Analysis of the Role of Mother Tongue Transfer in SLA from Cross-cultural Communication

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Abstract. The mother-tongue transfer has long been an important research topic in the field of second language acquisition. In cross-cultural communication, the mother-tongue transfer can be used not only as a second language learning method but also as an effective means of cross-cultural communication. In the current era of economic globalization and cultural pluralism, it is necessary to pay more attention to the role of mother-tongue transfer in second language acquisition, rather than just treating it as a 'cultural phenomenon'. This article discusses the advantages and disadvantages of using Chinese as a medium of second language acquisition for learners of English from China, in the form of mother-tongue transfer, from an intercultural perspective. The positive transfer of the mother tongue makes it easier for learners to acquire a second language. For those students who have a weak foundation in English, they are good at using Chinese thought to form sentences. Teachers need not be in denial but should adopt appropriate methods to facilitate positive transfer based on generalizing the similarities and differences between the two languages. Therefore, in the classroom, if teachers can get their students to identify the similarities between English and Chinese, they will be able to promote positive mother-tongue transfer.

1. Introduction

The first language is also called the mother tongue language. Some scholars in the academic circle believe that the degree of influence of the first language on the learning of the second language depends on the similarity or differences between the two languages. When people learn a second language, there will be some structural and formal migration due to the influence of the first language. There are many types of language transfer, such as: Sounds of language, Grammar, Meaning, Phonetics, Phonology, Morphology, Syntax, Semantics, Pragmatics. The differences between different languages will lead to different degrees of learner mastery of the vocabulary and syntax of the second language. This leads to the famous contrastive analysis hypothesis [1]. Mother tongue transfer involves two tendencies: positive transfer occurs when prior learning has a positive effect on subsequent learning, and negative transfer occurs when prior learning hinders subsequent learning. When learning a second language from the mother tongue transfer, the first language should be given priority.

Most current research on second language acquisition is strongly influenced by Larry Selinker's perspective [2]. The Universal Grammar (UG) and the human brain, which learners pass through, contain an innate psychological grammar that can help people acquire language, which refers to learning their mother tongue (Noam Chomsky) [3]. The cognitive system established by the first language is then used to learn the second language or language. The second language must share the resources of the first language. And it should be based on the first language. The article begins with a brief description of the basic connotations of language transfer, its development at home and abroad, and trends in its development. The second part of the article describes the similarities and differences between the mother tongue and the second language in terms of expression. The third section discusses how the positive transfer effect of the mother tongue can be properly used in second language learning.

2. Mother Tongue Transfer

2.1 The Concept of Mother Tongue Language Transfer and the Current Status and Trends of Research

Language is the carrier of a society's culture, and culture is the result of people coming together over a long period of time in a process of communication. Language plays a very important role when communicating between different countries, regions, and nations. It also has a positive impact on promoting relations between different countries and peoples.

This section will discuss the concept of mother tongue transfer Lado introduced the concept of 'language transfer' in his book Linguistics Across Cultures [4-5]. He believes that learners rely on their mother tongue when learning a second language and often transfer the form, meaning, and

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culture associated with the mother tongue to the second language. According to the theory of "mother tongue transfer", in the process of second language acquisition, mother tongue usage habits directly affect the effect of second language acquisition, which has both positive and negative effects on second language acquisition.

Then, the current situation and significance of the study of mother tongue transfer. With the development of the study of transfer, the concept of mother tongue transfer was put forward in the theory of comparative analysis, which emerged in the 1940s and 1950s, and has now attracted more and more attention from the academic community [1-3]. Also, there are other studies that have mentioned mother tongue transfer [6-10]. The study of mother-tongue transfer reached its peak in the 1980s and 1990s, which has made great achievements in both theory and practice. There are positive and negative language transfer. Positive transfer refers to the positive influence of the mother tongue on second language learning when the rules of the mother tongue are similar to those of the second language. Negative transfer, on the other hand, occurs when learners switch between two languages and is a negative effect of the mother tongue on foreign language learning. In recent years, Perfecto has explored English language teaching and bridging in mother tongue-based multilingual education [7]. Research on language transfer is proliferating, with Taylor suggesting that beginner learners of English will make more transfer errors than advanced learners of English because lower-level learners do not have sufficient knowledge of English and they are forced to transfer from their mother tongue.

