A Study on Putonghua Proficiency Test Management Models

Lin Tang*, Xiaodong Dai

School of Humanities, Sichuan University of Science & Engineering

ABSTRACT

Native language is very important for the own people. As we know, Putonghua is the official Chinese language. In order to communicate conveniently for the people come from different area in China, Putonghua is vigorously promoted by the Chinese government, and the Putonghua proficiency test is conducted. In this paper, two Putonghua proficiency test management models (traditional model and improved model) are studied. And the comparisons of the two models in different phase are made to show the superiority of the improved model. This study shows the test time, human and physical resources can be greatly saved in the improved model.

Keywords: Putonghua proficiency test, management model, manual testing, computer-aided testing

1. INTRODUCTION

Every country has their official language, and all people should learn their official language well. In China, Putonghua is the official language. However, China is made up of 56 nationalities, and every nationality has its own language. People in different areas may use different languages. In order to realize fluency communication and spread Chinese culture to the world, Putonghua is vigorously promoted[1-3]. As Putonghua is the national language of China, to promote the national Putonghua can overcome the language barrier and promote social interaction, and it is significant to construct the socialist economic, political and cultural. In the reform and open up era, with the development of socialist market economy, the demand for official language is becoming more and more urgent. Popularizing Putonghua will create a good language environment, promote the interaction of businesses, and construct a favorable market environment.

Putonghua proficiency test is a spoken Chinese test on the standard degree and proficiency. There are 3 levels and each level is separated into two degrees. Putonghua proficiency test is not a kind of eloquence test; it can evaluate the proficiency level of a candidate. The phonetics, vocabularies, grammar specifications is the important basis for the evaluation.

There are four parts in the Putonghua proficiency test[4-7]. The first part is monosyllabic words pronunciations. There are 100 monosyllabic words in this part, and the students should read them in 210 seconds. The second part is disyllabic words pronunciations. There are 50 disyllabic words in this part, and the students should read them in 150 seconds. The third part is the passage reading. The students should read the specified passage in 4 minutes with controllable voice and intonation. The passage contains about 400 words. The last part is talk about a given topic. The students have 3 minutes to freely talk everything about the topic without relying on the text.

Putonghua proficiency test management is a very complex work. Due to the large amounts of candidates, there needs a lot of professional teachers. And in the test process many professional managers are needed. With the growth of candidates, the formal management of Putonghua proficiency test is necessary. In this paper, the traditional management model and the improved model for Putonghua proficiency test is analyzed, and the advantages of the improved model are shown in the comparison section.

2. TRADITIONAL MANAGEMENT MODEL

Traditional Putonghua proficiency test management is a complex and costly model, which is based on manual testing[8-9], and can be described as follows.

Information publishing phase.

• When the proficiency test is ready, the administrator will call the class monitors in different classes, and tell them the testing information: the registration place and time, the testing time, the materials need to be prepared, and so on.
• The class monitors send the message to all the classmates.
Preparation phase.
- The class monitors in different class should collect the materials of the students who want to take the Putonghua test. And then, they should send the candidates’ information and the materials to the teacher who in charge of the test.
- When getting the candidates’ materials, the teacher in charge of the test should record the registration information, and arrange the training and test according to the number of candidates. Then the teacher will send the training information to the class committees, and tell them the test time and place. After that, the class monitors give the information to the candidates.
- All the candidates will be trained in a class room. In the process, the training teacher will tell the students how to prepare for the Putonghua proficiency test and the skills for the test, and correct the common wrong pronunciations.

Test phase.
- All the candidates have to wait for the test in the waiting area.
- When some candidate takes the test in the testing room, the next one would wait out of the door, and prepare for the talk topic.

The simplified model of traditional Putonghua proficiency test management model in high school is shown in Fig.1

3. IMPROVED MANAGEMENT MODEL
In improved Putonghua proficiency test management model, the complex work is greatly simplified, where the computer-aided testing is used[10-12]. The optimized management can be described as follows.
Information publishing phase.
- With the help of Internet, the workload of proficiency test information publishing is greatly reduced. The administrator uploads the testing information to the server, which can be shown in the specific webpage and can be kept for a long time.
- The students can visit the webpage and get the Putonghua proficiency test information in anytime and anywhere when they access to the Internet.

Preparation phase.
- The students login the Putonghua proficiency test system in the specific webpage, input the related information and finish the enrollment. Then, they can get the testing information: the training time and place, the test time and place, and the relative materials for the test.
- The Putonghua proficiency training will take a few hours. The teachers will give them some advices and teach the basic pronunciations. After that, the students have the opportunities to do the Putonghua practice on computers.

