

Study on the Effect of Language Learning Strategy Training on Enhancing the Autonomy of Chinese EFL Learners

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Abstract: This article examines the effectiveness of language learning strategy training in improving the ability of English as a foreign language learners in China to become autonomous learners. Starting from the relevant theories of language learning strategies and learner autonomy, based on an understanding of the actual situation of EFL learners in China, specific measures for language learning strategy training that are suitable for them are proposed, and how language learning strategy training can promote learners' autonomous development are discussed. Research has shown that foreign language learning strategy training can help improve learners' metacognitive monitoring ability and autonomy, increase learners' cognitive strategy means and effectiveness, enhance learners' attitudes, emotions, and learning enthusiasm, and cultivate their abilities in communication, cooperation, and information resource utilization. In summary, research has shown that incorporating strategy training into daily teaching is beneficial for improving the self-directed learning ability of Chinese EFL learners. The author's research has certain implications for EFL teaching practice in China.

Keywords: Foreign Language Learning Strategies, Strategy Training, Learners' Autonomous Learning Ability.

1. Introduction

With the continuous deepening of globalization, English as an international language has become increasingly prominent in its important position. In China, foreign language English has always received high attention. However, traditional teaching models often center around teachers, focus on imparting language knowledge, and neglect students' initiative in learning, making it difficult for many students to sustain effective language acquisition activities after class and not meet the requirements of lifelong learning. In recent years, with the shift of teaching philosophy from teacher centered to learner centered, the exercise of learner subjectivity has become one of the key focuses of language education and teaching research.

Student subjectivity refers to the ability of students to take responsibility for their own learning, including determining learning goals, selecting learning materials and methods, monitoring and regulating the learning process, evaluating learning outcomes, and other aspects[1]. Developing students' subjectivity can not only improve the quality of current learning, but also promote lifelong learning. Language learning strategies refer to the means, procedures, and techniques that students intentionally use to acquire and use language. Research has shown that successful learners are often those who are able to use various learning strategies effectively. The various measures taken by learners in the process of learning a language are called foreign language learning strategies. Foreign language learning strategy training is to enable students to understand and learn how to use these learning strategies, and apply them to their English learning practice[2]. There is an inherent relationship between learners' autonomy and learning strategy training: learning strategy training is a means for students to engage in self-directed learning, and only when students have the ability to learn independently can they truly play the role of learning strategies; Conversely, the realization of autonomy also relies

on the correct application of learning strategies. Chinese EFL learners have a unique learning background, lack a real language environment, have short study time in school, and face high exam pressure. In this situation, how to enable learners to learn effectively and possess the ability of self-directed learning is the focus of English teaching research. This article attempts to explore the role of language learning strategy training in improving the autonomy of Chinese EFL learners, in order to provide insights for practical teaching.

2. Design of Language Learning Strategy Training Program for Chinese EFL Learners

The language learning strategy training carried out based on the characteristics of Chinese EFL learners should consider factors such as learners' own language proficiency, learning habits, cultural background, and learning needs. Effective strategy training based on this should be able to integrate with daily teaching processes and adopt a combination of explicit training and implicit infiltration methods, emphasizing the cultivation of strategy awareness and practical use of strategies[3].

The selection of strategy training mode should be tailored to local conditions. Oxford's eight step strategy training mode is: determining learners' needs and available time; Choose appropriate strategies; Consider incorporating it into teaching methods; Motivate learners; Prepare materials and activities; Implement explicit strategy training; Evaluate the effectiveness of strategy training; Revise the training plan. This model highlights the procedural and dynamic nature of strategy training, and can be adjusted accordingly based on actual teaching situations. For Chinese EFL learners, strategy training can be integrated into the existing curriculum system to enhance their strategy awareness and application ability without adding additional burden.

The training content should be enriched, but emphasis

should also be placed. After understanding the actual situation of Chinese EFL learners, it was found that metacognitive strategies are their most important part. They should learn to plan their own learning behaviors, supervise themselves during the process, and finally conduct self-evaluation; For cognitive strategies, we can start with listening, speaking, reading, writing, and other aspects, such as predictive listening, skimming and scanning reading, organizing and proofreading writing, and so on[4]. Social strategic training can combine collaborative learning in classroom teaching with language practice outside of class, cultivating students' abilities in communication, interaction, and resource utilization. Emotional strategy training involves issues such as learners' anxiety, learning motivation, and confidence, which helps cultivate a positive learning attitude in students. Strategy training should be gradual, with the low-level goal of guiding students to develop a correct understanding of strategies. During the teaching process, teachers should introduce and demonstrate the functions of various learning methods to students; The intermediate level goal is to enable students to learn how to use these strategies and guide learners to try learning strategies in practical learning activities. High level attention is paid to self-regulation of strategies, enabling learners to learn to choose and use corresponding strategies based on their own situation and the characteristics of learning activities. Throughout the training process, the teacher's role shifted from simply imparting knowledge to being responsible for leading and driving learning, inspiring students to explore and reflect on the practical process[5].

