graduated from different high schools where English language is more or less taken as a compulsory subject under foreign languages policy from Chinese primary to high school levels. The students' English spoken is not too bad but the way some words and phrases are pronounced leaves a lot to be desired. The main causes among them is the influence of Chinese language as a mother tongue. The two classes who participated in this research comprised of 35 students in each class. The two classes has been in this research regarded as Class 2023 A and Class 2023 B for the second class. Class 2023 A had 27 girls and 8 boys while class 2023 B had 30 girls and 5 boys. The results shows that most students found out that lack of English Foreign teachers was the biggest reason for their pronunciation problems. Another reason was that most if there were any English Foreign teachers in their schools it was either the teacher could not speak little Chinese in order to make comparative lessons of some English and Chinese words and phrases that sounds difficult to cope up with. The importance of engaging Chinese English or English Chinese bi-lingual teachers has been found in this research as one of the effective teaching model for an English teacher in China.

Keywords Exploring, Similar, English, Chinese, Pronunciation

1. Introduction

Because of the great influence caused by language variances and similarities in the construction of a word, sentence and grammar pattern of many languages of the world, some English and Chinese words and phrases are not an exception in this study. Some English and Chinese words and phrases have certain similarities in their pronunciation which ultimately gives more challenges in the learning of English language by Chinese students especially those who struggle to see differences in some letters in the English alphabet from some letters in the Chinese alphabet. This study is going to literally refer to both the English and Chinese alphabet to show some letters that are usually misused or wrongly used by Chinese English students in their pronunciation.

The researcher will also use some reliable English and Chinese dictionaries in order to prove how difficult it is for the Chinese students in their quest to learn English as a Second Language. The dictionaries will show the word's pronunciation and its meaning. The critical part of this

research is however shown in the 5th chapter where I have revealed strategies so as to overcome the difficulties mentioned in this research. Some of the teaching strategies discussed were the thorough learning of English and Chinese alphabet differences. The research will in the next chapter show the differences of the English and Chinese alphabet and a few of the many English and Chinese words and phrases which are pronounced similarly but with different meanings that usually ends up in them to have different contextual implications and different expressions.

2. Research Background

Some results found from some Chinese students learning English according to the in-class survey and some response which were found from a few students who answered some questionnaires sent to them revealed that there are so many English and Chinese words and phrases that they found to be very difficult to deal with when learning English. The most difficult part mentioned was from the differences in the English and Chinese alphabet. Most of the students claimed that they didn't do a lot of learning of basic English vocabulary during their kindergarten time where they spend much time learning basic Chinese vocabulary and alphabet. Now that Chinese primary schools and kindergarten have

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recently adopted the non English lessons policy that forbids kindergartens and the first two grades in primary school from learning English until they are in grade 3 remains a challenge to many Chinese kids who may not have an exposure to early childhood learning of foreign languages. As Liu Zhiliang and Chen Guanying (2009) says, the younger the better for kids the easier it is for them to learn any foreign language. Wei M (2006) acknowledges that English pronunciation is neglected in the teaching of English as a Foreign Language and he assumes that this is very visible in most Asian countries because of the unavailability and lack of teaching strategies and techniques in the classrooms. My observation and argument is that the lack of the teaching of English pronunciation in Asian classrooms is due to the lack of literature related to the different languages in Asia that teaches local language pronunciations in comparison to English pronunciations as the target language.

