A Review of Research on Mother Tongue Transfer During English as a Second Language Acquisition

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Abstract: In the process of second language acquisition, learners are often influenced by native language transfer. The effect can be both positive and negative. That is, the impact of positive and negative migrations. This paper is aimed at learners who speak English as a second language. This paper mainly summarizes the influence of mother tongue transfer on grammar, pronunciation, and vocabulary. Mother tongue transfer may be challenging for English as a second language learners in terms of grammatical morphological changes, word order, virtual word functions, and syntactic component correspondence. The sentence structure in English is more complex than in Chinese. This makes it easy for learners to have difficulties in mastering English tenses, voice, singular and plural, etc. The second is the impact of native language transfer on English pronunciation. Native Chinese speakers are influenced by Chinese tones when learning English pronunciation. This results in a lack of fluency and accuracy in pronunciation. Finally, there is the impact of mother tongue transfer on English vocabulary. Since each language will have similarities, it indirectly enriches the vocabulary of the second language, and it is faster for us to learn and memorize. Learners should be aware to avoid the adverse effects of negative transfer of mother tongue.

Keywords: Second language acquisition, Native language migration, grammar, pronunciation, vocabulary

1.   Introduction

When learning a new foreign language, learners' foreign language learning is often influenced by their mother tongue. Following the deepening of foreign language learning, it will also have a certain reverse impact on their mother tongue. This phenomenon is called language transfer. The effect of mother tongue on foreign language learning is called mother tongue transfer. The transfer is divided into two types. One is positive transfer and the other is negative transfer. If the rules of the native language are the same as those of the second language, then this is a positive transfer; If the rules of the native language are different from those of the second language, then this is a negative transfer. In order to promote the process of second language learning more effectively, second language learners should make full use of the influence of positive transfer and avoid the bad influence of negative transfer [1]. Because the influence of positive influence is actively, it can make the foreign language learning become easier, so that learners will tend to overlook the positive migration; On the contrary, the influence of negative transfer is generally negative and detrimental. This will enable

learners to misexpress their foreign language learning in grammar, pronunciation, vocabulary and other aspects. Therefore, people in academic circles, including scholars, educators and learners, pay great attention to the negative transfer of the mother tongue.

According to the author's investigation, the theoretical basis of mother tongue transfer mainly comes from two important theoretical frameworks: Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis (CAH) and Error Analysis. By the analysis and comparison, this way uses hypotheses to explore the influence of similarities and differences between mother tongue and second language on the process of foreign language learning by scholars [2]. This hypothesis tells the learner, when there are obviously similarities between the mother tongue and the second foreign language in terms of structure, grammar and vocabulary. In this case, the learner is generally in a state affected by the positive transfer. In other words, these learners are able to naturally transfer certain knowledge or skills from their native language to their second language learning. This will make the learning process easier and faster.

However, when there are significant differences between the mother and second languages, negative transfer may become a learning obstacle that learners will face. In other words, second language learning will be affected by some habits or rules formed in the mother tongue, leading to difficulties and mistakes in the learning process [3]. However, the theory of error analysis takes a different perspective, focusing on the systematic analysis of errors in the process of second language acquisition. Language learning will be affected by some habits or rules formed in the mother tongue, leading to difficulties and mistakes in the learning process. This analysis is not limited to identifying the errors themselves, but more importantly is that delve into the root causes of those errors. Among them, native language transfer is considered to be an important factor leading to errors. Through error analysis, teachers can more accurately understand the learning difficulties of learners, so as to formulate more targeted teaching strategies to help learners overcome the difficulties brought by the transfer of their mother tongue and improve the learning effect of their second language [4]. In addition, linguistics, psychology, cognitive science and other scientific theories and viewpoints are also included in the theoretical research basis of mother tongue transfer. For example, the theory of language acquisition in linguistics and the theory of cognitive processing in cognitive science have deeply discussed and explained the phenomenon of mother tongue transfer. It is the existence of these theories that enable learners to have a broader and deeper perspective on the phenomenon of mother tongue transfer. In conclusion, the theoretical basis of mother tongue transfer is influenced by the theories and viewpoints of many disciplines, which is a complex and diversified system. These theories provide effective support and guidance for learners to understand the phenomenon of mother tongue transfer.

