



TONE TEACHING PLAN DESIGNED FOR INDONESIAN CHINESE BEGINNERS

RANCANGAN MODUL PEMBELAJARAN NADA PENGUCAPAN BAHASA MANDARIN UNTUK PELAJAR INDONESIA TINGKAT DASAR

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Abstract

Chinese is a tonal language, and Chinese tones can differentiate meanings of Chinese characters. In contrast, Indonesian is a language without tones, which explains why Indonesians have trouble acquiring tones when beginning to learn Chinese. Having recognized the importance of Chinese tones in teaching Indonesian beginners Chinese, we propose in this article a tone teaching plan designed for Indonesian Chinese beginners based on detailed analysis of previous research. The plan was tested at the Pahoa School in Tangerang District, Jakarta, Indonesia. The participants were 74 middle school students who had never learnt Chinese before. After the experiment, the questionnaires were used to collect data. It was found that this teaching plan was effective. In terms of mono-syllable adjustment, most students can make four tones of Chinese, especially rising tones and falling-rising tones; In terms of bisyllable tone sandhi, most students can master the law of tone change. However, this teaching plan also has some shortcomings. For example, the forms of tone teaching and training are not diversified; the design of the neutral tones teaching is not comprehensive enough; and the distribution of tone teaching items is uneven. These drawbacks can be further improved in future research.

Keywords: *tone; error; monosyllabic tones; bisyllable tones*

Abstrak

Bahasa Mandarin adalah bahasa yang memiliki nada pengucapan, nada pengucapan dalam bahasa Mandarin dapat membedakan arti. Sebaliknya, bahasa Indonesia adalah bahasa yang tidak memiliki nada pengucapan. Hal ini menyebabkan pelajar Indonesia mengalami kesulitan dalam menguasai nada pengucapan ketika mulai belajar bahasa Mandarin. Mengingat akan arti pentingnya penguasaan nada pengucapan dalam pengajaran bahasa Mandarin tingkat dasar, melalui artikel ini penulis merancang modul pembelajaran nada pengucapan bahasa Mandarin yang ditujukan bagi pelajar Indonesia tingkat dasar dengan mengacu pada analisis terperinci hasil penelitian sebelumnya. Modul pembelajaran ini diujicobakan pada Sekolah Terpadu Pahoa,

Tangerang, Indonesia. Para peserta adalah 74 siswa SMP dan SMA Sekolah Pahoia yang tidak memiliki dasar bahasa Mandarin. Setelah diujicobakan, kuesioner digunakan untuk mengumpulkan data. Berdasarkan hasil statistik, modul pembelajaran ini terbukti efektif. Dari segi nada tunggal, sebagian besar peserta dapat membunyikan keempat nada pengucapan bahasa Mandarin, terutama nada naik dan nada turun-naik. Dari segi kombinasi dua nada tunggal, sebagian besar peserta dapat menguasai aturan perubahan nada turun-naik. Hanya saja, ditemukan pula kekurangan pada modul ini. Misalnya, ragam pengajaran dan pelatihan nada pengucapan kurang bervariasi, konten pembelajaran nada ringan tidak cukup komprehensif, serta distribusi pengajaran setiap nada pengucapan tidak merata. Semua kekurangan ini dapat disempurnakan pada penelitian selanjutnya.

Kata kunci: *nada pengucapan; kesalahan; nada tunggal; kombinasi dua nada tunggal*

A. INTRODUCTION

Chinese and Indonesian are two distinct language systems, the two of which show evident differences in terms of the composition of syllables. While a Chinese syllable consists of initial, final and tonal, an Indonesian syllable consists only of initial and final. Chinese is a tonal language, and there are rising and falling changes of tone between syllables and syllables in a word. Chinese tones can be divided into four types: *yinping* (level tone), *yangping* (rising tone), *shangsheng* (falling-rising tone) and *qusheng* (falling tone). The tone pitches of these four tones are 55, 35, 214 and 51 respectively. Each syllable can convey a different meaning with a different tone. For example, “鸭 duck (ya55)” “牙 teeth (ya35)” “雅 elegant (ya214)” and “讶 surprise (ya51)”, are all “ya”, but they have different meaning due to different tones. Similar examples include “大人 adult (da51ren35)” and “打人 to hit somebody (da21ren35)”, and “重要 important (zhong51yao51)” and “中药 Chinese medicine (zhong55yao51)”. Although these words share the same initial consonants and vowels, they express different meanings because of different tones. Being a major feature of Chinese, tone distinguishes Chinese from other languages, and the four types of tones make Chinese sound like music. In contrast, Indonesian is a language without tones, which means that there are no rising and falling changes between syllables and syllables in an Indonesian word. Indonesian language uses intonation to express different meanings. Generally, sentences convey different meanings if they are voiced differently at the end.