Table 2.1. Words with similar pronunciation

	Chinese Word	English word
1	树 (shù) tree	Shoe
2	是 (shì) (is/are/am/yes/to be)	She
3	密 (mì)(secret/confidential/close/Thick/dense	Me
4	育(yù)(to have children/to raise or bring up/to educate)	You
5	焖 (mèn) (to cook in a covered vessel/to casserole/to stew)	Men
6	饭 (fàn)(cooked rice/meal or devotee)	Fun
7	逆 (nì) (contrary/opposite/to go against/backwards/to oppose/to betray/to rebel)	Knee
8	四 (sì) (4/four)	Sea
9	爱 (ài) (love /to love	Eye
10	吐 (tǔ) (vomit/to vomit)	Too
11	带 (dài) (Carry or to carry)	Dye
12	配 (pèi) (to join/ to fit/to mix/to match/to deserve/to allocate or to make up a prescription)	Pay
13	度 (dù) (to pass/to spend(time)/measure/kilowatt- hour/limit/degree of intensity/Degree (angles, temperature)/classifier for events and occurrences	Do
14	闭(bì) (to close/to stop up/to shut/to obstruct).	Bee
15	聘(pìn) (to engage(a teacher etc)/to hire/to betroth/betrothal gift/to get married (woman	Pin
16	屁(pì) (fart/flatulence/Nonsense /usually in the negative for(what) / a damn thing(not).	Pea
17	妹 (mèi) (younger sister/sister)	May
18	害 (hài) (to do harm to/ to cause trouble to/harm/evil/calamity).	High
19	概 (gài) (general/approximate/general idea).	Guy
20	俊 (jùn) for (smart/eminent/	June

	handsome/talented)	
21	类(lèi) means (kind/type/class/similar/like/ resemble)	Lay
22	赖 (lài) Is Chinese word that means (to depend on/to hang on in a place/bad/to renege (on promise)/to disclaim/to rat (on debt)/rascally/to blame/to put the blame on)	Lie
23	太 (tài) Degree adverb (too much/very/extremely)	Tie
24	外 (wài) Noun (outside/exterior /foreign/ in addition/external).	Why

A simple example is the pronunciation of the translation of the English word “tree”.

(1) In Chinese the English word for “tree” is called 树(shù).

This Chinese word for “tree” is pronounced as “shù” which is similarly pronounced the same as English word “shoe”. Chinese students in primary school after hearing the English word “shoe” if it’s not shown alongside a picture of a tree they may end up thinking about many things which are pronounced in Chinese as “shù” such as a tree.

The complications becomes more serious after realizing that in Chinese the same pronunciation for the English word “shoe” has more than a dozen of different Chinese words with different meanings but pronounced the same. Some few examples of this is shown with the following words that carries similar pronunciation with the English word “shoe”

1. 数 (shù) (n)which means number, figure or amount.
2. 术 (shù) (n)which means art, technique, method or tactic.
3. 述 (shù) (v)which means to state, narrate or to relate.
4. 束 (shù) (v) which means to bind or to restrain.
5. 竖 (shù) (adj) meaning vertical, upright or perpendicular.
6. 俞 (shù) (n) meaning acupuncture point(Chinese medicine)
7. 恕 (shù) (n)means consideration for others
8. 戍 (shù) (v)means to defend, garrison
9. 漱 (shù) (v) means to rinse(the mouth) or to gargle.

The above Chinese words are all pronounced the same but have different meanings. When Chinese students in primary school learn English they usually find it difficult to quickly know their differences to the English word “shoe” when used without its pictograph. This research observed a lot of English words and phrases that are similarly pronounced the same in Chinese but having different meanings however only 24 have been discussed in this research. I will briefly state the English words and show their comparative Chinese words and phrases with same pronunciation and how it affects the Chinese students learning English.

(2) The Chinese word 是 (shì) is usually mistaken for the English word “she” the pronoun for females. These two words are pronounced similarly but their meanings are totally different. The Chinese meaning for (shì) means (is/are/am/yes/to be). There are also more words in Chinese pronounced the same as (shì) with different meanings from the “shǐ” (is/are/am/yes/to be) word which therefore gives more headache for the Chinese students to understand the

difference from the English pronoun "she" when its pronounced and taught without showing it in its photographic form.

(3) Chinese word 密 (mì) which in Chinese means

(secret/confidential/close/thick/dense) is wrongly placed or taken by Chinese students for the English pronoun "me" in its similar pronunciation with the Chinese word (mì) which also has a lot of other different meanings apart from the above given meanings.