About the current state of research in China, in the past 30 years, the research on language transfer in China has gradually become more successful, and the research on language transfer has gradually attracted more and more attention from researchers, and has produced remarkable research results. The field of research is becoming broader and deeper. It is worth paying more attention to the fact that concept transfer research has become a hot focus and a major trend in this field. Although the learners have rich experience in theoretical research and empirical research, there is still a lot of space for improvement in the in-depth exploration of the micro field and the ability of interdisciplinary research [5]. Many researchers have studied the positive and negative effects of native language transfer in language learning, and most of them have studied the negative transfer phenomenon [6]. This paper takes learners of English as a second foreign language as the research object, to study the influence of mother tongue transfer on the acquisition of different language skills and the influence of individual learner differences on English learning. The purpose of this study is to improve the understanding of the influence of mother tongue on foreign language (English) learning for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners, to understand and use this influence to promote foreign

language learning, and to effectively identify and deal with mother tongue transfer problems in education [7].

2. Literature Review

In the 1940s and 1950s, the study of language transfer began to rise. Due to the advances in second language acquisition theory in the 1980s, second language acquisition has become an independent discipline. Second language acquisition (SLA) has attracted wide interest and attention from researchers at home and abroad. With the development of the education. Meanwhile, relevant professional works and academic papers are also continuously emerging and innovating. Learning a second language may be simple when it has something in common with the mother tongue, but it may be challenging to learn how the second language differs from it [8]; comparing and evaluating the differences between languages can help assess the difficulty of acquiring a second language. Many researchers have studied native language transfer and they took into account the various linguistic factors that contribute to this phenomenon. Lu Qiangwei said Chinese native learners always feel that they are overwhelmed when they learn complex English sentences [9]. Teng Demin said, when writing academic articles in English, Chinese scholars tend to use the same conjunction as English native researchers [10]. Ge Xianru said that language acquisition does not depend on the ability to understand meaning; input reinforcement encourages learners to establish a clear connection between form and meaning [11].

2.1. Grammar Transfer

Grammar is one of the three elements that constitute a language. Learning good grammar plays a vital role in learning a new language. Grammar is like a link between speech and semantics, which can enable learners to correctly express the meaning they want to express. No matter how well learners grasp the phonetics and semantics, if learners don't have a correct sentence framework to support it, learners can't correctly express the meaning learners want to express. Due to the morphological changes, word order, virtual word functions and syntactic component correspondence, there are significant differences between Chinese and English grammar, so these aspects can be challenging for learners. Just like, the grammatical structure of Chinese is relatively fixed and there are few morphological changes, while English has more complex morphological changes than Chinese grammatical structure, this can lead to difficulties in the learner's grasp of English tenses, voice, singular and plural, etc.

2.1.1. Lexical Transfer in Grammar

In order to be able to express more meaning, the vocabulary changes morphologically, which allows for more complex and precise sentences. Native Chinese learners need not change the form of Chinese words when using Chinese words, but should change the form of English words according to the tenses and voices of sentences. Chinese verbs have only one form, while English words have many forms: singular, plural, past tense, and different parts of speech conjugations. Due to the lack of use of this aspect in the mother tongue, learners will be affected by negative transfer of the mother tongue when using. It is known that those learners who are heavily influenced by their native language and habitually rely on Chinese to understand and use English vocabulary, they often have trouble adding morphologies like "-ed" or "-s" to the end of words, At the same time, it is also easy to ignore the different part-of-speech inflections required by the vocabulary in the sentence to adapt to its function in the sentence [12].

For example: There are a textbook and a water glass on the desk.

The correct expression should be: There is a textbook and a water glass on the desk.

Analyze: This sentence is the existence sentence. The noun phrase of the real subject is the juxtaposed structure. So the predicate verb is consistent with the singular and plural of the first parallel component, therefore the "are" should use "is" in here.

2.1.2. Syntactic Transfers

In syntactic terms, scholars tend to be more affected by negative transfers. Some learners will first use their native language (such as Chinese) to organize their language when they want to use English expressions. Then they are translated into English to express, which is easy for learners want to express the sentence syntax errors, with more obvious native thinking, such as common Chinglish.

