

International Intelligibility of English Spoken by Sichuan English Learners

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Abstract: *This study primarily aims to evaluate the international intelligibility of English spoken by college students originating from Sichuan Province in China. The study enrolls a total of 26 participants who are native speakers from 13 cities in the Sichuan region, as well as 15 international listeners who represent the inner, outer, and expanding circle countries. The experimental findings indicate that the spoken English of college students from Sichuan is considerably intelligible to listeners from diverse international backgrounds. The intelligibility level is mostly diminished by the impact of regional dialects, students' difficulties in distinguishing vowels and consonants, and their struggles with intonation and stress patterns.*

Keywords: *intelligibility, Sichuan, Spoken English, English pronunciation.*

I. INTRODUCTION

In recent times, the global recognition of English as an international language and its extensive global usage have given rise to numerous regional variations of English. Consequently, the matter of intelligibility has garnered increasing scholarly interest (Chan, 2021). China, being the foremost trading nation globally, is increasingly presented with possibilities and requirements to engage in communication with individuals throughout the globe. Consequently, the intelligibility of English spoken during these interactions assumes paramount importance. Due to the vast size of China and its diverse population comprising various ethnicities and languages, Chinese students have challenges in acquiring accurate English pronunciation. The influence of regional dialects and ethnical languages unavoidably hampers the intelligibility of their spoken English during interactions with individuals from other countries.

Proficiency in English language acquisition may provide more challenges for students residing in the southwest Mandarin areas due to the influence of their native languages and local dialects. So far, scholarly investigations have predominantly concentrated on discerning the disparities between English language usage among Chinese individuals and Received Pronunciation. In recent years, scholars have conducted investigations on diverse aspects influencing the spoken English of students hailing from dialectal regions. However, there is a dearth of studies pertaining to the global intelligibility of English spoken by students originating from Sichuan, the most populous and largest trading province in southwest China. Hence, by the examination of the English records of the speakers and the transcripts of the listeners, individuals have the ability to discern the distinctive pronunciation characteristics of Sichuan college students in their English speech. Furthermore, this analysis allows for the inference of whether their spoken English is deemed acceptable and intelligible to a global audience.

Prior research has mostly examined the impact of dialects on the intelligibility of China English pronunciation. Students residing in the region where Southwest Mandarin is predominantly spoken may encounter challenges in acquiring proficiency in the English language, primarily attributable to their linguistic background and the influence of local dialects. The matter of English phonological acquisition among Sichuan students has been examined by scholars; however, the existing research is deemed inadequate. To date, scholarly investigations have predominantly concentrated on discerning the disparities between the English language as spoken by individuals of Chinese accent and the accent known as Received Pronunciation or General American. In recent years, scholars have conducted investigations into a range of characteristics that influence the spoken English of students hailing from dialectal regions. However, there remains a dearth of studies pertaining to the international intelligibility of English spoken by students originating from the

southwest. Hence, the primary focus of this study is to investigate the level of international intelligibility of the English language spoken by college students hailing from Sichuan, China. The author conducts a comparative and analytical examination of transcripts from both speakers and listeners, utilizing quantitative analysis. The objective is to study the degree to which the spoken English of Sichuan college students is deemed acceptable and intelligible to international listeners.

