Relevant Research and Normative Recommendations on the Pronunciation of Letter Words

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Abstract. Letter words refer to words in Chinese that are composed of Latin letters, Greek letters, or other Western letters, or their hybrid forms with symbols, numbers and Chinese characters. They mainly include English letter words, abbreviations of Chinese phonetic alphabet, and letter words in the form of an alphabet. These letters simplify the form of communication, but how to standardize their usages in order to get them more adapted to the society and people's language habits is still an urgent question. Therefore, the author puts forward some suggested ideas.

Keywords: Letter words · Recognition · Specification

1 Introduction

Facing the tendency of globalization and the progress of science and technology, international interactions are more tightened than ever before, a variety of letter words continue to pour in, the number is increasing, there is also a phenomenon of inconsistent pronunciation methods, easy to misread, and the academic community has also carried out many investigations and discussions on the pronunciation of letter words. If the current problems in the reading of letters and words cannot be solved, it will not be conducive to the inheritance and development of Chinese culture. As a researcher of Chinese language and literature (teacher training), after reading a large number of relevant literature, combined with author's thinking, the author made some basic ideas about the norms of alphabet reading.

2 Search Results and Analysis

At 4:00 p.m. on May 26, 2022, there are 1454 search results for "letter words" in the subject word query of CNKI:

First, with the gradual integration of China with the international community, letter words have become a link that cannot be ignored in the Chinese vocabulary system and play a unique role in the Chinese language system. (CNKI-Zhou Xing 2021-08-15).

Second, the purpose of the compilation of the Modern Chinese Dictionary — "standardizing modern Chinese" — is restrictive to the specification of letter words included in the Modern Chinese Dictionary. However, the current letter words acceptance specification of the Modern Chinese Dictionary is contrary to its purpose of compilation and needs to be improved urgently. (CNKI-Xie Jun 2021-04-26).

Third, this study investigates the attitude of media practitioners in the use of alphabets through questionnaires to understand the use of alphabets in their work, the understanding of the norms for the use of alphabets, and the attitude towards the management of national norms. (CNKI-Zhang Di 2020-08-15).

At 4:00 p.m. on May 26, 2022, there were 32 search results on the People's Daily Online for "letter words" (exact matching).

First, the "Opinions on Comprehensively Strengthening the Work of Language and Writing in the New Era" also requires strengthening the normative guidance of new words and new languages, letter words, foreign language words, etc., strengthening language civilization education, strengthening the standardization and management of language and writing use, resolutely curbing the spread of vulgar and violent online language, and building a healthy and civilized language environment. (People's Daily News — Cover News 2021-12-09).

Second, for another example, in the standardization of language and writing, it is required to "strengthen the monitoring, research and normative guidance of new words, letter words, foreign language words, etc." (People's Daily News — Viewpoint Channel 2021-12-02 Tian Yu).

It can be seen that with the introduction of a variety of letter words, society pays great attention to the use of letter words, and many scholars have done corresponding research on the specifications of letter words, including classification, application, pronunciation methods, etc., However, there has been lacking a standardized set of pronunciation criteria for letter words. In the 7th edition of the Modern Chinese Dictionary, a total of 238 letter words are included, of which 47 are annotated with pinyin, while the remaining 191 are not [4], proving that the pronunciation specifications of letter words are still extremely imperfect. Because the composition of letter words is complex and diverse, including numbers, Chinese characters, Western letters, etc., it has caused certain difficulties to vocalization. In the following, the author will elaborate from three aspects: the definition and reasons for the occurrence of letter words, the investigation and comparative analysis of the extensive reading of letter words, and the research recommendations for standardizing the standards for the pronunciation of unified letter words.

3   The Definition of Letter Words and the Reason for Its Occurrence

Letter words refer to words in Chinese that are formed by western letters such as Latin and Greek letters or by mixing them with symbols, numbers or Chinese characters. Letter words can be used in spoken language and have a complete sense of meaning, mainly including the following three categories [3]:

- English letter words, including English words and English acronyms. Such as: 0ffice (computer software name), Windows (computer software name), Internet (Internet),

E-mail (email), CD (laser turntable), EQ (emotional intelligence), WC (water closet), EMS (postal express mail), UFO (unidentified flying objects), WTO (World Trade Organization), APP (generally refers to applications), DNA (deoxyribonucleic acid), β rays, B ultrasound, ATM machine, POS machine, 3D, AA system, pH, 4S shop, etc.

- Hanyu Pinyin alphabet abbreviation form. Such as: GB (national standard), RMB (RMB), HSK (Chinese proficiency test) and so on.
- Letter words in the form of an alphabet. Such as: T-shirt, S-shaped, C-shaped, etc.

There are two main reasons for the emergence of a large number of letter words: First, with the needs of social development, international exchanges are becoming more and more frequent, and various foreign words are introduced into China; And the general increase in social literacy has led to a gradual increase in the understanding and acceptability of letter words; coupled with the general use of computers and their networks brought about by the progress of science and technology, many vocabulary abbreviations have been simplified into letter words. Whether it is due to the difficulty of translating and transliterating some foreign words (such as DIY, WTO), or for the sake of convenient writing and memory, the letter words is in line with the laws of social development and is suitable for development and popularization [5].

