The Influence of Mother Tongue Thinking on Second Language Writing

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Abstract: In the process of foreign language understanding, learning and using, thinking in the mother tongue will inevitably lead to the intervention of strong mother tongue contextual knowledge in the brain, and then activate the mother tongue expressions that match the mother tongue contextual knowledge. The object of second language acquisition is influenced by age, the current study set out to examine to what degree of acquisition (AOA), defined as a learner's first intensive exposure to a second language (L2) environment, mediates the final state of poster, spoken vocal accommodation. The more the students use mother tongue thinking in English writing, the shorter the writing text. This negative correlation is most prominent in the text-generation activities of writing. In fact, similar experimental findings were found in early studies. For intermediate learners, the longer the code-switching takes place in second-language writing, the shorter the text will be. Therefore, the research topic of this paper is the influence of mother tongue thinking transfer on second-language writing.

Keywords: translate, Mother tongue transfer, grammar

1. Introduction

The goal of second language acquisition is influenced by age. Ellis found that in the process of writing, in order to keep the style and logic of the topic, thinking and language consistent with the articles read, learners will continue to read short articles, which will arouse language cognition, stimulate cognitive comparison and produce language synergy [1]. The current research aims to examine to what extent the degree of acquisition (AOA) regulates the final state (oral phonological adjustment). The degree of acquisition is defined as the learners' first intensive contact with the second language (L2) environment. In addition, there is a significant positive correlation between English proficiency and vocabulary and the output of second language writing, and there are also specific differences in their moderating effects [2]. The more students use mother tongue thinking in English writing, the shorter the writing text. This negative correlation is most prominent in the text-generation activities of writing. It emphasizes the social cognitive process of learners' mutual cooperation, dynamic adjustment and mutual adaptation in interaction [3]. People are the most important context. Only when people exert their subjective initiative and use language creatively on the basis of a large number of language imitations can interaction promote learning be realized.People are the most important context. Only when people exert their subjective initiative and use language creatively on the basis of a large number of language imitations can interaction promote learning be realized.[4]. In fact,

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2. Method

2.1. Questionnaire Survey

The author will distribute 20 questionnaires and collect 20 questionnaires. The subjects of this experiment are junior English majors who passed CET-4 in a normal university in China. On May 19th, 2024, after the author distributed the questionnaire through the online link, the questionnaire was collected on the same day. Twenty questionnaires were distributed and twenty questionnaires were collected.

The following are the contents of this questionnaire:

1. In your daily English writing, which aspect of your problem is the most serious?
2. With sufficient vocabulary, can you express the topic you want to talk about in English?
3. How do you study English?
4. Which is easier for you, Chinese-English translation or English translation?
5. In the process of English writing, are you used to expressing directly in English or translating Chinese into English?
6. Do you overuse certain words and syntax in English writing? If so, please give examples.
7. Will you learn writing skills from reading English works?
8. Will the problems arising from mother-tongue writing be equally reflected in English writing?

2.2. Proposition Writing

The subjects selected in this experiment are English majors from a normal university in China, and they are all junior students who have passed CET-4, with a total of five students (see Table 1).

Table 1: Proposition writing

Literary form	Title	Difficulty
Expository writing	Line chart describing the economic level of each region	Easier
Argumentative writing	Should college students take a break after graduation?	Proper

The author prepared two types of propositional composition writing for the junior students who participated in the experiment, namely, expository writing and argumentative writing. Each junior student who participated in the experiment had to write two compositions by time. During the experiment, the author took into account the control time, the number of words and other factors, and each article was given 30 minutes to write, and each article required about 100 words. Students are not allowed to refer to relevant materials and finish them independently. After the completion, the author recycles the test paper and gives it to a judge to read and judge all the compositions, and gives the marking results on the same day.

3.   Result

Swain and Lapkin believe that the process of second language acquisition, in essence, refers to the process in which learners learn to express themselves in non-native languages [5]. The transfer effect of the mother tongue is directly reflected in English writing, in the form of grammar, vocabulary and expression. Negative transfer refers to the interference of negative factors in the mother tongue on second language acquisition. When there is a big difference between the mother tongue and the target language, it is easy for learners to apply the rules or patterns of the mother tongue to the target language, resulting in errors or idiomatic expressions. For example, Chinese verbs don't change tenses, while English needs to express tenses through verb form changes. When learning English, China students may be influenced by their mother tongue, ignoring the tense changes of verbs, resulting in inaccurate expression. However, there is also a positive transfer. When the mother tongue is similar or consistent with the rules, usage, meaning and pronunciation of the target language, learners can understand and master the target language more easily and reduce the learning difficulty. Research in phonological development has historically focused on adults' impressionistic judgments of segmental accuracy based on audio recordings, and such research forms the foundation of many well-established developmental speech production norms [6]. For another example, Flege put forward the Speech Learning Model (SLM) in 1995, and thought that second language pronunciation learning basically started from learners' mother tongue [7]. The model holds that second language pronunciation perception precedes output, and the perception ability will greatly affect the output ability. For Chinese-speaking English learners, it is not difficult to master the basic grammar and vocabulary of English, because both languages belong to the Indo-European family and have similar grammatical structures and vocabulary.

In order to solve this problem, the author further analyzes it through two experiments, taking English writing as the starting point, and analyzes how vocabulary, grammar and expression are embodied under the influence of mother tongue thinking.