(4) Another Chinese word is 育 (yù) which in Chinese means (to have children/to raise or bring up/to educate) but is usually mistaken for the English pronoun "you" because of their similar pronunciation. In Chinese there are also other (yù) which has different characters and different meanings but still pronounced the same. For example there is another 预 (yù) which means (to advance/in advance/beforehand/to prepare) and yet the pronunciation is just the same to of the one previously mentioned. All these (yù) in Chinese language vocabulary gives Chinese students hard time when learning English pronoun "you". There is a funny misunderstanding that appears in the movie "Rush hour" by Chinese actor Jack Chan and an American actor Chris Tucker when Chris Tucker asked a Chinese martial art master and said, "What's your name?" and the martial art master answered and said, "My name is 预 (yù). The American actor was furious at hearing this because he thought the martial art master was referring to the English pronoun "You". One can imagine the embarrassment after realizing the truth which was mistaken to due to the complexity of the English and Chinese language similarities in word pronunciation but with different meanings.

(5) Another word is Chinese 焖 (mèn) which in Chinese means (to cook in a covered vessel/to casserole/to stew) but usually mistaken by Chinese students for the English noun(men) the plural for (man) male adult person/people. If a Chinese student has not undergone English for beginners it will be very hard to separate the Chinese word meaning which is pronounced the same with an English word such as the examples given in this research findings.

Most of the words that are encountered in English that have similar pronunciation in Chinese shows that learning English by Chinese students is not only comprised of different pronunciation between English and Chinese words. There are so many words in English that have similar pronunciation but produces different meanings. Even though according to Fuying B (2013) the transfer of native sound system contributes the major reasons for foreign language pronunciation errors but in this research some words in Chinese and English have similar pronunciation but have different meanings. The problem of having different meanings in some of the English and Chinese words and phrases with similar pronunciation is one of the greatest problems faced by Chinese students who have not effectively covered the English beginners level. The following is another Chinese word which has similar pronunciation with an English word but produces different meaning.

(6) 饭 (fàn) which when the English word "fun" is mentioned it is not a big deal with Chinese students in pronunciation at face value Upon hearing the English word "fun" most Chinese students may think it refers to the Chinese (fan) which is mentioned above but has a different meaning. The Chinese word (fàn) mentioned above means (cooked rice/meal or devotee). A simple example English sentence that may end up being misunderstood when using the English word "fun" is; "Did you have fun?" The first general meaning of it from a Chinese student who may not know the English meaning of "fun" may think it means "Did you have a meal". This is one of the effects found in some similar pronunciation of English and Chinese words. This is also attributed by the fact that young Chinese people these days usually mix Chinese and English when speaking.

(7) Chinese word 逆 (nì) is another problem for the Chinese students. The word means (contrary/opposite/to go against/ backwards/to oppose/to betray/to rebel). Many Chinese face some problems when they hear the English word "knee" because it is pronounced similarly with the above mentioned Chinese word (nì) though the meanings are different. A Chinese student who doesn't know the meaning of the English word "knee" may quickly get confused with the Chinese word (nì) which is pronounced similarly. The above Chinese word (ni) mentioned above has 7 different meanings but same character therefore each different Chinese student who doesn't know the meaning of (knee) may each have 7 different meanings of the English word and all because of how these two Chinese and English words (nì) and (knee) pronounced. I will show some of the similar challenges faced by the Chinese students learning English after meeting Chinese and English words with similar pronunciation.