Due to the lack of tones in Indonesian, Indonesian students have big trouble acquiring tones when learning Chinese. Indonesian beginners generally cannot distinguish the four tones of Chinese, and often read them all as level tones, which is also caused by Indonesian students’ insensitivity to Chinese tones. Besides, many Indonesian Chinese teachers do not pay attention to the teaching of Chinese tones. Instead, they believe that it is no big problem for students to speak Chinese with an Indonesian accent as long as the communication is smooth. They are afraid that overemphasis on correcting pronunciation may put more pressure on learners. Nevertheless, the author does not agree with this opinion. This is because in addition to affecting communication, errors in pronouncing Chinese tone can hardly be corrected once fossilization appears. Therefore, it is important to put more emphasis on tone teaching in the primary stage of Chinese phonetics learning; and it is necessary to carry out targeted teaching plans according to the learning needs of

Indonesian students. A famous Chinese linguist points out that “the general guidance for teaching Chinese as a foreign language is how to enable a foreign student who has never studied Chinese to learn and master Chinese as quickly and best as possible in the shortest time.” (Lu, J. M., 2016: 30). Based on this idea, the author proposes optimizing Chinese tone teaching plans to improve the current Chinese tonal teaching in Indonesia.

“In the three major elements of Chinese phonetics teaching in the primary stage, Indonesian students make more errors in learning Chinese tones than learning consonants and vowels.” (Zeng, J. J., 2005: 198). This phenomenon is consistent with the Hierarchy of Difficulty models proposed by Ellis, R. (1985). Ellis believes that if a language feature in the target language does not have a corresponding form in a learner’s first language, the learner will have great difficulty acquiring the target language. The hypothesis put forward by Ellis explains why Indonesian students are generally not good at making the four Chinese tones. Although some have already studied Chinese for many years in China, Indonesian students still make errors when pronouncing Chinese tones. Even Indonesian learners make no vocabulary or grammatical errors, they still speak Chinese with an Indonesian accent. The reason is that the Chinese tone is not well mastered. Therefore, it is imperative that the teaching of Chinese tones be emphasized in the very beginning.

Wang, F. & Li, J. W. (2005) point out that while paying attention to the teaching of consonants and vowels in the teaching of Chinese as a foreign language, we should attach importance to learners’ ability to voice the four tones of Chinese. Shi, X. D. & Feng, K. (2008) believe that Chinese phonetics should be taught step by step, and the teaching of Chinese as a foreign language should emphasize phonetics and even connect speech at the initial stage. Mao, L. (2007) holds that tone teaching should be generally shifted from syllables and words to connected speech teaching, in which words and phrases are the core. Therefore, she thinks that the priority should be given to the teaching of words and phrases in the primary stage of Chinese phonetics teaching. Based on this idea, the author believes that the content of tone teaching for Indonesian Chinese beginners should include monosyllable and bisyllable tones instead of tone and intonation or connected speech. Most of Chinese words are composed of two syllables, so the bisyllable tone sandhi teaching plays an important role. Besides, since the falling-rising tone and neutral tone are important components of Chinese characters, they are included in the scope of this research.

As for monosyllable research, Ni, W. M. & Lin, M. X (2000), Wang, M. L. (2006), Peng, H. (2012) investigated the learning of Chinese tones among Indonesian learners in the primary stage and obtained relatively consistent results. They found that in terms of the four tones of Chinese, Indonesian students made more errors in pronouncing rising tones and falling-rising tones than level tones and falling tones, and that the main problem lied in that they couldn’t make high or low pitches when they should. Among them, Wang, M. L. and Peng, H. re-adjusted the order of tone teaching according to the error rates and decided to teach tones of lower error rate first and tones of higher rate later. Their final teaching sequence is level tones, falling tones, rising tones and falling-rising tones.

As for bisyllable tone sandhi, Li, J. L. (2011) investigated the acquisition of bisyllable tone sandhi among Indonesian Chinese beginners, and found that they made more errors when pronouncing bisyllables composed by rising and falling-rising tones, especially the combination of two falling-rising tones and the combination of one falling-rising tone and one rising tone. Cheng, Y. (2006) and Wang, G. P. (2004) conducted surveys on the pronunciation of bisyllables composed

by two falling-rising tones among Indonesian students, and they obtained relatively consistent results. They found that the errors were generally reflected in Indonesian students' unreasonable distribution of time when pronouncing the two syllables. When voicing bisyllables composed by two falling-rising tones, Indonesian students usually spent more time on voicing the former syllable. However, more time should be spent on the latter syllable in standard Chinese. Peng, H. (2012) used a voice test to examine the pronunciation of neutral tones by Indonesian learners in the primary stage and found that the main reason why they made errors lied in that Indonesian students did not understand the concept of neutral tones or could not voice them. They usually voiced a neutral-toned word into the original tone of the word or pronounced it at will, thus making errors.