II. RELATED STUDIES

2.1 Theoretical Framework for Understanding Intelligibility

The concept of intelligibility holds significant significance within the field of language studies, garnering increasing attention from scholars and serving as a focal point for research endeavors. Catford (1950) made a distinction between the effectiveness and intelligibility of utterances based on research examining how hearers respond to speakers in various contexts. He argued that the selection and use of linguistic forms by speakers, as well as the identification and interpretation of these forms by listeners, can result in a decrease in intelligibility. According to the research conducted by Smith and Nelson (1985), the concept of intelligibility pertains to the capacity to understand the author's intended meaning, which has three primary components: intelligibility, comprehensibility, and interpretability. The researchers provided explicit elucidations of the concepts of intelligibility, comprehensibility, and interpretability within the framework of their investigation. Respectively, intelligibility can be conceptualized as the ability to recognize individual words or utterances. Comprehensibility, on the other hand, refers to the understanding of the meaning conveyed by words or utterances, particularly the comprehension of the act of expressing something with a specific intention. Lastly, interpretability pertains to the process of identifying and interpreting the underlying meaning behind a word or utterance. It encompasses the recognition and comprehension of the communicative act performed through speech and is closely linked to the speaker's intended message. According to Derwing and Munro (1995), the concept of intelligibility was commonly characterized as the extent to which a listener accurately comprehends the speaker's utterance. In their seminal work, Derwing and Munro (1997) proposed a categorization of second language (L2) speech that encompasses three distinct characteristics, namely accentedness, intelligibility, and comprehensibility. Building upon the groundwork laid by Derwing and Munro, Kennedy, and Trofimovich (2008) conducted a study to explore the factors impacting the intelligibility, comprehensibility, and accentedness of second language (L2) speech. Their investigation revealed that two key elements, namely listener experience and semantic context, had a significant role in influencing these aspects. In a study conducted by Rao (2015), the author explored the interconnectedness between communication and intelligibility. The author posited that the efficiency of communication is contingent upon the extent to which the speaker is intelligible to the listener, as well as the reciprocal intelligibility between both parties involved.

2.2 Research on the intelligibility of global varieties of English

There have been a growing number of studies on World Englishes in the era of globalization in which English varieties emerged and grew, which has greatly aroused scholarly research interest. According to the research conducted by Dita and de Leon (2022) on Philippine English, it was determined that students would benefit from exposure to various forms of English, leading to enhanced performance akin to that of native speakers within educational settings. Hiroko (2021) investigated the impact of morphological and semantic adaptations on the intelligibility of Japanese English among listeners. They found that these adaptations had a significant influence on the level of intelligibility. According to Diaz (2017), it was concluded that the instruction of suprasegmental features has the potential to enhance students' pronunciation. Conversely, Becker and Kluge (2014) found that the primary contributor to unintelligibility in German, Chinese, and Japanese was the pronunciation of individual vowel and consonant sounds. In the case of American individuals, it was observed that the rate of speech had a detrimental impact on intelligibility. In their study, Hansen et al. (2018) examined the accentedness, comprehensibility, and intelligibility of English speech produced by individuals from China, Hong Kong, Singapore, and the United States (US) as perceived by listeners from the same regions. As a result, the research demonstrated that there was no singular aspect that exhibited a reciprocal connection with intelligibility. However, it was found that accentedness and intelligibility displayed a positive correlation. In the study, it was shown that a common background had a positive impact on scores related to accentedness

and intelligibility. However, it did not have a significant effect on intelligibility. Additionally, individuals with foreign experience had higher performance in terms of intelligibility compared to those without such experience.

2.3 Research on the intelligibility of China English

In recent years, scholars have initiated investigations into the intelligibility of China English. In a study conducted by (Zhang, 2015), the focus was on examining the intelligibility of English speech produced by Chinese university students. The research also aimed to identify the factors that hinder the intelligibility of English among Chinese students. The study ultimately drew results in three distinct areas. First and foremost, individuals from different countries can comprehend English as spoken by students from Chinese universities. Furthermore, despite the presenters having proficient English accents, they made efforts to effectively convey the intended message. Ultimately, the study revealed the presence of phonological difficulties that impede the speakers' ability to be understood, including issues related to vowel length, vowel quality, and the simplification of diphthongs. According to Zhou et al. (2019), a significant contributing element to the misinterpretation of English spoken in central China was identified as the deletion of syllables. From an educational standpoint, it is considered crucial for those learning English to effectively articulate the pronunciation of various components, namely syllables, in order to ensure that spoken English is comprehensible to those listening. Simultaneously, it was said that those proficient in English should accord precedence to intelligibility based on English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) and endeavor to exhibit greater assertiveness and self-assurance when engaging in conversations with individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds. According to the findings of Cao (2017), there exists a significant correlation between accentedness and intelligibility, indicating a strong association between these two variables. However, the relationship between accentedness and understanding was found to be less pronounced, suggesting that intelligibility is not solely dependent on accentedness. The study conducted by the researcher found that the degree of accentedness was influenced by various factors, including pronunciation, sentence stress, rhythm, intonation, and lexical stress. Furthermore, she conducted an investigation that revealed the crucial role of English proficiency in comprehension. According to the research conducted by Kirkpatrick et al. (2008), the investigation revealed that the intelligibility of English speech in Hong Kong was found to be 81%. Furthermore, the study indicated that females exhibited a higher level of intelligibility at 86%. These findings suggest that the international intelligibility of Hong Kong English, as well as its acceptability among the educated population, is notably high. The utilization of Hong Kong English can serve as a valuable model for the instruction of phonetics.