Of the differences between the second language and the mother tongue, people often face a number of problems in cross-cultural communication: they often encounter incongruities in pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, and other aspects when communicating with their mother tongue's way of thinking [8-9]. When they encounter differences in meaning between their mother tongue and their second language, they often feel confused. When they use a second language to communicate, they have to use a language that is different or even opposite to the language they know to communicate, which shows that there are certain difficulties in learning and communicating a second language. To solve this problem, researchers have proposed many methods: for example, they use transfer theory to explain the incongruence between the mother tongue and the second language. They use word transfer to explain the incongruence of pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary in the second language. They use cultural transfer to explain this phenomenon. Over time, these theories have gradually been accepted and recognized by people. It is also being adopted by more and more researchers. Due to the differences in people's attitudes and behavior in cross-cultural communication, mother tongue transfer is different in the process of second language acquisition and its role will be different.

2.2 The Expression Focus of Mother Tongue and Second Language in Different Language Environments

In daily life, the mother tongue and a second language are closely related. If the mother tongue and the second language do not have the same performance focus, this will cause communication barriers to affect learning efficiency [10]. This section discusses "Vocabulary Learning", "Grammar Learning" and "Communicative Competence Development." Based on the relevant theories, this paper discusses the problems, such as the appearance of different representations of the mother tongue and second language, and their influence on teaching and communication. This section analyzes the problems caused by the change of emphasis on second language performance under different backgrounds and gives corresponding solutions.

2.2.1. Vocabulary Learning

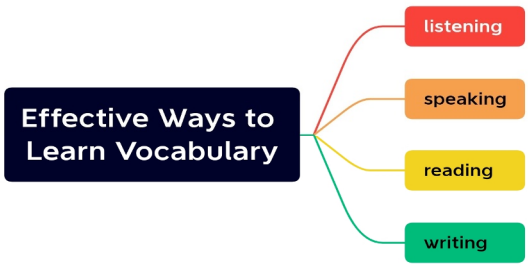


Figure 1. Effective Ways to Learn Vocabulary

For second language learners, the most effective way to learn vocabulary is to acquire new knowledge by listening, speaking, reading, and writing (Figure 1). This requires learners to master a large number of vocabulary, or can not effectively communicate. When learners' abilities reach a certain level, they can enlarge their knowledge reserves and enhance their cultural confidence by reading and learning vocabulary. Vocabulary learning is a complicated process for learners. This requires learners to learn new knowledge through extensive practice and constant use of second language vocabulary.

Idioms and slang will make learners' expressions more authentic when they use what they have learned in practice. Indeed, in order to enable learners to better learn a second language, understanding some idioms and slang will be more conducive to new knowledge.

Methods of learning new words: Vocabulary teaching is a new thing, it can spread quickly in a new environment, and may also be eliminated. When some new contents appear in Chinese, some idioms and slang often appear. Use the most frequently used idioms or slang to learn new words in people's daily life. This can also enrich and improve the existing knowledge base of learners.

2.2.2. The Differences in Grammar Rules between English and Chinese

It is mainly manifested in grammar and difficulties in comprehension:

First, in grammar and second language knowledge. Due to the obvious differences in grammar between the first and second languages. Therefore, even if learners master the basic grammar rules in English, they cannot apply all of them correctly to the second language. For example, Chinese students unconsciously omit the subject or the object in their daily language communication, thinking that it is a matter of language habit. When they ask 'Have you had your lunch?' but in Chinese expressions, students usually omit 'you'. It is a common phenomenon to omit the subject in Chinese.

Second, difficulty in comprehension. A very active tradition of research in a second language the syntactic structure in the mother tongue is composed of subject, predicate, and object, while in English, it is composed of the first two parts, but Chinese is different from English in that there is no object postposition in Chinese. In English, the composition of a sentence is divided into five parts: 1. Subject and predicate. (For example: I am swimming.) 2. Subject, predicate and object. (For instance: He likes to read books.) 3. Subject, predicate and predicative. (Eg: She looks beautiful.) 4. Subject, predicate, indirect object and direct object. (Eg: Jack gave the cat some food.) 5. Subject, predicate, object and object complement. (Eg: We call her Mary.) Structurally, English is more complex than Chinese. Therefore, grammar rules in Chinese are gradually mastered when learning the first language. It is difficult to master when learning a second language.