In summary, previous research on Indonesian students' acquisition of Chinese tones are mainly description and interpretation of various errors, and they propose some feasible suggestions on tone teaching. However, many studies and the teaching theories have not been put into practice, whose feasibility and effectiveness have not been confirmed. Besides, the teaching of Chinese tones among Indonesian students remains to be improved. When teaching tones, teachers are still blindly obeying the textbooks and being confined to textbooks, and they rarely consider the students' learning psychology. Therefore, the significance of this research lies in that based on previous research it actually designs exercises on Chinese tones for Indonesian learners according to their demands. It proposes a tone teaching plan involving monosyllable and bisyllables. In the teaching of bisyllable tone sandhi, it includes the law of voicing falling-rising changing tones and neutral tones, and the teaching of falling-rising changing tones is focused on the combination of two falling-rising tones and the combination of one falling-rising tone and one rising tone. As for the design of tone teaching and training, the monosyllable tone is prior to bisyllable tone sandhi, so is the design of corresponding exercises. This study designs the teaching plan in the light of previous research results. With the aim to improve current teaching of Chinese tones in Indonesian, the designed plan was applied in actual classroom teaching and learning, which shows novelty of this study.

B. RESEARCH METHOD

The tone teaching plan designed by the author was applied at the Paha School in the Tangerang district of Jakarta, Indonesia. The participant were 57 new middle school students and 17 new high school students, all of whom had never learned Chinese before and were divided into three parallel classes. Each year, the school offers elementary Chinese intensive (comprehensive) classes for students of the first year for about 3 months, which are called preparatory classes. New students who have not learned Chinese before have to take these 90-minute classes twice a week. As an important part of the intensive reading classes, Chinese phonetics teaching is generally carried out for 3 weeks. The author responds to the invitation of the director of the Chinese Department of Paha School, and taught new students Chinese there. Instead of being confined to textbooks, the author adopted this teaching tone plan and used the centralized training method for Chinese phonetic exercise.

In order to investigate whether this plan was in line with the learning psychology of Indonesian students in terms of optimizing and improving the tone teaching, and whether it was of help to students' tone learning, the author adopted the questionnaire method. At the end of the 3-week Chinese phonetic class, the author asked the students participating in this class to help finish a questionnaire. The questionnaire

was written in Indonesian to make it easier for these Chinese beginners to answer questions. Of the 74 questionnaires sent out only 72 were valid.

The participants handed in questionnaires immediately they finished all questions. The design of the questionnaire was based on three dimensions, being interesting, systematic and pertinence. A total of 15 questions were designed for the questionnaire and were examined using the Likert Scale. The scale consisted of a set of statements including “Strongly Disagree”, “Disagree”, “Basically Agree”, “Agree” and “Strongly Agree”, which were recorded as 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 respectively. The participants’ evaluation of the tone teaching plan adopted by the author could be reflected from each item in the questionnaire. More participant choosing 3, 4, and 5 indicated that the tone teaching plan adopted by the author was favored, and vice versa.

C. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

As an important part of Chinese phonetics teaching, the tone teaching in the primary stage should follow a principle of “from being easy to difficult”. Based on this principle, the author taught monosyllable tones first and bisyllable tone sandhi later. The specific teaching content is as follows.

First was the teaching and training of monosyllable tones. Indonesian learners usually make errors in pronouncing monosyllable tones because they can’t make high pitches or low pitches when they should. Since Indonesian words are pounced in a flat tone, Indonesian students are generally not sensitive to Chinese tones. In order to solve this problem, teachers themselves should hold correct attitudes towards tone learning. They should first explain the pronouncing features of each tone, and then demonstrate accurate pronunciation so that students can imitate and practice. Dang, Y.F. (2008) puts forward the concept of simplifying tone teaching, who proposes changing the terminologies of “*yin*” (level tones), “*yang*” (rising tones), “*shang*” (falling-rising tones), “*qu*” (falling tones) into the first, second, third and fourth tones to facilitate students’ memorization. However, this method cannot show the pronunciation features of each tone, thus not satisfying teaching needs. Therefore, the author changed the original terminologies into “*ping*” (level tones), “*sheng*” (rising tones), “*quzhe*” (falling-rising tones), and “*jiang*” (falling tones), which can both display the pronunciation features of four tones and simplify tone teaching and learning. Ye, Y. X. (2009) and Yu, J. (2007) believe that connecting Chinese tones with human “emotions” helps beginners to understand the pronunciation of Chinese tones more quickly. The author has adopted this concept when designing this plan. The author first re-adjusted the sequence of teaching the four tones according to the errors made by Indonesian students, then used images of “humanity” to guide students’ pronunciation and help them better memorize them. The design of five-degree mark of Chinese tones as shown in figure 1.