2.4 Research on the English speakers from Sichuan Province

In the context of China, the spoken English language exhibits regional varieties mostly due to the influence of diverse dialects and accents. It is commonly recognized that English learners from Sichuan Province may encounter challenges due to the influence of their local dialect, which falls under the category of Southwest Mandarin. Several studies have provided insights into the effects on the English spoken by Chinese students hailing from diverse places. In a study conducted by Fang (2017), an examination was carried out to explore the challenges associated with consonants and vowels, as well as the potential influence of individuals' mother tongue and local dialect on students' phonetic abilities. Qin (2014) examined the influence of various accents on English learners in the Sichuan region. Their findings revealed that the Sichuan dialect exerted a significant adverse effect on the pronunciation skills of English learners. However, it was also observed that the Sichuan dialect had a beneficial transfer effect on certain aspects of English language acquisition. English educators have the potential to devise teaching methodologies that facilitate the gradual transformation of negative consequences into positive ones for students.

Prior studies have extensively examined the intelligibility of English as spoken by learners across the globe, and a wealth of valuable perspectives and analyses have been offered in this regard. Nevertheless, the current study is lacking in several areas. While many studies have indicated that dialects may have a detrimental impact on the English spoken by Chinese learners, limited study has specifically examined the English spoken by learners from Sichuan. Therefore, the current study tries to address the following research questions:

1. What is the international intelligibility level of English spoken by Sichuan English speakers?
2. What factors influence the intelligibility level of English spoken by Sichuan English speakers?

III. METHOD

3.1 Participants

3.1.1 Speakers

A total of 26 college students from 13 cities of Sichuan were invited to participate in the study, including 13 male and 13 female students. Specifically, the individuals in question were raised in an environment where a certain dialect was predominantly spoken. This indicates that their use of language was primarily limited to their dialect within the confines of their household and did not extend to any other geographical locations. Furthermore, they must embody the characteristic traits of the 13 districts in Sichuan. In broad terms, the dialects of the individuals in question exhibit similarities, albeit with discernible variations in the pronunciation of certain lexical items. The individuals' ages span from 19 to 21 years, and they have acquired a minimum of six years of English language education.

3.1.2 Listeners

This study included a sample of 15 participants, consisting of seven males and eight females, who were selected as international listeners. These individuals represented four different circles of World Englishes: five participants were from countries belonging to the inner circle, specifically the UK, USA, and Canada; five participants were from countries belonging to the outer circle, namely Malaysia, and the Philippines; and the remaining five participants were from countries belonging to the expanding circle, specifically China. The majority of individuals consisted of English teachers and university students, with an average age of 27. For individuals residing in the UK, USA, and Canada, English serves as their primary language and holds official status within their respective nations. The individual's self-assessment of their English proficiency and English listening skills indicates an advanced level. Regarding the two English instructors, it is noteworthy that their primary language of communication in their professional capacity is English. However, it is pertinent to mention that they have been in China for a duration of about two years, affording them ample exposure to the Chinese language and English spoken by Chinese individuals. The Malaysian and Philippine listeners are college students from public Malaysian and Philippine universities. The individuals in question possess English as their secondary language and have not had the opportunity to visit China or engage with individuals of Chinese origin. The other five listeners are Chinese students, who are pursuing a degree in English in a public university in China. They have completed the CET-4 (College English Test Band 4) examination, and some of them have passed TEM-4 (Test for English Majors).