(1) Word order

In English and Chinese, the basic structure of some sentences is the same. Such as "main + predicate + object", "main + predicate + table" and so on. However, when learners want to use English to express themselves, in many cases, it is not possible to directly use the word order of the native language to express what the learner wants.

Example 1: My friend last night came to play with me.

The correct expression should be: My friend came to play with me last night. Or: Last night my friend came to play with me.

Example 2: I have not an English name.

The correct expression should be: I do not have an English name.

Example 3: The year of 2008 held Beijing Olympics.

The correct expression should be: The Beijing Olympics were held in 2008.

(2) Predicate verb.

When using the English sentence expression, only one qualified predicate verb can appear in the sentence. If there is more than one verb, use conjunctions, punctuation, or non-qualifiers to connect the multiple verbs.

For example: He came to eat lunch. And: My mother came in and stand at the table.

According to the data statistics, there are several typical English sentences written by college students below:

I just have two bottles of coke drink.

The correct expression should be: I just have two bottles of coke to drink.

There are all beautiful dresses should be wear.

The correct expression should be: There are all beautiful dresses to wear.

The above two sentences are incorrectly expressed precisely because the verbs in the sentence are not connected in an appropriate way.

(3) The expression of the tense and the voice.

Native Chinese speakers have simpler tenses and voice expressions, while English has more complex tenses and voices. Therefore, when using English expressions, learners may be influenced by their native thinking and confuse their native tense with English tense. In this case, the expression of the sentence is not accurate. For example, people who speak Chinese as their mother tongue usually rarely use passive sentences when making sentences, and English is the opposite. English prefers passive expression to Chinese.

For example: The building was built in 2004.

When using Chinese, if learners want to express a sentence in which the subject and verb are obviously passive, but the context in which it is expressed does not create misunderstandings. It can also be expressed correctly means that the word "by" is usually omitted, use the active voice directly to express what the learners want to say. For example, a sentence in Chinese "We ate up the bread". In the learner's understanding, that is "The bread was finished." but when we express, the word "by" is usually omitted in expression. But in English it is the opposite. When the subject of the sentence to

be expressed is the bearer of the action to be expressed, the passive voice is generally used to express the obvious passive relationship. The reason for this expression is that when using English expressions, the emphasis is generally on the logic and accuracy of the sentence. In English, without the passive voice, the relationship between the performer and the receiver of the action cannot be clearly expressed.

For example: This sentence "The apple has been bought" tells the learners clearly "Apples are sold out." "has been bought" is the form of a passive voice.

2.2. Voice Migration

Phonology, vocabulary, and grammar are the three main elements of a language. They are interdependent and together form the complete system of language. Speech, as the material shell of language, is the material basis for the existence of vocabulary and grammar. So when learners want to learn a new language, learning speech well is a crucial step. Learners who speak English as a second language are often affected by negative transfer of their mother tongue when learning English. It is precisely because of the negative transfer of the mother tongue that it is difficult for learners who speak English as a second language to improve their English pronunciation skills during the learning process [13]. When native Chinese speakers are learning English pronunciation, learners may overlook this feature of English speech by focusing too much on the sound of each syllable, resulting in less natural pronunciation. The next, Chinese is a tonal language. Tone has an important impact on the meaning of words. Therefore, scholars may be influenced by the tone of the Chinese voice. It is difficult to adapt to intonation changes in English pronunciation. For example, the Chinese character "万" — one; "太" —time.

Phonemes in English are divided into vowels and consonants. According to statistical findings, the negative transfer of consonants is more pronounced than the negative transfer of vowels caused by the mother tongue during English learning.

(1) Unclear distinction between [v] and [w]

There are two labiodental sounds in English pronunciation: [f] and [v]. But in Chinese, there is only [f], so native Chinese speakers will naturally use the [w] sound when they pronounce the [v] sound.

For example: cover[ˈkʌvə], leave [liːv]and voice [vɔis] and so on.