The author first displayed the five-degree mark of the re-adjusted Chinese tones (see figure 1) by use of multimedia, and then started from the level tone after drawing the tone pitch of each tone. After demonstrating how to pronounce these tones, the author emphasized that both the initial and ending sounds of level tones should be high pitches. A more exaggerated example can be given to help the students memorize. For example, when pronouncing a level tone “*ā*”, the speaker’s voice should be like shouting on the mountain. Teachers can use images to when demonstrating pronunciation and lead the students to practice pronunciation together. The teaching and exercising of falling tones should emphasize that the ending part of

a tone must be reduced to the lowest pitch. For instance, when pronouncing “à”, the speaker should sound angry. The method of teaching rising tones was the same as that of level tones. The author first demonstrated, and then emphasized that the initial sound of the tone should be higher. For example, when pronouncing “á”, the speaker should sound like being confused. The teaching of falling-rising tones was more complicated. The author first reminded the students that the final sound of the tone should be slightly higher, and the ending part should be extended a little when voiced. When pronouncing a falling-rising tone like “ǎ”, for instance, the speaker should sound like suddenly figuring out a question. After the author demonstrated pronunciation, more practice have to be carried out. In the teaching and training of the four tones, the emphasis should be put on rising and falling-rising tones. And the pronunciation should be practiced repeatedly to strengthen students’ memory.

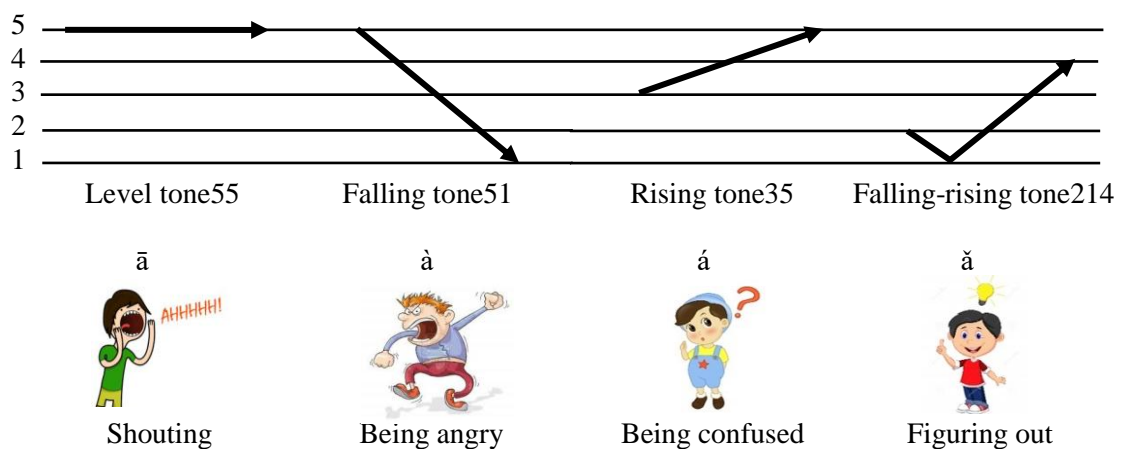


Figure 1. Five-degree mark of the adjusted Chinese tones

The second part of this teaching plan was about bisyllable tone sandhi. Indonesian students have difficulty voicing bisyllable tones involving falling-rising and rising tones, especially the combination of two falling-rising tones and the combination of one falling-rising tone and one rising tone. The teacher should make it clear that the two syllables within a bisyllable determine the tone-changing rules of the bisyllable. When voicing a combination of two falling-rising tones, the former syllable should be pronounced with tone 35; when voicing a combination of one falling-rising tone and one other tone, the former syllable should be pronounced with tone 21. After explaining the pronunciation rules, the teacher should first demonstrate the pronunciation and then lead the students to make a lot of practice. When demonstrating the pronunciation, the teacher had better provide examples with correct marking for students, and then ask students to keep practicing until they can learn by heart. Once the students form a psychological cognition of the pronunciation of bisyllable tones, they will make fewer and fewer errors when pronouncing them. After this they can start the learning of neutral tones. Although the focus of exercises is bisyllable tones composed of rising and falling-rising tones, the design of examples for reference should cover all the combinations of tones that may appear. The design of examples for reference is shown in table 1 as follows.