3.2 Research Instruments

3.2.1 Assessment of Pronunciation

The pronunciation assessment consists of three tasks. The five speakers hailing from Sichuan were instructed to orally articulate a total of 44 distinct words, ten sentences, as well as a paragraph. Regarding the initial task, a total of 44 distinct words were required to be orally articulated individually. The selection of these specific words, each comprising 44 distinct English phonemes, was derived from the textbook titled "Upgrading English Pronunciation and Intonation." This textbook serves as an introduction resource on English pronunciation for English majors at a public university in China. Furthermore, these terms are commonly employed in everyday discourse, and they consist of monosyllabic structures that are well-suited for assessing each phoneme in the English language. Subsequently, a total of ten concise sentences were provided for the subsequent reading assignment. Ultimately, the participants were instructed to orally recite a brief excerpt titled "The Boy Who Cried Wolf," a widely recognized Aesop fable that Deterding (2006) highly advocated for use as an assessment tool for English pronunciation. Simultaneously, each job of the pronunciation test must be independently recorded.

3.2.2 Word-for-word transcriptions and cloze tests

The recorded data of the speakers was distributed to the five foreign listeners randomly via email. Initially, the participants were instructed to transcribe the 44 distinct terms. Additionally, the participants were expected to fulfill the requirement of completing two cloze tests consisting of ten sentences each, as well as a passage, as part of the pronunciation assessment.

3.2.3 Concise Background Survey

The purpose of the questionnaire is to gather fundamental information about the International listeners, including their nationalities, ages, and occupations. Additionally, it aims to collect pertinent language background information, such as the outcomes of their English assessment, self-assessment of English proficiency, and proficiency in English listening and Chinese language.

3.2.4 Qualitative Survey

Regarding the open-ended questionnaires, participants from various countries were initially instructed to evaluate the phonological intelligibility of the speaker's performance in the pronunciation test, which encompassed the reading of individual words, sentences, and a passage. This evaluation was conducted using a scale ranging from 1 to 9, where 1 represented complete unintelligibility and 9 indicated complete intelligibility. Additionally, participants were asked to provide three keywords that best described the speakers' English proficiency. In the interim, participants were tasked with identifying and offering critiques on the speaker's English pronunciation difficulties, within a range of 100-400 words. Additionally, they were required to furnish recommendations, spanning 100-400 words, aimed at enhancing the intelligibility of the speakers' English oral communication. Participants were provided with a seven-day timeframe to do the assigned activities after the receipt of the audio files. Additionally, all of the aforementioned questionnaires were electronically sent to the author in conjunction with the transcripts.

3.4 Data collection and data analysis

3.4.1 Verbatim Transcripts

The transcripts were subjected to meticulous analysis utilizing the exact word methodology, wherein the author systematically examined and compared the transcripts from both the speakers and the listeners. The intelligibility of the 44 individual words can be represented by the percentage of accurately transcribed words. The cloze tests were employed to assess the intelligibility of the ten sentences and the passage. The author opted to employ a cloze test format for the 10 sentences, wherein three notional words were selected in each sentence, while functional words such as "a," "the," "has," "to," "on," "are," and "were" were deliberately omitted. The set of 30 conceptual words consists of "book," "tells," and "story," denoting a literary narrative; "young," "boy," and "home," referring to a juvenile male and his place of residence; "they," "climbing," and "tree," signifying individuals engaging in the act of ascending a woody plant; "she," "stood," and "window," indicating a female person positioned near a transparent opening; "table," "three," and "legs," representing a piece of furniture supported by a trio of appendages; "letter," "fell," and "floor," describing a written correspondence descending onto a horizontal surface; "five," "men," and "working," portraying a quintet of males engaged in labor; "he," "listened," and "father," denoting an individual attentively perceiving auditory stimuli from their male parent; "shoes," "very," and "dirty," characterizing footwear that is considerably soiled; and finally, "they," "went," and "vacation," signifying a group of individuals embarking on a period of leisure or recreation. The author of the passage also selected 30 notional words that encompass a wide range of phonemes to design the cloze tests. These words include: once, shepherd, watch, flocks, dark, foot, thought, plan, company, fist, air, village, rushed, stayed, short, pleasure, later, trick, successful, escaped, zoo, change, usual, fear, actually, sheep, cried, convinced, fool, and feast.