(2) Unclear distinction between[θ], [s]and[ð], [z]

Affected by negative transfer of mother tongue, learners who speak English as a second language may pronounce [θ] as [s] or [s] as [θ], pronounce [d] as [z] or [z] as [d].

For example: Think and sink are not clear about each other. It is also easy to pronounce sem [ðəm] as [zəm] and so on.

(3) Unable to pronounce the [m] sound

In some regional dialects, there is no post-nasal pronunciation, so it is affected by the negative transfer of the mother tongue, and many learners can't pronounce the [m] sound. So in some words that end in the [m] sound, students influenced by regional dialects often omit the [m] sound.

For example: mushroom, minimum and medium and so on.

(4) Unclear distinction between [n] and [l]

People in certain areas such as Hubei, Chongqing, and Sichuan, in their dialect system, n and l are the same sound, so they are affected by the negative transfer of the mother tongue. Second-language English learners in these areas may have difficulty distinguishing or even pronouncing the [n] and [l] sounds.

For example: Pronounce neck as lack.

2.3. Vocabulary Transfer

Vocabulary plays a vital role in the process of learning English. Vocabulary acquisition is an integral part of the learning process [14]. The improvement of English proficiency is inseparable from the accumulation of English vocabulary in the learning process of English as a second language learners. The influence of Chinese vocabulary on English vocabulary is manifold. It not only enriches the English vocabulary, but also provides new ideas and inspiration for the development of English vocabulary.

If there is no sufficient vocabulary, then even if the learner has a good grasp of grammar and pronunciation, he will not be able to express the meaning of the learner well. As mentioned earlier, grammar, pronunciation and vocabulary are inseparable in the process of learning English. Learners can't improve learners' English without one or the other. Of course, there's a positive side to everything and a school side. The same is true of lexical transfer, which is also divided into positive transfer and negative transfer.

2.3.1. Vocabulary Positive Transfer

Take Chinese as an example, although there are great differences between the language systems of Chinese and English, the two language systems also have similarities. It is precisely because of these similarities that English as a second language learners have a positive transfer effect. There are many words in Chinese pronunciation that have very similar sounds to English words, and this helps learners learn and remember these words quickly.

For example: litchi (荔), typhoon (台风).

2.3.2. Vocabulary Negative Transfer

Compared with the similarity, the difference between Chinese and English is more obvious. English words sometimes a word will have many meanings, that is, the learner says that the word has multiple meanings. But Chinese words often have only one meaning, so when learners are learning English, learners tend to memorize words mechanically and systematically. Most learners will use the method of repetition, recite and memorize the English words corresponding to the Chinese meaning one by one. This creates the effect of a negative transfer of words. This is because it is rare for Chinese and English equivalents to correspond exactly. The influence of negative transfer of mother tongue on vocabulary is manifested in word meaning, part of speech, lexical collocation and morphology. There is a typical example is: long time no see.

3. Conclusion

Native language transfer is inevitable in the process of learning a second foreign language. In general, the impact of negative migration is more obvious. Learners should try learners' best to avoid the influence of negative transfer and make use of the influence of positive transfer. The first thing learners need to do is to find out what their native language has in common with their second foreign language (English). It's these commonalities that drive the impact of positive native language migration. Learners need to take advantage of positive transfer. If learners have good discovery and use of the positive transfer of the mother tongue, then learners' second foreign language learning process will become easier and progress will be faster. Next, in the process of teaching a second foreign language, teachers should strengthen the comparative analysis of English and mother tongue teaching. Comparative analysis of the differences between different learning factors can help learners avoid the influence of negative transfer of mother tongue. Because of the differences between different learners, each character's English learning strategy is different. English teachers should

guide students to take the initiative to grasp the law of migration. Teachers should implement effective strategies to overcome the negative effects of mother tongues, and help them build a solid foundation in the English language. The effect of mother tongue transfer is studied in detail by means of comparative analysis and error analysis. The complex issue of mother tongue transfer plays an indispensable role in the field of second language acquisition. Its impact is too far-reaching to be overlooked. To delve deeper into the mysteries of mother tongue migration, and its nuanced impact on foreign language learning, the future academic inquiry must continue to broaden its horizons, and deepen understanding.

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