

Enlightenment from Chinese-English Differences in Thinking on Oral English Teaching of College Students

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Abstract: Language is the material carrier of thinking, and the two are interdependent and inseparable. In the process of second language acquisition, learners' language thinking often has an important influence on the process and result of second language acquisition, primarily because native language thinking influences the verbal expression of the second language in daily life. Students in their native language environment and are influenced by their cultural practices develop specific native language thinking. They already have some background knowledge and cognitive comprehension of their native language in their minds before they try to learn a new language. Therefore, for them, the process of second language acquisition is not zero-based but takes the native language as the base. Moreover, because of the vast differences in grammar and expressions between English and Chinese, the casual nature of the spoken language, and the less rigorous grammatical requirements, English learners who use Chinese as their first language tend to apply their native language's habitual thinking to the use of English. Therefore, exploring the relationship between Chinese thinking and speaking is an integral part of the second language acquisition process. This paper explores the relationship between Chinese thinking and speaking, explores the influence of language thinking on speaking acquisition, and discusses how classroom teaching can help learners overcome the interference of fixed thought in Chinese and develop English thinking skills to improve learners' English-speaking performance.

Keywords: Differences between English and Chinese thinking, oral English, teaching method, university students.

1. Introduction

For second language learners, English thinking is defined as the mastery of English at an infinitely close to native level, the ability to express one's thoughts and ideas flexibly in fluent, authentic English, and the formation of an intuitive, conditional way of thinking that brings language back into

practical application. From the articles, it is found that "scholars" mainly focus on analyzing the influence of thinking differences on English literacy but pay less attention to the knowledge of oral output. However, the communicative ability of college students has always been the focus and difficulty of English teaching. Therefore, we start from the differences between English and Chinese thinking, hoping to cultivate learners' English thinking and improve their verbal acquisition ability through classroom teaching. The differences between English and Chinese thinking are reflected in various aspects, such as the differences between linear and curvilinear thinking[1], the differences in grammar[2], the differences in language order[3], and the differences in thinking order, and other aspects.

When students are in their native language environment and are influenced by the cultural practices of their nationality, it leads to learner-specific native language thinking. Learners already have some background knowledge and cognitive understanding of their native language before learning a new language[4]. Thus, for them, the process of second language acquisition is not zero-based but is based on their native language. They first acquire the standard features of human language through their native language[5], such as the phonological system, with phonemic and syllabic units, vowels, and consonants[6]; semantics, with both core and additional meanings; and grammar, with nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, pronouns, and other word classes. Next, the acquired knowledge and experience are used to reconstruct the target language system. As students understand the meaning of words[7], they unconsciously convert the new symbols they encounter into synonyms in their native language so that the two can be related to each other, thus deepening their memory. When learning grammar, it is difficult for them to avoid stereotypes of their native language. They subconsciously use the syntactic structure of their native language to organize the target language. The first language influences not only the acquisition of grammar in the second language but also the choice and vocabulary. This inaccuracy in language expression due to differences in grammar forms can lead to problems in the communication process, which may make it difficult for the hearing party to understand the meaning and deviation, causing communication difficulties. Under this teaching model, learners will develop instrumental thinking in Chinese and adopt a translation approach to learning English. After a lengthy study period, college students' literacy skills have improved significantly. They can understand passages accurately and realize translations between English and Chinese books. However, despite their knowledge base in phonetics, grammar, and vocabulary, their oral communication skills in English still lag in developing written expression skills. This point deserves further exploration.