3.4.2 Questionnaires with open-ended questions

A total of fifteen adjectives were employed to portray the English language spoken by students hailing from Sichuan. The comments provided by the participants, consisting of 100-300 words, were subjected to analysis to discern the disparities between the English pronunciation of Sichuan students and the standard accents of Received Pronunciation (RP) or General American (GA). Simultaneously, the recommendations provided for enhancing the intelligibility of English speech among speakers proved to be enlightening for the educators in Sichuan in their efforts to instruct English pronunciation.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1 General level of intelligibility

The author obtained overall intelligibility scores, word-by-word transcripts, and two cloze tests for the passage and the 10 phrases from a sample of five listeners representing different regions of the world. The author observed discrepancies in the transcripts of the speakers and listeners across all three listening activities.

The mean intelligibility score obtained from the selected listeners is 6.9 out of a total of 9 (see Table 1), indicating a score of 76.7 out of 100. This finding suggests that despite the presence of a noticeable accent in the English spoken by students from Sichuan, the listeners are generally able to comprehend their speech. Two evaluators assigned a perfect score of 9 to the audio recording of the speaker.

Table 1. The general level of intelligibility

Mean	Max.	Min.	Std. deviation	N
6.9	9	3	1.82	15

4.1.1 Level of Intelligibility of Individual Words

This study compiled and examined verbatim transcriptions of the 44 distinct words provided by individuals hailing from several distinct nations. Based on the findings of the study, it was seen that the maximum number of accurately transcribed words amounted to 38, while the minimum number recorded was 13. The average number of correctly transcribed words was determined to be 28, with a corresponding standard deviation of 7.29. Therefore, the accurate terms were 68.5% of the total words transcribed accurately.

4.1.2 Assessment of Sentence Intelligibility Level

To ascertain the intelligibility score, a set of ten sentences was employed. The author made a deliberate selection of three words per sentence and a total of 30 words for the cloze exercise. This job exhibits a range of successfully transcribed words, with the maximum count being 30, the lowest count being 19, the average count being 25, and the standard deviation being 3.59. As a result of these aforementioned criteria, the percentage of words transcribed with accuracy is 91.3%.

4.1.3 The intelligibility level of the passage

The section under consideration consists of a total of 221 words, with a subset of 30 words dedicated to assessing its level of intelligibility. The participants were instructed to fill in the blanks during the auditory exercise. After doing a more comprehensive examination of the accurately transcribed words, it has been ascertained that the maximum count is 27, the minimum count is 13, the mean count is 24, and the standard deviation is 6.31. As a result, the proportion of words transcribed correctly is 82.1% (see Table 2).