The content and activities of strategy training should be close to the actual situation of learners. Learning tasks in textbooks can be selected for strategy training, or specialized strategy training activities can be set up, using classroom discussions, learning logs, peer communication, case analysis, and other methods to carry out strategy training. If learners are asked to record their learning strategies used within a week, and then share and exchange them within the group for mutual learning and reference. Reflective questions can also be designed to prompt learners to reflect on the strategies used and their effectiveness in a learning task, as well as whether there are better strategies to choose from. Strategy training should be combined with an evaluation system. Traditional summative evaluation is difficult to reflect the effectiveness of strategy training. Formative evaluation methods can be used to focus on learners' progress in strategy use and self-directed learning; Learning portfolios, strategy usage logs, and self-evaluation reports can all be evaluation tools. In addition, teachers' observation and feedback have important guiding significance for learners' strategic development, and should be encouraged and suggested in a timely manner.

3. The Mechanism by Which Language Learning Strategy Training Enhances Learners' Autonomy

Foreign language learning strategy training can help improve the autonomy of foreign language learners, and this assistance is multifaceted, including metacognitive awareness, cognitive strategy use, emotional factors, and social interaction. Understanding the mechanism of foreign language learning strategy training is beneficial for guiding the practice of foreign language learning strategy training and enabling it to play a role in cultivating the autonomy of foreign language learners[6].

3.1. Enhance Metacognitive Awareness and Self-Management Ability

Metacognitive awareness is an important component of self-directed learning, which refers to the ability of learners to consciously perceive and experience their own cognitive processes and outcomes. Strategy training can enhance students' metacognitive awareness, enabling them to recognize their own learning styles, learning needs, and different learning activity requirements, and learn how to plan, supervise, and evaluate their learning process. Through strategy training, learners learn to set learning goals. During the training process, teachers guide learners to transform long-term goals into short-term goals, making learning goals more actionable.

Students begin to consider what language proficiency they want to achieve, how much time they need, and how they should take each step of their learning journey. This purpose driven learning makes learning activities more purposeful and planned. Strategy training teaches students how to control the learning process, and students learn to test their understanding and correct deviations in a timely manner during the learning process[7]. For example, in the process of listening training, learners can monitor whether they are keeping up with the pace of the listening material, whether to continue listening or stop to think about areas they cannot understand, and so on.

During reading, students can discover their level of understanding of the reading material and which parts still need to be read back. Strategy training promotes the development of students' metacognitive monitoring ability, allowing them to judge their learning situation from multiple dimensions, focusing on both the final learning outcomes such as exam scores and the gains and losses during the learning process. Through regular reflection and summarization, students can objectively recognize their own growth and find areas for improvement, which can serve as a reference for the next stage of learning.

The development of metacognitive awareness promotes the improvement of self-management ability. When learners know what they are learning, can monitor their learning process, and objectively evaluate their learning outcomes, they have the ability to manage their own learning. This self-regulation ability is an important manifestation of learners' autonomy, which transforms them from passive knowledge receivers to actively planning their own learning.

3.2. Enriching Cognitive Strategy Tools and Improving Learning Efficiency

Cognitive strategies refer to the methods and techniques adopted by learners to complete a specific type of learning activity, which have an impact on the effectiveness of learning. Strategic training can enable learners to master a range of different cognitive strategies and corresponding cognitive tools, and adopt targeted learning methods to improve learning outcomes when facing different learning tasks. In terms of vocabulary learning, strategy training helps learners master some methods of memorizing words. In addition to repeated memorization, students have also mastered methods such as associative memory, contextual memory, and root and affix analysis, making their vocabulary memory vivid and lively, bidding farewell to the boredom and inefficiency brought by mechanical memory[8].

Learners of vocabulary acquisition strategies can choose appropriate vocabulary acquisition methods based on the

characteristics of the vocabulary and their own memory habits to improve the efficiency of vocabulary acquisition; The strategy training in listening comprehension is to guide students to use prediction, selective attention, inference and other strategies for learning. Learners need to learn to make predictions about the content of listening materials based on questions and options, and selectively pay attention to relevant important information during the listening process. At the same time, they should use contextual and background knowledge to infer information that they did not hear or could not hear clearly. The application of the above strategies makes the listening process more proactive and improves listening comprehension. In the reading comprehension process, strategy training also teaches learners different reading methods such as skimming, searching, and intensive reading.