3. Effect of Similar word Pronunciation

The effects caused by the similarities in pronunciation of English and Chinese words and phrases has an enormous impact in the learning of English by Chinese students in the beginners' classes. The greatest negative impact is shown through the way students express themselves after hearing some English words that are pronounced the same with certain Chinese words. Usually the responds from most of the Chinese students who haven't got the basics of English for beginners level produce wrong implications totally different from the correct meaning of the word. When the students face words they don't know their meanings usually it ends up in the wrong usage of the word. In this case because the English word is pronounced the same as a Chinese word most students start thinking from their native language system resulting in the lost of the intended meaning. One of the examples is when the Chinese students meet one of the English word such as "sea". In Chinese there are actually many words that are pronounced the same with the English word (sea) but have a total different meaning. One example is the Chinese word.

(8) 四 (sì) which means (4/four) but equally pronounced the same as the English word (sea). When some Chinese students hear an English sentence such as; "Big sea" they may think of it in Chinese as if it means "Big four". This ends up in students to have different implication of a context due to the different meaning produced by the same pronunciation of different English and Chinese word. This effect is mainly caused by the influence of the mother tongue which usually comes first in one's mind when one hears of a word from a foreign language which is pronounced the same in their own language but carries different spellings and meanings. This effect may also apply to English students learning Chinese for their first time. General thought is that both English students learning Chinese language and Chinese students learning English face similar challenges in this regard though I personally think English students may face more difficulties because of Chinese language's complexity. Unlike in English language Chinese language one word may have too many different meanings whilst in English one word may usually have not more than two meanings therefore after learning Chinese phonetics the English students may still need to master a lot of more Chinese words with similar pronunciation and similar (pinyin) but have different meanings. The other strangest different implications driven by English and Chinese words which have similar pronunciations are also as a result of Chinese dialects which many times produces different implications when pronouncing some other Chinese words.

3.1. Different Implications

Some Chinese from South Chinese province usually pronounce the Chinese (third tone) as the (fourth tone). For example the Chinese word for (die/dying/death) is

死 (sǐ) but usually pronounced as 四 (sì) by most of the Chinese in China's Southern provinces. This is why most of the Chinese people do not like to associate with number (4). Imagine the implication that can arise from saying to a Chinese person "You see". Some Chinese students or Chinese people may misunderstand it for "You are dead". Imagine the worse scenario again if the Chinese student's name is called 预 (yù). The end result of the implication will surely be too personal. Some different implications of similar pronunciation of some English and Chinese words have serious consequences if said to people with short tempers. For example in Chinese the word for (love or to love) is;

(9) 爱 (ài) which is equally pronounced the same as the English word "eye". Imagine if someone of the opposite sex and a foreigner for that matter says to a Chinese "My eye". If the Chinese person does not know the meaning of the English word "eye" may quickly think he/she is referring to (love) and by saying so it may imply to say "My love". This kind of misunderstanding is only brought about by lack of basic word knowledge combined with the influence of the mother tongue which usually appears to close the gap of the unknown foreign word. Young Chinese people these days are mostly used to mix with Chinese or Chinese and English

when speaking and this usually happens when they miss the meaning of the English word. The result of doing this therefore produces the miss-implication of a content or context.

3.2. Different Expressions

Most of Chinese verbs are reflected with of by expressions. Due to the effects caused by similar pronunciation of some of English and Chinese words and because of the reason that most young Chinese students usually mix English and Chinese some meanings therefore produces wrong or different expressions of some content or context. Some examples in this matter are as follows;

(10) 吐 (tǔ) which means to (vomit). The English word equivalent in pronunciation to this Chinese word is the degree adverb "too". Some Chinese students who may not know the meaning of the English word (too) may take it for the Chinese word pronounced the same with it such as (tù) which means to vomit. Imagine if a Chinese student may hear an English sentence such as "You too". The Chinese students may think you are saying (You vomited or you are vomiting). Imagine the expression of it. Obviously the expression will be such of a disgusted person.

(11) 带 (dài) which means "Carry or to carry". In English there is also a verb and a noun word pronounced the same as the Chinese word (dài) which is "dye". An English sentence such as "Dye your head" may have wrong expressions from a Chinese student who do not know the meaning of the English word (dye) or may know the English word (die) which is however pronounced the same as (dye) but have different meanings. Chinese students may quickly think in their mother tongue and end up thinking the sentence means (Carry your head) which may not actually have any sensible meaning. This may be taken as a mockery implying to say (take your brains with you).