However, scholars at home and abroad have focused their research on teaching Chinese thinking and grammar on written expression[8], while less analysis has been done on oral communication. When scholars from the United States and other countries have investigated the link between cognitive differences between Chinese and English speakers and the teaching of English, their main focus has been to determine how the native Chinese way of thinking affects reading and writing in English. Using this element of research, three main approaches can be taken. First, most prior research has focused on the harmful effects of thinking in one's native language. Specifically, these studies[9][10] have used the Chinese-English phenomenon as an entry point to explore the difficulties associated with word mis-matching, morphological differences, linguistic confusion, and repeated use of words in English-Chinese translation. In addition to this, many scholars have used the practice of using auditory thinking to capture second language learners' processes of looking at photographs and composing music to highlight the link between native language thinking and foreign language writing ability. The findings show a deteriorating relationship between the time spent thinking in the native language and the quality of the writing produced. They argue that, based on this information, significant efforts must be made to overcome the interference of the native language and to build the ability to think in English language teaching[11], which is crucial. On the other hand, many

studies[12]-[14] have shown that thinking in the original language can positively influence the positive transfer of second language acquisition. Intending to improve the quality of English language teaching and learning, these researchers advocate the functional complementarity of native language and English language thinking. This is done to continuously build bridges between the foreign language and the native language[15], to improve the efficiency of target language learning, and ultimately to achieve exemplary teaching results. Third, other studies using methods such as controlled trials and questionnaires have concluded that the effects of English or Chinese thinking on second language acquisition are comparable[16]. These different ways of thinking have a place in developing second language acquisition. In addition, several studies have investigated the effect of a person's native language, Chinese, on their second language, spoken English, expression. These studies have concluded that the main functions of the mother tongue in the production of said English output are task response, content conception, word formation, and process control. On the other hand, the samples used in these studies were tiny and, therefore, can only be used as a hypothesis for further research. In this paper, we will increase the sample size and combine various research methods to explore the role of language thinking in teaching spoken English in higher education. Our focus will be on the differences in the ways of thinking between Chinese and English and the spoken expressions of second languages such as English.

Based on the above discussion, we will draw appropriate conclusions. In conclusion, the influence of the difference between Chinese and English thinking on speaking learning has received much attention. Still, a systematic understanding has not yet been developed, so this paper uses a questionnaire to examine how classroom teaching can be used to increase learners' awareness of the difference between Chinese and English thinking and to promote their speaking skills.

2. Research

2.1. Methodology

This questionnaire is aimed at 100 college students aged 18-22 who have participated in oral English classes and have spoken English scores. Through questions 1, 2 and 3, the paper aims to find out the influence of college students' oral ability and classroom teaching methods and models. Through questions 6, 13 and 14, the paper tries to find out the relationship between college students' oral English and their personality and traditional introverted thoughts. Questions 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 and 15 were used to explore whether college students' spoken English is related to Chinese translation thinking and Chinese grammar thinking. Question four will discuss whether teaching materials affect spoken English.

As can be seen from the above table, Chi-square test (cross analysis) is used to study the difference (independence) between oral English classroom teaching methods, students' grammar habits, students' personality and translation methods, and the selection of English textbooks on oral English scores. It can be seen from the above table: Different classroom teaching methods, students' grammar habits, students' personality and translation methods, and the choice of English textbooks had significant effects on oral English scores ($P < 0.05$), which meant that different classroom teaching methods had different effects on oral English scores. It can be concluded that different classroom teaching methods, students' grammar habits, students' personalities and translation methods, and the choice of English textbooks all show significant differences in oral English scores.

2.2. Results

This questionnaire analyzes the effect of the difference between Chinese and English thinking on English-speaking performance. Since the model's dependent variable is the speaking version and the

independent variables are thinking styles, thinking habits and teaching methods, etc., this study adopts multiple regression and chi-square tests for data analysis.

Table 1: The general relationship between the difference between Chinese and English thinking and English-speaking result.

		Coefficient ^a			t	Sig.	Collinearity statistics	
model		Non-standardized coefficient	Standard coefficient	t			allowance	VIF
		B	standard error	t				
	(constant)	2.202	.579		3.805	.000		
one	The reason for using Chinese	-.469	.173	-.374	-2.713	.008	.563	1.777
	Importance attached to English	.602	.190	.438	3.179	.002	.563	1.777

A. dependent variable: English achievement

Analysis: This table proves that the importance of reflection in English plays a positive role in the score of spoken English at the 0.01 level of significance. The B-value of the reason for thinking in Chinese is -0.483, and the Sig value is 0.002, less than 0.01, proving that the reason for believing in Chinese plays a negative role in the score of spoken English at the 0.01 level of significance.