4   The Investigation and Comparative Analysis of the Extensive Reading of Letter Words

In order to make a basic survey of the pronunciation of letter words, the author designed a simple questionnaire and divided the respondents according to their age, education, subject cultural background, and occupation. A total of 140 people participated in the survey, of which 99 young people aged 18–25, accounting for 70.71% of all participants, the most important group, followed by the middle-aged group aged 45–50, a total of 17 people, accounting for 12.14% of the total number of people; the degree is the highest proportion of undergraduate (99 people, 70.71%), followed by high school (11 people, 7.86%) and graduate students (10 people, 7.14%); subject background in literature and history (99 people, 70.71%) and science and engineering (32 people, 22.86%); from the perspective of occupation, college students accounted for the highest proportion (82 people, 58.57%), followed by teachers (6 people, 4.29%).

Based on the data collection and analysis of the results of the questionnaire survey, it can be seen that only a smaller proportion of people know the definition of the word "letter word", 43 people, accounting for 30.71%, while many more people are not clearly defined (97 people, 69.29%). There are also obvious differences in the way different letters are read. The author selected 6 representative letter words for the survey, and the following is the corresponding table of the results of the different letter words surveys.

It can be seen that among these six letter words, the misreading rate of PPT is the highest, (even significantly more than half of the total number of surveys, 112 people, 80%, as shown in "Table 4"), followed by APP (81 people, 57.86%, as shown in "Table 5"), then POS machines (37 people, 26.43%, as shown in "Table 3") and B2B (27 people, 19.29%, as shown in "Table 6"), and finally E-mail (9 people, 6.43%, as shown in "Table 1"). RMB is more special, and the difference between the number of people in the two

Table 1. "E-mail"

Letter words	Reading	
	E is pronounced in alphabetical order, Mail is read in English words	Electronic Mail, Read it in full English
E-mail	131 people, 93.57%	9 people, 6.43%

Table 2. "RMB"

Letter words	Reading	
	R, M, B, Read it in alphabetical order	rén míng bì, Pronounced in Hanyu Pinyin
RMB	84 people, 60%	56 people, 40%

Table 3. "POS 机"

Letter words	Reading		
	POS, Read it according to the English word "pos", "Machine" is pronounced in Chinese	Point of sales, Read it in full English	P, O, S are pronounced in the English alphabet, "Machine" is pronounced in Chinese characters
POS 机	103 people, 73.57%	8 people, 5.71%	29 people, 20.71%

Table 4. "PPT"

Letter words	Reading	
	P, P, T, Read it in alphabetical order	Power Point Read it in English words
PPT	112 people, 80%	28 people, 20%

reading methods is not large (as shown in "Table 2"), which shows that there is a big controversy in the recognition of the word.

Below, the author will roughly divide into several categories according to pronunciation habits for analysis.

- The first category, such as Office (Microsoft Office, computer office software name), E-mail (Electronic Mail, e-mail). These letter words retain a part of the original English word, pronounced according to the English word, and only the first part is read in English.

Table 5. "APP"

Letter words	Reading		
	A, P, P Read it in alphabetical order	app Read it according to the abbreviation pronunciation of the first three letters of the words "application"	application Read it in English words
APP	74 people, 52.86%	59 people, 42.14%	7 people, 5%

Table 6. "B2B"

Letter words	Reading	
	B, two, B Read it according to the English alphabet and English words	B, 2, B Read in accordance with English letters and Arabic numerals
B2B	113 people, 80.71%	27 people, 19.29%

- The second category, such as CD (Compact Disk, laser turntable), VCD (Video Compact Disc), EQ (Emotional Quotient, emotional intelligence), WC (Water Closet, lavatory), EMS (Express Mail Service, postal express mail service), VIP (very important person, VIP), DIY (Do It Yourself, do it yourself) and so on. Due to the long English full name, such letter words are generally abbreviated from the initials of various Western words, and people are accustomed to reading these words according to each English letter. In addition, the author also classifies the letter words in the form of Hanyu Pinyin alphabet abbreviations into this category. For example, GB (national standard), RMB (Renminbi), HSK (Chinese Proficiency Test), etc., which are similar to English acronyms, take part of the pinyin initials to form letter words, and there are some controversies about the pronunciation.

- The third category, such as AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome, also known as AIDS), POS machines (Point of sales, point of sale intelligence management systems), COM (Commercial organizations, business organizations, companies), APP (Application, applications) and so on. Some of these letters are the same as the second category, taking the initials of each word (such as AIDS, POS), and some are simplified combinations of letters that make up the words in several full names (such as COM, APP), but people generally do not read according to the English alphabet, but regard it as part of the word and read it as a whole.

- The fourth category: such as PPT, etc. According to the reading method of Western countries, PPT is generally pronounced as the same pronunciation as the original English full name Power Point, that is, it is read as two words. However, according to the survey, the author found that such words have the highest mispronunciation rate, and most people pronounce them according to the English letters P, P, and T.