Table 1. List of Chinese bisyllable tones (examples for reference)

| | | | |
|---------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|
| 都说 dōushuō | 没说 méishuō | 也说 yěshuō | 再说 zàishuō |
| 都读 dōudú | 没读 méidú | 也读 yědú | 再读 zàidú |
| 都写 dōuxiě | 没写 méixiě | 也写 yěxiě | 再写 zàixiě |
| 都看 dōukàn | 没看 méikàn | 也看 yěkàn | 再看 zàikàn |

In addition to bisyllable tone sandhi, Indonesian students also find it difficult to master the rules of pronouncing neutral tones when they learn Chinese bisyllables. In order to solve this problem, teachers should first help students establish a concept “neutral tones”, which can differentiate various meanings of a certain Chinese character. To help students understand and acquire this tone, the author first displayed several bisyllable words with neutral tones, and then compared them with words with other tones. For instance, the Chinese phrase “地道” can be pronounced as “di51dao51” or “di51dao”, meaning “tunnel” and “being pure” respectively; and “大人” can be pronounced as “da51ren35” or “da51ren”, meaning “adult” and “official” respectively. Once students master the concept of “neutral tones”, teachers can start teaching pitches of neutral tones.



| | | | |
|---|---|--|---|
| didào | dìdao | dàrén | dàren |
|  |  |  |  |
| 地道 tunnel | 地道 being pure (taste) | 大人 adults | 大人 officials |

Figure 2. The role of neutral tones in distinguishing meanings

The teaching of rules for pronouncing neutral tones can start from pitches of neutral tones. When a bisyllable phrase contains a word with neutral tone, the pronunciation of its former syllable should be extended, and the latter syllable should be voiced lighter and shorter. The pitches of neutral tones are affected by the tone of the former syllable of a bisyllable word, which is the feature of the pronunciation of neutral tones. In order to help students to avoid making errors when pronouncing neutral tones, teachers can adopt a sensible teaching method, namely, providing many examples at first. They can provide some typical words with neutral tones for students to practice (See Figure 3). It is required that students should repeat after their teacher and perceive the difference in pronouncing neutral tones and other tones. Practicing these words for several times first will facilitate the teaching and learning of pitches of neutral tones. When teaching neutral tones, instead of following the traditional teaching sequence, teachers can re-adjusted teaching content according to the learning needs of Indonesian students, which will be more in line with the students’ learning psychology. The specific approach is shown in the following.