From this, we can conclude that excessive use of thinking in Chinese can negatively affect the acquisition of spoken English in the process of oral language acquisition.

(One) The effect of teaching style on speaking performance

Table 2: Spoken classes are taught in full English* Verbal result.

		Result					Total
		90-100	80-89	70-79	60-69	Under 60	
Spoken classes are taught in English	Disagree	0	2	5	11	7	25
	Agree	12	18	12	4	3	49
	Strongly	8	14	8	1	1	32
Total		20	34	25	16	11	106

Table 3: Teachers guides students to think in English* Verbal result.

		Result					Total
		90-100	80-89	70-79	60-69	Under 60	
Teachers guides students to think in English	Disagree	0	3	4	6	4	17
	Agree	20	31	21	10	1	89
	Total	20	34	25	16	11	106

Through the results of the chi-square analysis, we can find that students who adopt a better performance in spoken English mostly accept the all-English teaching style in the process of learning, so we can assume that adopting the all-English teaching format and exposing learners to the English environment more in the process of learning to speak has a boosting effect on learners' English performance.

(Two) The effect of speaking output rate on speaking performance.

Table 4: Often reluctant to engage in oral expression* Verbal result.

		Result					Total
		90-100	80-89	70-79	60-69	Under 60	
Often reluctant to oral expression	Disagree	17	30	17	2	1	67
	Agree	2	3	6	6	4	21
	Strongly	1	1	2	8	6	18
Total		20	34	25	16	11	106

Table 5: Not speaking for fear of expressing perfectly* Verbal result.

		Result					Total
		90-100	80-89	70-79	60-69	Under 60	
Not speaking for fear Expressing perfectly	Disagree	17	28	14	3	2	64
	Agree	2	4	7	5	4	22
	Strongly	1	2	4	8	5	20
Total		20	34	25	16	11	106

We can conclude from tables (4) and (5) that learners with speaking scores below 60 are usually reluctant to do speaking activities because they are worried about poor speaking expression. In contrast, learners with scores above 60 do not resist speaking English. We can conclude that the higher the output rate of speaking, the higher the learners' speaking scores will be, so students should be given the leading role in the classroom, given more space to express themselves, and encouraged to do.

(Three) The effect of thinking in the process of using speaking on speaking performance.

Table 6: Prepare English speech in Chinese* Verbal result.

		Result					Total
		90-100	80-89	70-79	60-69	Under 60	
Prepare English in Chinese	Disagree	20	28	12	2	1	63
	Agree	0	3	8	8	5	24
	Strongly	0	3	5	6	5	19
Total		20	34	25	16	11	106

The analysis results in Table (6) show that learners with speaking scores below 60 are accustomed to using Chinese thinking in speaking, thinking about the content to be expressed in Chinese, and then translating the Chinese content into English. In contrast, learners with scores above 60 are less likely to use this method of Chinese to English translation, which means that teachers should guide students to overcome the habit of using Chinese to translate in the speaking class. This means that teachers should teach students to overcome the addiction to using Chinese to solve in the speaking classroom to improve their speaking performance.

According to the data analysis, we get that students' English speaking performance is better when teachers use English thinking guidance in speaking classes, use a full English teaching method, correct Chinese thinking errors, and use authentic speaking materials. At the same time, we get that students who have poor grammar and syntax mastery, use native syllable markers, are used to using Chinese translation thinking, often use imitation memorization, and are reluctant to open their mouths because they are afraid of imperfections have poorer English speaking performance.

3. Discussion

It is believed that thinking plays a significant role in oral language acquisition, so this section focuses on why the differences between Chinese and English thought impact oral language acquisition.