Table 2. Intelligibility score of the individual words, sentences, and the passage

	Mean	Std. deviation	N
words	28	7.29	15
Sentences	25	3.59	15
Passage	24	6.31	15

4.2 Pronunciation features

4.2.1 Difficulties in English Pronunciation

The topic of discussion pertains to the phenomenon of confusion in the realm of vowels. In the region where the Sichuan dialect is spoken, students have a heightened level of difficulty in distinguishing between long vowel sounds and short vowel sounds. Based on the analysis of the 44-word transcripts, it was seen that four listeners exhibited confusion between the words "ship" and "sheep," "sheep" and "shape," as well as "seal" and "sale." This suggests that these individuals struggle to differentiate between the /ɪ/ and /i:/ sounds, as well as between the /ɪ:/ and /eɪ/ sounds to a significant degree. In the interim, the recipients of the study expressed that the phonetic realization of the "ee"/ "ea" vowel sound in words such as "feet"/ "sneak" frequently had an

acoustic resemblance to the /ɪ/ vowel sound. As a result, phonetic changes occurred in the English language, leading to the alteration of the words "feet" and "sneak" to "fit" and "snik" respectively. Additionally, the /ɪ/ sound occasionally transformed into a /e/ sound, resulting in the word "six" being pronounced as "sex". In addition, it was observed that their pronunciation of the words "pair" and "bear" deviated from the standard pronunciation of "peer" and "beer" respectively. This suggests a difficulty in accurately articulating the vowel sounds /eə/ and /ɪə/.

4.2.2 The phenomenon of confusion in consonants

Upon examination of the transcripts, it is evident that the speakers encountered difficulties with the articulation of the /w/ phoneme on certain occasions. Specifically, their pronunciation occasionally resembled that of the /r/ phoneme, or they omitted its pronunciation altogether. As an illustration, it was observed that the individual in question employed the term "oolf" instead of "wolf" and encountered difficulty in articulating the /wr/ phoneme inside the term "wrist." Simultaneously, the speakers encounter difficulties in distinguishing between the phonemes /ck/ and /g/, /z/ and /r/, and /θ/ and /s/. As an illustration, the individuals in question employed the term "pick" instead of "pig," "rule" or "room" instead of "zoo," and "think" as a substitution for "sink." Consonants such as /v/, /l/, and /n/ cause perplexity among them. As an example, two individuals erroneously associated the word "tin" with "team" and the word "poor" with "poor." Several individuals in the audience complained that the English pronunciation of certain terms is imprecise, and this can be readily discerned from the transcripts, indicating that the presenters may have inadvertently interchanged some words. One prominent issue in terms of pronunciation is the notable difficulty that speakers hailing from Sichuan encounter while attempting to articulate the nasal phoneme /n/ and the distinct /l/ sound. The audience exhibited a discrepancy in their interpretation of the terms "night" and "light," as well as "no" and "low."

4.2.3 Difficulties in Intonation and Stress

In addition to the aforementioned challenges of pronunciation, certain pupils encounter the subsequent phenomena: lack of awareness about the liaison, omission of plosives, monotonous intonation, and reduced utilization of intonation during sentence reading. Intonation can be defined as the utilization of diverse pitch patterns that convey significant information. The English language spoken by students from Sichuan can be comprehended by attentive listeners when they carefully listen to the audio recordings. The observers noted that the speakers made an effort to excessively emphasize some words, leading to peculiar or improper syllable stress. The speakers exhibited a deliberate and meticulous approach to reading the materials, carefully enunciating each word. This method resulted in minimal fluctuations in intonation, hence preventing any discomfort in the recorded audio. Typically, individuals tend to enunciate each word, including functional elements such as pronouns, articles, conjunctions, prepositions, and auxiliary terms, when reading sentences. There is a certain level of concern that they may have harbored around the possibility of committing errors. Consequently, the audience characterized the speech as unadorned, enthusiastic, somewhat contrived, and with occasional misplacement of word emphasis.