(12) 配 (pèi) This is Chinese noun and adverb but mostly used as a verb which has various meanings such as ;(to join/ to fit/ to mix/ to match/ to deserve/ to allocate or to make up a prescription). A similar English word pronounced the same as this is "Pay". Different or a disturbing expression may be produced by some Chinese students when they hear an English sentence like (Pay the drink). Because of the influence of the Chinese language some Chinese students may think you are saying (mix the drink). It is very easy for an English speaking person or an English teacher to be misunderstood by Chinese people and Chinese students learning English or those who have learned English before but have not mastered the basics of English language such as word meaning. I wish that the readers of this research will benefit a lot from the recommendations that will be given in the following chapters for the better understanding of these two great languages as far as learning of English by Chinese students is concerned.

3.3. Different Meanings

As been alluded previously that some English and Chinese words have similar pronunciation but all of them have

different meanings. In this survey is going to show the different meanings of the remaining words that were encountered during this research regardless of their implications or how Chinese students may express themselves after hearing them but just their different meanings is this research's justification on how some English and Chinese words which have similar pronunciation are a hindrance to the easy learning of English language by Chinese students. It is from this section that the reader may master a few Chinese words that have similar pronunciation with some English words so as to know how to deal with them in the process of learning English.

(13) 度 (dù) for (to pass/to spend(time) / measure / kilowatt- hour/limit/degree of intensity/degree (angles, temperature) / classifier for events and occurrences. This (du) is mistaken for the English word (do)

(14) 闭 (bì) means (to close/to stop up/to shut/to obstruct). This (bi) is also misunderstood for the English word (bee)

(15) 聘 (pìn) means (to engage(a teacher etc)/to hire/to betroth/ betrothal gift/to get married(woman). This (pin) may be taken for the English word (pin) which can be a needle or peg.

(16) 屁 (pì) means (fart/flatulence/nonsense/usually in the negative for (what)/ a damn thing(not). This word is also mistaken for the English word (pea) a bean.

(17) 妹 (mèi) This Chinese word means (younger sister/sister) while in English a similar word pronounced similarly to it is (May) the fifth month of the year.

(18) 害 (hài) Is a Chinese word that means (to do harm to/ to cause trouble to/harm/evil/calamity).In English a similar word pronounced the same like it is (high).

(19) 概 (gài) means (general/approximate/general idea). In English a word with similar pronunciation is (guy).

(20) 俊 (jùn) for (smart/eminent/handsome/talented). The pronunciation of this word may have a little difference with the English word with similar pronunciation such as (June) the sixth month of the year. The little difference is the pronunciation of (j) because of the way (j) is pronounced in the Chinese alphabet but the ultimate pronunciation of the English word is equally the same with the Chinese word (jun).

(21) 类 (lèi) means (kind/type/class/similar/like/ resemble) while its equivalent English word with same pronunciation is (lay) which means put/reveal/spread/place/put etc.

(22) 赖 (lài) Is Chinese word that means (to depend on/to hang on in a place/bad/to renege(on promise)/to disclaim/to rat (on debt)/rascally/to blame/to put the blame on).A similar English word in pronunciation to it is (lie) to recline or another meaning as to (tell a lie).

(23) 太 (tài) A Chinese degree adverb which means (too much/very/extremely). The similar English word with same pronunciation is (tie) which means to fasten or to bind.

(24) 外 (wài) Is a Chinese noun word which means (outside/exterior/foreign/ in addition/external). When Chinese students hear an English word such as (why) they may think it is the same word as the Chinese word (wài). The cause being the influence of the mother tongue (Chinese language).

All the words stated in this section are just an example of the many Chinese words which have similar pronunciation with some English words but carries different meanings.