Test phase.
- The manager sends the test paper to each student, and every student will get different test contents. The computers will record the hole testing process.
- The next group of candidates should wait in the waiting room, and prepare the talk topic.

The improved model for Putonghua proficiency test in high school is shown in Fig.2

![Figure 2 Improved Management Model](image-url)
4. COMPARISONS OF THE TWO MODELS

4.1 Information publishing phase
In the traditional model, the administrator has to call all the class monitors. This work is boring. The administrator should repeatedly tell every class monitor the Putonghua proficiency test information and the materials need to be prepared. However, this information may not be get completely by every student, because some information may be left out by the class monitors. And if some of the class monitors change their phone numbers, the administrator has to make his/her effort to contact them in various ways.

In the improved model, the administrator just needs to publish the Putonghua proficiency test information to a specific webpage via the Internet. This is an easy work. Every student can read this information from the specific webpage. If they forget the training time, test time or the needed materials, they can retrieve the information from the webpage at anytime and anywhere.

In this phase, the workload of the administrator is greatly reduced in the improved model by using the Internet. And the errors and omissions in the process of transmission are avoided. Otherwise, the Putonghua proficiency test information can be retrieved from the webpage. However, in the traditional model, the students have to call the administrator to check the information if they forget it.

4.2 Preparing phase
In the traditional model, the students should find the teacher who in charge of the Putonghua proficiency test, and finish the registration in the teacher’s office. If they forget some materials, such as the photos, ID cards, application forms, etc., they have to register again in the next time. A lot of time will be wasted. And then, the teacher will tell them the training time and place, and the textbook for test.

The students have only two training courses, and every training course is lasting only 3 hours. The teacher will demonstrate the standard pronunciations, and the right pronunciation ways. However, after the training courses, the students have to practice on their own. No professional teacher would guide and correct their pronunciations.

In the improved model, the students can finish the registration by using their computers. They login the system and finish the registration with their related information and upload their photos. In this way, much time is saved. The students also have the same training courses, and in addition, they have the computer training courses. They will practice the pronunciations with the help of the computers. After the simulation test, the computers will show them the non-standard pronunciations, and help them to correct the pronunciations. And the computers will compare the standard pronunciations with the students’ pronunciations. In this way, the students will clearly know their non-standard pronunciations, and overcome them in the real test.

4.3 Test phase
In the traditional model, when a candidate tests, two teachers are needed. The two teachers record the test with a voice recorder and decide the scores of the candidate according to his/her pronunciation.

The other candidates have to wait their turn. Due to the limited number of professional teachers, the candidates always have to wait for a long time. In this model, the testing efficiency is low and the human resources are greatly consumed. The test of one candidate would take 20 minutes and two teachers should be assigned.

In the improved model, a group of computers and one manager are needed. The manager distributes the test paper to every student, and the students finish their test by using the computers. The computers record their voice, and compare with the standard pronunciations, and then, give the scores. In the process, if someone’s computer breaks down or the recording is failed, the manager will know this immediately, and make the equipment bake to normal. However, in the traditional model, the teachers cannot do this, because they do not know whether the voice recorder works properly or not. When they check the records after the test, they will know whether the record is success or not.

The other students have to wait in the waiting room. However, they do not need wait for a long time, because the students are test by group, and there are usually 20 students in a group. In this model, the testing efficiency is greatly improved, and the human resources are saved (only a few staffs and a professional manager are needed).

The title of the paper is centered 17.8 mm (0.67”) below the top of the page in 24 point font. Right below the title (separated by single line spacing) are the names of the authors. The font size for the authors is 11pt. Author affiliations shall be in 9 pt.

5. CONCLUSION

Putonghua is the national language in China, and Putonghua proficiency test is the important test for the evaluation of the Putonghua standard level. In this paper, two management models for Putonghua proficiency test are discussed, and the comparison results indicate that the improved model is suitable for the test in modern Putonghua proficiency tests.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This paper is supported by the scientific research of State Language Commission (YB125-78).

References


AUTHOR

Lin Tang received the B.S. degrees in Chinese Language & Literature from Sichuan Normal University in 2006. She is now a provincial-level Putonghua tester and a Putonghua proficient test administrator in Sichuan University of Science & Engineering. Her research interests include proficiency testing management, modern Chinese and comparative literature and world literature.

Xiaodong Dai is a professor of Sichuan University of Science & Engineering, and he is a state-level Putonghua tester. He has authored or co-authored more than 20 publications. His research interests include linguistics and applied linguistics, Chinese modern and contemporary literature and proficiency testing management.