V. CONCLUSION

Based on the provided quantitative data, it can be observed that the mean intelligibility score for English spoken by Sichuan students is 6.8, with a maximum score of 9, indicating a percentage of 75.6 out of 100. According to Zhang's (2015) Rating Criteria on intelligibility, it can be concluded that the English spoken by students from Sichuan is largely intelligible to international listeners, provided that the listeners are attentive. The mean intelligibility score for the individual words is 28, with a sample size of 44. Similarly, the mean score for the 10 sentences is 25, with a sample size of 30. Lastly, the mean score for the short passage is 24, with a sample size of 30. The available data consistently indicate that the English language proficiency of Sichuan students is predominantly intelligible to individuals from foreign countries. Despite the presence of a strong accent and occasional difficulties in pronouncing certain vowels and consonants, Sichuan students were able to effectively communicate their ideas to international audiences, as seen by the feedback received. The terminology employed to describe the overarching characteristics is characterized by clarity albeit simplicity, inaccuracy, lack of authenticity, and a sense of unease, among other factors.

Regarding the implications, it is recommended that learners of English phonetics have increased exposure to authentic English sound materials. This exposure can facilitate the creation of an appropriate

phonetic input environment, which is considered one of the most crucial and influential approaches for mitigating the influence of dialects on English pronunciation. The initial audio resources can provide learners with precise English word pronunciation and enhance their learning experience with a particular level of engagement. The audience members recommended that the presenters increase their exposure to genuine English audio resources and place greater emphasis on observing the pronunciation of these sounds by native speakers. There exist various major forms of English authentic audio resources that are extensively utilized in the instruction of English pronunciation. These include radio broadcasts, television programs, songs, and other speech materials that are relevant to the subject matter. These educational resources have the potential to enhance students' motivation to study English, while also facilitating their exploration and comprehension of the cultural aspects connected with English-speaking countries.

As widely acknowledged, the process of imitation serves as a rapid and efficacious means for individuals to acquire new knowledge, a principle that holds for the acquisition of English phonetics as well. The participants proposed the idea of compiling a written inventory of words and engaging in deliberate exercises to discern and distinguish each word individually. As an illustration, individuals encountering difficulties with the phoneme /r/ may engage in exercises aimed at articulating words such as "heal" and "hear." In addition, individuals are expected to pay attention to the configuration of the oral cavity and tongue position during the articulation of the phonemes /θ/ and /s/. The participants also expressed that the presenters might engage in exercises focused on vowel sounds, particularly emphasizing the distinctions between long and short vowel sounds. For instance, this could involve reading words like "shot" and "shoot," as well as "seas" and "six," to enhance word identification abilities. In the meantime, it is strongly advised that students engage in the practice of reading English aloud in the morning and engage in communication with their peers during their free time. This approach is essential as it allows students to actively seek opportunities to enhance their oral English skills, given the challenge of finding native speakers for practice.

Regarding the Sichuan English learners, one initial approach they can use is to emulate the pronunciation of their lecturers. This is attributable to the fact that English instructors have undergone structured instruction in phonetics. In an educational setting, students have frequent opportunities to engage in communication with their English instructors. Furthermore, as previously said, students have the opportunity to replicate genuine English audio resources, such as those derived from English films or television programs. This approach fosters increased engagement and facilitates simpler accessibility for learners. Students get the opportunity to engage in the practice of emulating the genuine rendition and subsequently documenting their vocalizations. Through the process of comparing standard English pronunciation, learners can identify and rectify errors, moving towards a more accurate rendition of Received Pronunciation or General American in English pronunciation.

The English pronunciation of teachers also exerts a nuanced influence on students. However, the English pronunciation of most local English teachers in Sichuan is influenced by dialects, resulting in deviations from Received Pronunciation or General American. Consequently, the English spoken by these teachers may lack naturalness and closeness to inner circle speakers. With regards to enhancing teacher training, pertinent educational institutions and organizations should conduct training sessions of intelligibility courses. This approach aims to enhance teachers' proficiency in English pronunciation instruction, including features such as pronunciation, intonation, and related facets. English educators must possess a comprehensive understanding of English phonetics and demonstrate familiarity with fundamental concepts in phonetics, including liaison, assimilation, stress, intonation, and related aspects. It is also noticeable that English teachers should pay more attention to the intelligibility instructions, and not only expect the students to acquire an accent of the inner circle, which may be the future direction of English pronunciation teaching in China.

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