- The fifth category: b-scan ultrasonography (two-dimensional ultrasound), AA system (Algebraic Average, each person shares the cost equally), T-shirt (a short-sleeved clothing), α particles (of which α from Greek letters, particles emitted when certain radioactive material decays) and so on. This type of letter words is partly a Western alphabet word, part is letter words in the form of letters. Alphabetic alphabet word, and its common point is that the Western alphabet and Chinese characters are mixed, and people generally read according to different components, the Western part reads the Western language, and the Chinese part reads the Chinese part.
- The sixth category: for example, B2B (Business-to-Business, a process of business transactions), C2C (Customer-to-Customer, e-commerce between individuals), MP3 (music player), etc., such letters are composed of numbers and English letters, take B2B and C2C, because the 2 in B2B is an abbreviated form of to, so the numbers in it should be read according to the pronunciation of English numbers For MP3, the numbers should be read in Arabic numerals [1, 2, 6].

5 Research Proposals to Standardize the Standards for the Pronunciation of Uniform Letter Words

Whether to read in letters or pinyin has become the first important issue. From the perspective of the author, the use of letters is more corresponded with international reality and the need of communication in today's world. In the Modern Chinese Dictionary, most of the phonetic words in the dictionary are from English, mainly because it's dominate position in the global communication., although since the reform and opening up, with the continuous improvement of China's comprehensive national strength, the international status of Chinese has also improved, but compared with the English the influence of Hanyu Pinyin is still relatively limited; at the same time, due to the special pronunciation of Hanyu Pinyin, it is divided into initials and finals, which are not as recognizable as English letters, and English letters such as Q do not have corresponding Hanyu Pinyin. Therefore, the use of pinyin in some particular situation is inconvenient; in addition, society as a whole has become accustomed to reading letters in English, and it is a suitable choice to continue to use them rather than to reject them.

Moreover, it must be realized that Pinyin is not an official script of Chinese after all, but only plays a temporary substitute for writing. If the letter words is pronounced according to the pronunciation of Hanyu Pinyin, it will cause controversy over the replacement of Chinese characters with pinyin for the convenience of writing [3].

In summary, the author believes that the following pronunciation specification standard settings are conducive to the use of letter words management:

- For pure English letter words: (1) If it contains parts that can be pronounced and spelled according to English words, it is pronounced according to English words; for example, E-mail, because the "mail" part of it can still be pronounced according to the spelling and pronunciation rules of English, so whether it is for convenience or people's reading habits (E is read according to English letters, mail is read according to English words, the number of people reading according to English words is 131 people, 93.57%), this rule is the most appropriate (2) if the former is not included, It is pronounced according to the English alphabet.

- For letter words whose origin is a Chinese abbreviation: read according to the pronunciation of the English alphabet. For example, HSK, which is the abbreviation of "Han", "Water" and "Kao" in the "Chinese Proficiency Test", if it is read in Chinese, pronounced as "Han Shui Kao", there will be a problem of difficult to understand the meaning; if it is read according to Hanyu Pinyin, there are problems of difficult and light pronunciation. Another example is RMB, which is the abbreviation of "Yuan", if read in Chinese, the difference with the original name "RMB" is actually not much, it all requires three pronunciations to represent different characters; if it is pronounced according to Hanyu Pinyin, it is the same as HSK. And combined with the survey results, people are more likely to read according to the English alphabet pronunciation (84 people, 60%).

- For western world and Chinese, numbers mixed letter words: (1) The western world is the same as the rule 1. (2) The number part, if it is the original Western abbreviation of the letter words, is recognized according to the Western pronunciation, and the others are recognized according to Arabic numerals, which is conducive to people recognizing the letter words, sociated with their original writing and meaning, which is more conducive to associative memory. The most typical examples are B2B, C2C, B2B is an abbreviation of the English word Business-to-Business, where "to" is the "2" in the letter words. The same is true of C2C, which is an abbreviation for Consumer-to-Customer. Moreover, as can be seen from the survey data above, it is clear that the number of people who are accustomed to reading according to this reading method (113 people, 80.71%) is also significantly greater than the number of people who use Arabic numerals (27 people, 19.29%). (3) Chinese part is pronounced according to Chinese pronunciation. For example, PH value, AA system, etc.

- For special letter words such as APP and PPT: read according to the reading method that is more inclined by society as a whole. Judging from the survey data, for example, APP, the number of people reading according to the English alphabet reached 74, accounting for 52.86%; if the reading method used in Western countries is the correct standard, most people's reading is wrong, and the same is true for PPT (112 people, 80%). Therefore, the author believes that it is advisable to follow the principle of "convention" and read the English alphabet according to the English alphabet, rather than read the complete words according to the reading method of Western countries. This way of reading is not only in line with social reading habits, but also more convenient than reading words.

6 Conclusion

This study mainly solves the problem that letter words are difficult to be classified and pronounced due to various types. On the basis of learning and summarizing the previous research results, according to the different sources of letter words and people's pronunciation habits, this study makes a systematic classification of letter words, and puts forward four suggestions to standardize the pronunciation of letter words. This is of great significance for perfecting the pronunciation rules of letter words and developing Chinese culture.

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