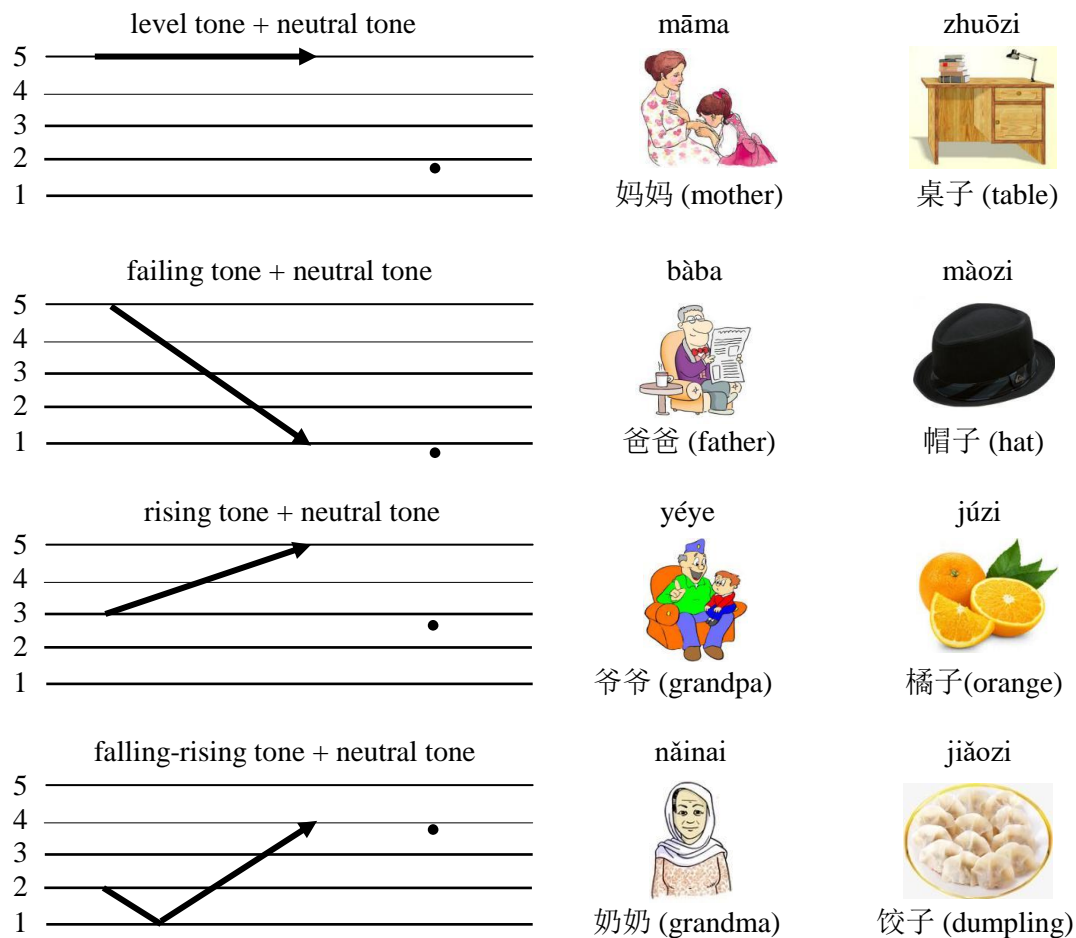


Figure 3. The rules of pronouncing Chinese neutral tones

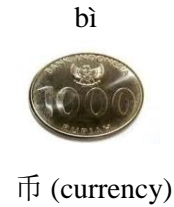
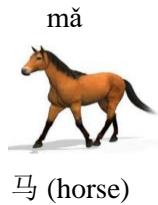
The words with neutral provided by the author are common Chinese words and thus easy for students to remember. At the primary stage, the teaching of neutral tones does not need to be too detailed, as long as learners can form a concept of “neutral tones” is enough.

After the basic knowledge is introduced, teachers can guide students to do exercises. Wang, H. W. (2003) emphasizes that the initial stage of tone teaching should involve meaningful exercises which can help students remember the four tones of Chinese. The author has adopted this idea when designing this teaching plan. To avoid boring mechanical exercises, this plan uses cartoon images to connect sounds with Chinese meanings, thus being interesting and meaningful. In addition, the complexity of Chinese characters was ignored when the author designed this plan because the use of common Chinese characters was only to enrich the learning content and give students a preliminary impression of Chinese characters. The focus of practice is still on the training of Chinese tones. The design of the exercises is as follows.

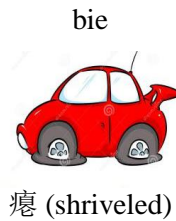
1) Exercises of monosyllab tones

The exercises involve many forms, such as reading exercises, listening exercises, etc. Among them, the amount of exercises for rising tones and falling-rising tones is greater than that for level tones and falling tones.

1. Read aloud the following syllables and pay attention to their tones.



2. Listen to the teacher and mark the tones of the syllables below.



3. Listen to the teacher and choose the syllables you hear.

(qiū qiù qiú)



(cāi cái cǎi)



(zōu zòu zǒu)



(cā cà cá)



(zèi zěi zéi)



(chī chí chì)



2) Exercises of bisyllable tone sandhi

These exercises also involve many forms, such as reading exercises, listening exercises, and so on. The training focuses on bisyllables composed of rising and falling-rising tones and also neutral tones.

1. Read aloud and compare.

| | | | |
|---------------|------------|-----------|----------------|
| yùyī | yǔyī | xiǎo xuě | xiǎoxué |
| 浴衣 | 雨衣 | 小雪 | 小学 |
| bathrobe | raincoat | scouter | primary school |
| yóuqī | yóuqí | kěyǐ | kěyí |
| 油漆 | 尤其 | 可以 | 可疑 |
| paint | especially | can | suspicious |
| dúbó | dǔbó | xiāoshī | xiǎoshí |
| 读博 | 赌博 | 消失 | 小时 |
| study for PHD | gamble | disappear | hour |

2. Listen to the teacher and mark the tones.



3. Read the syllables below and pay attention to the changing of tones.



4. Read aloud the following syllables and pay attention to the neural tones.

| | | |
|--|--|---|
| gōngfu  功夫 (kongfu) | mùtóu  木头 (wood) | líba  篱笆 (fence) |
| shítóu  石头 (stone) | yǎnjīng  眼睛 (eye) | fǔtóu  斧头 (axe) |

At the end of the primary Chinese phonetics teaching, the author used a questionnaire method to investigate the effect of this teaching plan in terms of optimizing and improving tone teaching. According to the statistical results of 72 valid questionnaires, the students’ feedback on this plan is as follows:

Table 2. Satisfical results of the interest of this teaching plan

| Questionnaire items | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Basically Agree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|-------------------|----------|-----------------|-------|----------------|
| I like this method of tone teaching and practicing. | 2 | 4 | 19 | 34 | 13 |
| The illustrations used by the teacher are vivid and interesting, which has aroused my interest in learning. | 2 | 2 | 19 | 26 | 23 |
| The amount of exercises designed by the teacher is appropriate and the forms are diversified. | 1 | 1 | 8 | 29 | 33 |
| The teacher’s tone teaching is not boring. | 1 | 0 | 16 | 31 | 24 |
| I think that tone learning becomes easy and enjoyable. | 2 | 4 | 16 | 32 | 18 |

It can be seen from this table that most of the students regarded this teaching plan as interesting. The number of students who agreed with the above five statements was 47, 49, 62, 55 and 50, accounting for 65.27%, 68.05%, 86.11%, 76.38% and 69.44% respectively. Among them, the item “The amount of exercises designed by the teacher is appropriate and the forms are diversified” was the most recognized with 86.11% students holding positive attitudes towards it, where as “I like this method of tone teaching and practicing” was the least recognized item with only 65.27% students supporting it. This result indicated that the design of this plan needed to be further improved in teaching and training tones.

Next is the investigation on this plan from a systematic dimension. According to the statistical results of 72 valid questionnaires, the students provided the following evaluations.

Table 3. Statistical results of the system of this teaching plan

| Questionnaire items | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Basically Agree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|--|-------------------|----------|-----------------|-------|----------------|
| The teaching content is highly connected and integrate. | 0 | 2 | 7 | 31 | 32 |
| I now have a more comprehensive understanding of Chinese tones. | 0 | 1 | 7 | 36 | 28 |
| I can distinguish rising tones from falling-rising tones and pronounce them correctly. | 0 | 1 | 11 | 42 | 18 |
| I have mastered the tone changing rules of falling-rising tones | 0 | 5 | 15 | 30 | 22 |
| I know how to voice Chinese neutral tones. | 0 | 3 | 20 | 25 | 24 |

It can be seen from table3 that the majority of students regarded this plan as systematic. The number of students who agreed with the above five statements was 63, 64, 60, 52 and 49 respectively, accounting for 87.50%, 88.88%, 83.33%, 72.22% and 68.05% of all respondents. Among them, the item “I now have a more comprehensive understanding of Chinese tones” was the most recognized with 88.88% students holding positive attitudes towards it, indicating that the design of this tone teaching plan was comprehensive. However, only 68.05% of the students thought that “I know how to voice Chinese neutral tones”, indicating that this plan needed further improvement in terms of exercises for learning neutral tones.

Finally, the teaching plan was examined from the pertinence dimension. According to the statistical results of 72 valid questionnaires, the students’ evaluation of the plan is as follows:

Table 4. Statistical results of the pertinence of this teaching plan

| Questionnaire items | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Basically Agree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|-------------------|----------|-----------------|-------|----------------|
| The teaching method adopted by the teacher enables us to learn the pronunciation features of the four tones easily and happily. | 0 | 0 | 16 | 24 | 32 |
| I think the illustrations used by the teacher are very instructive. | 3 | 5 | 19 | 24 | 21 |
| I think the arrangement of the teaching process is very reasonable. | 9 | 8 | 21 | 20 | 14 |
| I think the design of exercises are appropriate with a clear focus. | 2 | 2 | 19 | 23 | 26 |
| I think the sequence of the tone teaching plan is very suitable for our learning psychology. | 1 | 3 | 9 | 27 | 32 |

It can be seen from the table that the pertinence of this plan was recognized by most students. The number of students who agreed with the above five statements was 56, 45, 34, 49 and 59 respectively, accounting for 77.78%, 62.50%, 47.22%, 68.06% and 81.94%. Among them, “I think the sequence of the tone teaching plan is very suitable for our learning psychology” was the most recognized with 81.94% of the students holding positive attitudes towards it, indicating that the teaching sequence of this plan was highly pertinent and could meet the needs of Indonesian students. In contrast, only 47.22% held that “I think the arrangement of the teaching process is very reasonable”, meaning that the distribution of the tone teaching items of this plan was not balanced and needed further improvement.

In summary, according to the results of questionnaires, the tone teaching plan was well accepted by most respondents from the perspective of being interesting, systematic or pertinent. In terms of monosyllable tones, the students thought that they could pronounce the four tones of Chinese properly, especially the rising and falling-rising tones. In terms of bisyllable tones, the students said that they could make bisyllable tone sandhi. As for the drawbacks of this teaching plan, since they didn't exert much effect, they can be regarded as a point where improvement should be made in future research.