4. Causes of the Effects

There has always been an interest in learning of foreign languages by people of different countries for the benefit of inter-communication when people travel, do international business or studying abroad. The more development of the Western countries drove many people only to learn Western foreign languages. The sudden fast development of China's economy these recent years have made many people of the world and governments to promote the learning of Chinese language. Learning Chinese has been described by many scholars of linguistics such as Zhan Hong and Hsiu-Jen Cheng (2014) as one of the most difficult language to learn due to the obstacle caused by the Chinese Characters and pedagogical factors especially the changing of meanings due to any change of a tone. The scholars also mention how the compound characters that includes phonetic component radicals which do not often times sound the same as the phonetic radicals.

4.1. Influence of the mother tongue

Chinese language is a pictorial language which is composed of characters that can be simplified with pinyin which is used for word pronunciation. There are mainly 4 tones in Chinese language. The fifth tone is a neutral tone. Each tone produces a different meaning of a Chinese word. It is very usual that one Chinese word may have four different tones therefore resulting in four different meanings. The following is one simple example of a Chinese word;

Table 4.1

Chinese four tones chart			
—	/	V	\
Ahhh...	What?	Well...	No!
			

- (1) 妈(mā) Stands for (ma/mum/mummy/mother)
- (2) 吗(má) Is a pronoun colloquial for (what)
- (3) 马(mǎ) Means (horse/the horse in Chinese chess)
- (4) 骂(mà) Is (verbally abuse/curse/swear/call names)
- (5) 么(ma) An auxiliary put(at the end of a question)

The wrong use of a Chinese tone results in having a different meaning that may eventually produce wrong

implication and expressions. These tones affect many Chinese students when learning English especially spoken English. Anyone who wishes to teach English to Chinese students should surely know some basic Chinese words and their meanings so that it may help to explicitly overcome the influence of the mother tongue in the learning of English due to the various word pronunciation similarities in both English and Chinese word formulation regardless of different meanings produced in English and Chinese similar pronounced words. In my view I think its very critical to pay attention to the influence of Chinese language when learning English locally because of the great similarities in some English and Chinese words and phrases. It will be greatly embarrassing and a dangerous situation if a Chinese person might happen to travel to the USA and doesn't speak English well and may use the commonly used phrase 那个 (nà ge) which can also easily be pronounced as (ne ga/ ni ga) meaning (that one). If an African American hears this from a Chinese person may end up in some serious reactions because to them is mockery of a black American history.

4.2. Lack of Emphasis on Teaching Word Pronunciation

In the recent years China has witnessed a lot of foreign experts coming to teach English in China. Most of the experts in this field unfortunately do not possess Chinese proficiency to make it easier to overcome the challenges faced by Chinese students learning English when they face words in English and Chinese that have same pronunciation but with different meaning. Teaching English vocabulary to Chinese student is not an easy task and more difficult more so if the words have similar pronunciation such as the ones revealed in the previous chapters. The lack of knowledge of Chinese language by many foreign English language experts combined with lack of Chinese teachers with English proficiency has highly contributed to the lack of emphasis on teaching of English and Chinese words with similar pronunciation.

4.3. Lack of Teaching of (ESL) Learning strategies

According to **Oxford L (1992)** Second Language Learning strategies deals with specific behaviors, actions, steps or some technical skills and methods that enables students to improve their internalization, storage, retrieval and the usage of Second Language. The author also quotes what Rigney (1978) describes strategies as tools that activate self participation necessary for development of communication abilities. As I have mentioned previously that teaching English to Chinese students in China requires teachers with proficiency in Chinese so as to understand the challenges faced by Chinese students learning English vocabulary is a necessary teaching strategy for good results.