2.2.3. Communication Skills Development

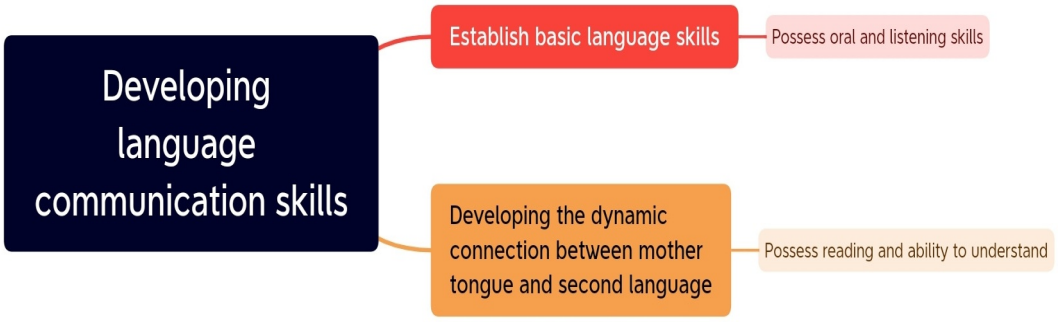


Figure 2. Communication Skills Development

Figure 2 shows the communication skills development. Since the communicative competence of the second language is related to the level of the mother tongue, in order to cultivate students' communicative competence in the second language. It is necessary for people should first cultivate the basic communicative skills formed in the process of learning the first language, such as listening, understanding, expression, writing, reading, and information processing.

In other words, how does the mother tongue transfer in communication? In order to develop students' communicative competence in a second language, they must first be taught basic communicative skills. For example, listening and speaking are established through imitation of phonological intonation. Secondly, students must develop a dynamic relationship between the mother language and the second language. A student can learn a second language by listening and speaking, but if he wants to interact with the second language, he must be able to read it. They must then learn how to understand and be able to transfer and reproduce the knowledge of the first language in the reading process. So the second language cannot be learned without the first language, because the first language is the basis for learning the second language. When students can acquire basic communicative skills, they can then learn some specific communicative skills (e.g. organization, expression, reading, comprehension, and information processing).

It is also important to pay attention to the differences in expression habits between English and Chinese.

2.3 How to Correctly Use the Positive Transfer Effect of the Mother Tongue in Second Language Learning

The positive transfer effect of the correct use of the mother tongue in second language learning. This is a fundamental principle in second language learning. In second language acquisition, it is necessary to use the mother tongue correctly and appropriately so that the positive effects of

the mother tongue can be transferred to second language acquisition. This is the case, for example, when dealing with cultural differences in everyday life. When learners are confronted with slang that is indigenous to the English language, direct translations may not make sense or may be difficult to understand. For example, the slang phrase 'raining cats and dogs' means 'pouring rain', but the direct translation in Chinese only literally means 'raining cats and dogs'. Therefore, in this case, it is necessary to localize the English language with the help of cultural background and use the mother tongue and the idiom 'da yu qing pen' which students can understand to help them learn the second language.

This section examines the concept of language transfer, first proposed by Selinker (1972) first explored the transfer of mother tongue to second language, and the term "transfer" was first proposed by Corder (1981), who believed that transfer was a communicative strategy. Ellis (1994) believes that transfer is not only a communicative strategy, but also a learning strategy. I think native language transfer in intercultural communication which holds that different language forms produce different results in different cultural contexts.

American linguist Harold Bloom mentioned the theory of mother tongue transfer in his research on the relationship between language and cultural transfer. In this theory, people can see that there is a certain difference between the second language and the mother tongue.

However, with the development of globalization, language has spread on a large scale around the world, and the phenomenon of "anglicization" in the context of globalization makes second language acquisition an important issue, so it is particularly important to analyze bilingual differences in the process of second language acquisition. Since the repetition of words is a very common phenomenon in Chinese, people can use this to study the influencing factors of mother-tongue migration.

3. Conclusion

This paper has drawn the following conclusions from extensive data analysis and literature summary. When people use their mother tongue for language learning, they encounter two problems: First, when people come to a language that is incongruent, or even opposite, to another language. There are certain differences between the foreign language they learn and the second language. Next, because of the differences in the cultural background, perceptions and ways of behaving that people hold, this also leads to a different role for mother-tongue transfer in second language acquisition. In addition to understanding what students already know, teachers should provide opportunities for students to make connections and interactions between new and old knowledge. Teachers should continually analyze the similarities that exist in both English and Chinese and make connections between them. Appropriate teaching techniques will be used to synthesize the two different cultural contexts to promote active learning. In the classroom, people can make their children aware of the similarities between English and Chinese to help them learn the second language. Therefore, we need to combine language knowledge with socio-cultural knowledge to help students learn and understand a second language from various aspects such as semantics, grammar and pragmatics through Chinese slang, idioms and expressions, thereby breaking down barriers of cultural differences.

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