1. Grammatical differences can cause a lack of fluency in spoken output.

There is no fixed requirement for the position of the subject in spoken Chinese expressions, and there is often a reversal of the order of words; however, because people who are native speakers of Mandarin are used to this, the reverse of the order of words does not affect their reading and understanding, so spoken Chinese expressions have a strong casualness. Still, spoken English is more logical and has a complex sentence structure, so if learners use Chinese thinking to express themselves, it may cause a contradictory situation, thus affecting the acquisition of spoken language. At the same time, Chinese grammar is arbitrary compared to English grammar, and there are cases of verb superposition. For example, the more active expressions and verb forms in Chinese lead to more casual use of verbs in communication influenced by fixed thinking, such as "I want to eat." Here "want" and "eat" are the same verb, but in Mandarin spoken expressions, these two words can be used directly without changing their forms, while in English spoken expressions, the two verbs cannot appear in one sentence, so the help of "to" is needed.

2. The differences between Chinese and English ways of thinking cause deviations in the meaning of spoken expressions.

Chinese people tend to be introverted and conservative, while Westerners tend to be direct. Therefore, Chinese people often associate objective facts with their subjective feelings when expressing, make the described things more concrete, and use as much rhetoric as possible to modify the nouns. At the same time, Westerners prefer to use the shortest words to express the most accurate meaning, so there may be analysis and deviation between Chinese and Westerners in oral communication.

3. Differences in traditional Chinese thinking habits cause less and less effective spoken output.

Chinese people are often taught the idea of "doing the best" when they are young. Children from one Chinese family are often compared with children from other families, so the one who performs less well usually has a psychological burden. Therefore, in the classroom, when the teacher asks for oral communication, most of the learners are reluctant to speak because of the psychological commitment and the fear of not expressing themselves fluently. Some of them will write a "mini-essay" on the upcoming topic in their native language, Chinese, based on the language they are used to. "This habit of thinking harms learners' oral acquisition and affects the effectiveness of oral acquisition. Influenced by Chinese traditional culture, most Chinese students have formed a comprehensive thinking and are good at analyzing problems from the whole to the part. However, in English, it focuses more on the analytical thinking from part to whole. For example, Chinese students are accustomed to summarize the main idea and then explain it when expressing their ideas, while native English speakers often express their ideas directly and then summarize their examples at the end.

4. Conclusions

The thinking difference between Chinese and English is a common problem in college students' oral English teaching. How to help students overcome the obstacles in oral English and cultivate English thinking is one of the key points in college English class.

Based on the study, this paper proposes that Chinese and English thinking affects the expression of spoken English and that college students who are proficient in English review are more likely to master spoken English. The factors that affect English thinking include grammatical differences, differences in expressions, translation methods, and whether teachers have taught according to the

Chinese-English review. The symbolic thinking of Chinese and the abstract thinking of English can make it difficult for students to express themselves in spoken English. The euphemistic expressions of Chinese can create ambiguity in students' choice of English sentences. In addition, the lack of continuity and the traditional method of teaching by imitation and recitation can solidify students' spoken English.

Thus, the way of teaching is significant. Accordingly, the following points are suggested:

1. It is necessary to choose appropriate teaching materials in the teaching so that students can meet the requirements of teaching and broaden their horizons.

2. Teachers can refer to the relevant foreign textbooks to prepare textbooks on the basis of experience.

3. Teachers need to remind students to be careful in using native language markers in oral practice; otherwise, they will change the intonation of English itself.

4. Students should be guided to speak English, think in English, and gradually develop an English way of thinking; adopt an entire English teaching method so that students can be exposed to the English environment for a more extended period and gradually accept and learn English expressions; they need to consciously correct students' mistakes in Chinese thinking in oral learning, and try not to use Chinese thought in teaching.

Through data analysis, It is believed that it is cumbersome to calculate statistical formulas manually. Still, with the help of relevant statistical software and plug-ins, this process will become more intuitive and straightforward. The disadvantage of this research is that the analysis objects are relatively limited and the number is small, and the obtained data may not represent all groups. If the sample is enlarged, it may improve the scientificity and validity of the survey results and reduce the chance. Second, the statistical knowledge mastered is relatively basic, the influencing factors, various indicators, and the analysis process analysis are not comprehensive and professional, and the model is ineffective.

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