4.4. Lack of Sufficient Learning and Teaching Materials

English and Chinese are two parallel languages with different learning and teaching systems. Literature, books, journals and researches done towards these two languages

dealing with similar word pronunciation are very scarce. The lack of books or dictionaries with comparative English and Chinese word pronunciation makes it difficult for both teachers to teach and students to learn English and Chinese words with similar word pronunciation. Howard J and Major J (2004) asserts that the lack of commercial teaching materials for language learning usually results in teachers to construct their own teaching materials best for their students. This is also the same phenomena in Chinese schools regarding the lack of English teaching materials of similar English and Chinese words with similar pronunciation.

Table 4.2. Causes of the Effects Ratings (Online Survey)

100%				
90%				
80%				
70%				
60%				
50%				
40%				
30%				
20%				
10%				
0%				
	1	2	3	4

Key:

1	Influence of the mother tongue
2	Lack of emphasis on teaching word pronunciation
3	Lack of teaching of ESL learning strategies
4	Lack of sufficient learning and Teaching materials

5. Teaching and Learning Strategies

Each language has its ways and strategies that produces excellent teaching and learning results unique in their own way. English and Chinese regardless of their sharp differences in the formation of word, sentence and grammar systems there are some special strategies that may enable an easy teaching and learning of the two languages' similarities in some of the words in their pronunciation by Chinese students learning English.

5.1. Bi-Lingual Class Strategy

The Bi-Lingual class strategy is the formation of an English teacher who can speak English and Chinese very well. The class should be taught generously by either a foreign expert or a local Chinese teacher who both can speak English and Chinese. Such a class can make sure that even slow learners can cope up with the teacher's pace. Mixing English and Chinese in the early stage of learning English is very beneficial to all students because it makes students to build more confidence in speaking. This can be applied both in the teaching and learning of English language by Chinese students.

5.2. Word Repetition strategy

As I have proven in the previous chapters that Chinese vocabulary is complex and quite a lot to master and often have similar words that can be pronounced the same but have different meanings it is more crucial for Chinese students learning English to identify first English words that are pronounced the same with some Chinese words and master them. Chinese students are used to memorization of words, characters, phrases, sentences and large content because of the structure of Chinese language. In this case it is critical to develop word repetition strategy when teaching English words that have similar pronunciation with some Chinese words to Chinese students. Students can also use the same strategy of word repetition when learning English words alongside Chinese words with similar pronunciation. For example a student can write each word more than ten times with its meaning against a similar Chinese word with similar pronunciation. The following is an example;

- She, She, She, She, She, She, She, She, She, She》stands for (pronoun for female/women) e.g (She is my mum).
- 是 Shì, Shì, Shì, Shì, Shì, Shì, Shì, Shì, Shì》stands for (Am/Is/Are/Yes/to be) e.g (是 Shì 我 wǒ 妈 m 妈 mā) (She is my mum).

When a Chinese student master such technique of knowing how to identify words in English and Chinese with similar pronunciation and repeat them with their meanings and then make a sentence in both English and Chinese it may make some sense of seeing the great difference between the two languages.

5.3. Quiz Word Competition Strategy

A quiz competition in the subject of linguistics is an enabling teaching and learning strategy for any language in the world. In order to master English words and reveal their differences from some Chinese words that have similar pronunciation with English words a quiz word competition is one of the best solution to improve language learning. An English teacher be it a foreign expert or a local Chinese English teacher can create a list of English words with similar pronunciation in Chinese and ask students to say the Chinese word and its meaning and its difference with the English word. The next stage will be to randomly as students to make a sentence from both the English and Chinese words and finally ask other students to show the difference that can be found in the two sentences. For example;

- Teacher: Find a word pronounced the same as (Why) in Chinese
- Student A: (外/ wài)
- Teacher: What does it mean?
- Student B: It means (Outside)
- Teacher: Make a short sentence using (Why)
- Student C: Why B?
- Teacher: Make a short sentence using Chinese (外/wài)
- Student D: (外 wài 币 bì).

- Teacher: What's the meaning of all this?
- Student E: (Why B) means why is it letter B while Chinese (外 wài 币 bì) means foreign currency.