3.1.   Questionnaire Results

In the questionnaire survey, seventeen people said that the most common problem in English writing is grammar, two said that the most common problem is vocabulary storage, and one said that the most common problem is logical conception of writing; Fifteen people said that even if they have a certain vocabulary reserve, it is difficult to express what they want to say directly in English. Three people said that they can complete the writing content well with sufficient vocabulary reserve, and one person said that their vocabulary reserve is insufficient. Question 3: Nineteen people said they learned English by doing exercises and attending classes, and one said they learned English by listening to English podcasts. Nineteen people in the fourth question said that English translation was easier, and one person said that there was no significant difference between English translation and Chinese-English translation. In question 5, sixteen people said that everyone would first conceive the content in Chinese and then translate it into English, and four people said that they would directly express the content in English; In question 6, eighteen people said they would habitually use simple sentences to write, and two said they were good at using complex sentences to write; Question 7: Eleven people said that they would rarely apply the contents of English articles to personal writing, and eight people said that they would apply the contents of English articles they had read to English writing. The results of all the questionnaires in question 8 show that the problems arising from mother-tongue writing will also be manifested in English writing.

3.2. Proposition Writing Result

In proposition writing, the difficulty of the two articles increases step by step according to the setting of the questions. Each interviewee needs to write two articles, with five subjects and ten recovered texts. After the investigation of the recovery of experimental papers, it was found that in the first explanatory essay writing, five students made mistakes in subject-predicate agreement, article use and tense, among which the error rate of subject-predicate agreement is the highest and the error rate of article collocation is the lowest. In the second argumentative essay writing, all four students had the problem of translating from Chinese to English. They first came up with Chinese to express the content, and then translated it into English word by word, such as "graduates' difficult position" and "a job with development". Students only pay attention to the linear listing of word meanings, so Chinglish mistakes and improper expressions occur. Based on two tasks of two different styles, this experiment takes the influence of mother tongue thinking as the independent variable and the lexical and syntactic complexity of writing output as the dependent variable. The author divides these errors into two categories, namely, part of speech, verb phrases, noun phrases, vocabulary, collocation and syntax, and adopts the form of manual verification to screen out spelling errors caused by non-mother tongue thinking, and finally summarizes the types of errors. These errors include subject-predicate agreement, article errors, noun errors, sentence structure, misuse of part of speech, sentence tense, verb errors, collocation errors, conjunction errors, sentence word order and so on.

4. Discussion

The above two studies show that long code-switching time or too many mistakes in writing indicate the strong intervention of mother tongue thinking; However, with the increase of mother tongue thinking, the length of second language composition is decreasing. The decrease in the length of the composition indicates that the number of words in the composition produced per unit time is decreasing, and the fluency of language output is weakening. According to Skchan, accuracy and complexity require learners to use the rule system for syntactic processing, while fluency requires learners to use the memory system to extract existing chunks [8]. Therefore, to ensure the fluency of language output, language information should be memorized for a long time, so that learners can successfully extract it with the least attention resources whenever needed. For this experiment, when learners can't extract language information from long-term memory in text generation activities, mother tongue thinking will automatically intervene, and learners will complete word selection and sentence making through translation. As a result, a lot of attention resources are bound to be invested in the accuracy and complexity of language use. In view of the competitive effect of attention resources in allocation, the fluency of language output will be affected, and the length of second language composition will be reduced [9]. Language output is a complex process, which involves different cognitive systems and uses a lot of cognitive resources. Processing language knowledge and language skill information, such as phonemes, pronunciation, tone, vocabulary, meaning, grammar, etc., requires users to quickly complete processing between working memory and long-term memory system. Therefore, how to deal with language information accurately and effectively, and how much attention and cognitive resources are invested in what key information is very important [10].

In the process of writing, everyone habitually uses mother tongue thinking, but the amount of mother tongue participation in different thinking activities is different; The amount of mother tongue thinking in English writing is less than that in reading Chinese writing; The more learners think in their mother tongue, the shorter their writing texts will be. This study holds that propositional writing is helpful to the organic integration of foreign language forms and appropriate contextual knowledge, thus reducing learners' dependence on mother-tongue thinking and inhibiting the filling of mother tongue contextual knowledge, which is an effective foreign language learning method.

5. Conclusion

To sum up, the mother tongue is a prerequisite for learning a foreign language, and the transfer of the mother tongue will affect foreign language learning in all aspects, including positive and negative effects. As for the writing aspect of this paper, the author takes English as an international language as the starting point and English writing as the research content, thus analyzing the influence of mother tongue thinking transfer on foreign language writing. Through the research, it is found that when learners are unfamiliar with a second language and can't fully master the second language, they have to use their mother tongue thinking to make up for the lack of knowledge and habit. However, if the author relies too much on mother tongue thinking in the process of second language learning, it will easily stifle the development of second language ability. In addition to the core language, the acquisition of a second language is also influenced by language environment, grammatical habits, grammatical reasoning and other factors, so it is uncertain when and under what conditions mother tongue thinking will have a positive or negative impact on foreign language writing, so this experiment cannot completely rule out the influence of many variables. The author only analyzes the negative influence of mother tongue thinking on foreign language writing from the aspect of writing, and hopes that everyone can judge their own foreign language writing problems caused by the transfer of mother tongue thinking through this article and make timely corrections. In addition, the number of subjects selected in this experiment is too small to achieve generalized coverage, so it has limitations.

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