Discussion

Based on previous research results, this article designed a tone teaching plan for Indonesian Chinese beginners and applied the plan to actual classroom teaching. The plan is examined through the questionnaire method from three dimensions: interesting, systematic and pertinent. It can be seen from the statistical results of questionnaires that the students basically agreed that this plan was interesting, systematic and pertinent. Among them, "The amount of exercises designed by the teacher is appropriate and the forms are diversified", "I now have a more comprehensive understanding of Chinese tones", and "I think the sequence of the tone teaching plan is very suitable for our learning psychology" was most recognized by the students, which can be seen as the highlight of this teaching plan. However, fewer students thought that "I like this method of tone teaching and practicing", "I know how to voice Chinese neutral tones", and "I think the arrangement of the teaching process is very reasonable", indicating the drawbacks of this plan.

This finding is in line with Wang, F. & Li, J. W. (2005) that paying attention to the teaching of consonants and vowels in the teaching of Chinese should attach importance to learners' ability to voice the four tones of Chinese. Similarly, Shi, X. D. & Feng, K. (2008) consider that Chinese phonetics should be taught step by step, and the teaching of Chinese as a foreign language should emphasize phonetics and even connect speech at the initial stage.

The author believes there are several reasons why this plan could be popular among the students. First, Chinese phonetics teaching has not received enough attention from Indonesian Chinese teachers, many of whom regard it as an optional stage in the acquisition of Chinese. They think that Chinese phonetics can be learned simply by imitation and hold such attitudes towards the teaching of Chinese consonants and vowels and tones. Since Chinese phonetics teaching is often underemphasized, Indonesian students are usually confused about the rules of pronouncing Chinese tones, thus inevitably speaking Chinese with a strong Indonesian accent. Second, existing teaching materials have many drawbacks, and many textbooks of Chinese as a foreign language need to be improved in the design of phonetics teaching. If teachers just blindly follow textbooks and do not use them appropriately, it is difficult to improve Chinese tone teaching in Indonesia. The tone teaching plan designed by the author can fill the gaps in the teaching of primary Chinese phonetics in Indonesia, thus having received the support of the students.

At present, there have been quite a lot of research on Indonesian learners' acquisition of Chinese tones (see Cheng, Y., 2006; Wang, G. P., 2004; Peng, H. 2012). Previous scholars mainly analyze the causes and distribution of errors, and then propose several teaching suggestions such as research on the acquisition of monosyllable tones conducted by Ni, Lin, and Wang and the research on the acquisition of bisyllable tones made by Li, Cheng, and Wang. The tone teaching plan designed by the author was based on the results of those previous studies. Through

the experiment, it can be found that the plan adopts various strategies for optimizing Chinese tone teaching, such as adjusting the sequence of monosyllable teaching, connecting tone teaching with human “emotions”, changing the names of the four tones to make it more easier for students to understand them, and focusing on the teaching and training of bisyllable tones composed of rising and falling-rising tones. According to the statistical results of questionnaires, these strategies were generally supported by those Indonesian students, thus confirming the feasibility and effectiveness of the tonal teaching theories proposed by the predecessors for Indonesian Chinese beginners. However, in terms of the teaching of neutral tones, this plan is not comprehensive enough and needs further improvement.

D. CONCLUSION

Indonesian Chinese teachers usually pay less attention to Chinese phonetics teaching, especially tone teaching in the initial stage of Chinese phonetics teaching, which has led Indonesian learners to speak Chinese with an Indonesian accent. With an aim to improve tone teaching of primary Chinese phonetics teaching in Indonesia, the author integrated many previous research results and designed a tone teaching plan for Indonesian Chinese beginners. In terms of monosyllable tones, this plan re-adjusts the tone teaching sequence according to the errors made by Indonesian students, connects the tone teaching with the human “emotions”, and change the original terminologies for the four tones to make it easier for the students to understand them. In terms of bisyllable tones, the plan focuses on bisyllable tones composed of rising and falling-rising tones and teaches the pitches of neutral tones by use of typical examples. The experiment results show that many features of this plan were well accepted by the students and thus confirm the feasibility and effectiveness of those tonal teaching theories proposed by predecessors for Indonesian learners, which can thus provide some perspectives for future research. Nevertheless, this tone teaching plan also has some drawbacks. For example, the forms of tone teaching and training are not diversified, and the distribution of tone teaching items is uneven, which need to be further improved. In addition, this study only uses the questionnaire method, and the respondents are limited to middle school and high school students, which may affect the credibility of the research results to some extent. Therefore, the author suggests that future research should use several survey methods, and involve more subjects from different walks of life to obtain more effective data, which are conducive to further developing existing research results.

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