The participation of 5 students to contribute similarities, facts and differences between one English word and another Chinese word may make some great sense in the learning of English by Chinese students towards the issue of dealing with word pronunciation that is similar in English and Chinese.

5.4. Word Comparative Strategy

When learning English as a Chinese student it's worth taking note of word comparison. Most languages have certain words that may sound to be pronounced the same with other foreign languages even though they carry different meaning in most cases. Given such encounters such as between English language and Chinese language it is from this background that a lot of literature, journals, dictionaries and articles must be compiled that serves as a bridge between the two languages in word comparison so as to strengthen the various ways of English language learning by Chinese students. During the course of my other previous related researches I have observed that learning of a Second language especially by Chinese children in China a lot of emphasis on word comparison is critical due to the strong differences between Chinese and other foreign languages especially western languages such as English which usually have many words that are pronounced the same with some Chinese words. Unfortunately I haven't found anywhere in English and Chinese related literature that have some English words which are pronounced similarly with Chinese words and have same meaning. What is common is Modern Chinese spoken language is the availability of borrowed English words that are usually used by Chinese people and mainly the students.

5.5. Use of Pictorial Strategy

Early language learning especially for students in the primary schools the use of pictures is very crucial and a must teaching strategy because of its effectiveness. In this case an English teacher in China using pictures with both English and Chinese words that are pronounced the same can only give a quick meaning of the word by a mere look at the picture. For some easy example the teacher can make a picture of 妹(mèi) Chinese for (young sister) and a picture for (May) the fifth month of the year. These two pictures are literally pronounced the same by the English and Chinese students. The greatest advantage therefore becomes out through the different pictures which brings out the meaning and the difference between English word and Chinese word pronounced the similarly the same. It is in my best understanding that pictures depicts clear meaning and clear expressions than words.

This era of high technology I have seen that many people prefer using emojis in their phone chats when trying to make themselves more clear unlike written words. It is therefore

my suggestion that an English teacher teaching Chinese students who have an elementary English proficiency may effectively make use of pictures to the Chinese students for them to better understand the differences of different words with similar pronunciation.



Picture 5.1. 害羞(hài xiū) (Shy) and High Mountain

The two pictures above can actually make Chinese students learning English better understand the difference and meaning of the two similar pronounced words and how they are used. The Chinese word 害 (hài) which means (evil or harm) is pronounced the same with the English word (high). In order to bring out the great differences between these two words the teacher can actually produce a Chinese adjective word 害羞(hài xiū) which means (shy) as shown on the picture above. The teacher can also show a picture of a High mountain and explain the difference between 害 (hài) and the English word (high).

6. Conclusions

The research was effectively carried out with the main aim of identifying some critical English and Chinese words that have similar pronunciation but carries different meaning with the use of English and Chinese dictionaries and a few other past researches related to the research topic. The research did not cover all the English and Chinese words with similar pronunciation but used the most common vocabulary used by Chinese students of elementary and beginners' level.

The effects shown in this research on how words with similar pronunciation in English and in Chinese are used have some different impact ranging from different expressions, different implications and different meanings. Some of the causes of these impact have been assumed to have been as a result of; the influence of the mother tongue, Lack of teaching of words with same pronunciation, Lack of Second language learning strategies and Lack of sufficient learning and teaching Materials such as an English and Chinese dictionary or some previous researches that have some literature guidance in English and Chinese for words with similar pronunciation.

The research ends up with some teaching and learning strategic recommendations to the easy learning and teaching of English to Chinese students such as; The use of a Bi-Lingual Class Strategy, use of Word Comparative Strategy, use of Quiz Word Competition Strategy, the use of a Pictorial Strategy and Word Repetition Strategy.

The research strategic recommendations are not only limited to the ones that have been listed in this research but more room is even more open for contemporary and future learning and teaching strategies by other researchers on the similar topic.

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