During the reading process, learners learn to control the speed and depth of reading according to the purpose of reading, quickly grasp the general idea of the article or search for specific information; At the same time, learners also learn to use context to infer word meanings and identify the structure and logical relationships of the article to deepen their understanding of the text, and expand the depth and breadth of reading comprehension. In the process of oral and written expression, strategy training helps learners to engage in activities such as ideation, organization, and modification. Students will develop the habit of saying what they want to say before speaking and how to say it better[9]. They will develop the habit of paying attention to both accuracy and fluency when speaking, and the habit of thinking about how to say it better after finishing. These methods, when used properly, can make language expression more organized and effective.

The richness of cognitive strategy tools directly affects the effectiveness of learning. If students have diverse learning methods and can make effective strategy calls based on different task contexts, it will make learning easier and the learning outcomes more significant. And successful positive feedback will stimulate students' greater learning enthusiasm, thus entering a virtuous cycle.

3.3. Improving Emotional Attitudes and Stimulating Learning Motivation

Emotional factors have a significant impact on language learning, and emotional attitudes such as learning anxiety, learning motivation, and learning confidence can affect learning behavior and outcomes. Strategy training cares about the emotional needs of learners, helps them deal with emotional issues during the learning process, stimulates learning motivation, and forms a positive learning attitude. Strategy training helps learners recognize and deal with learning anxiety, which is commonly present in language learning and particularly prominent in oral communication and exam processes. During the strategy training phase, students learn how to recognize their own anxiety state and use relaxation techniques, self motivation, and other methods to alleviate anxiety.

In addition, learners increase their sense of control over learning by mastering effective learning strategies, thereby reducing uncertainty and anxiety. Strategy training helps to stimulate and maintain learners' learning motivation. When learners master effective learning methods and see their own progress in learning, their intrinsic motivation is strengthened; The goal setting and self-assessment process in strategy training can help students recognize the meaning of learning

and achieve experiential learning outcomes. At the same time, peer interaction and cooperative learning in social strategy training provide external support for learning, increasing social motivation for learning.

Cultivate learners' positive learning beliefs[10]. Many Chinese EFL learners hold beliefs that are not conducive to learning: language learning mainly relies on talent; Errors should be completely avoided, and so on. After strategic training, learners realize the importance of effort and methods, and errors are also an inevitable part of the learning process. Under such positive beliefs, learners will persist even more when faced with difficulties. Willing to learn new methods.

Strategy training also cultivates learners' sense of learning responsibility. When they realize that they can choose and use strategies and have an impact on learning outcomes, learners will learn responsibly for themselves. This sense of responsibility is an important psychological foundation for learners' autonomy, enabling them to shift from being others oriented to self oriented and from passive to proactive.

The cultivation of positive emotions and learning interests provides continuous motivation for self-directed learning. In the learning process, only those who have good emotional experiences and persistent learning motivation will actively and persistently engage in learning activities, and be able to persistently overcome various difficulties and obstacles encountered in learning.

3.4. Promote the Expansion of Social Interaction and Resource Utilization Capabilities

Language learning is essentially a social behavior, and utilizing resources from the environment in interactions with others is an important means of language learning. Strategy training expands learners' learning space and channels for resource acquisition through the development of their social and resource utilization strategies, and provides external support for learners' self-directed learning activities. Strategy training promotes the development of learners' cooperative learning ability. Students can learn to divide tasks clearly and collaborate with each other in group activities, and can seek advice from classmates when encountering difficulties. After learning, they can share their experiences with classmates. Cooperative learning not only provides students with opportunities to use language, but also offers them the chance to observe and imitate the learning styles of other students.

Through peer interaction, students can learn about effective strategies used by other classmates and incorporate these strategies into their own strategy library. Strategy training can help learners improve their interaction skills with teachers. In traditional teacher-student relationships, learners are often in a passive position. Strategy training encourages students to actively communicate with teachers during the learning process, reflect on difficulties in learning, and seek advice and feedback. This positive teacher-student exchange can provide learners with more personalized guidance and help them establish a sense of learning subjectivity.

Strategy training encourages learners to utilize various learning resources. With the development of information technology, learners can obtain learning resources through various channels such as online courses, learning software, original materials, etc. Strategy training can help learners understand the characteristics of different types of learning resources, learn to choose suitable learning resources according to different learning purposes and their own level,

and effectively use them to achieve the goal of self-directed learning. In addition, strategy training also trains learners' ability to learn in real contexts and seek learning opportunities in daily life, such as observing English signs, listening to English broadcasts, watching English programs, communicating with foreign friends, and so on.

Learners bring learning out of the classroom, making language learning more practical and greatly increasing learning opportunities; The expansion of social interaction and resource utilization abilities enables learners' learning to no longer be limited to classroom teaching and textbooks themselves, but to permeate all aspects of life. With learners actively seeking social help and fully utilizing various learning resources, they can have the ability to continue learning in different environments, which is a manifestation of learners' autonomy at a higher level.

4. Conclusion

Language learning strategy training is beneficial for improving the autonomy of Chinese EFL learners. Language learning strategy training can enhance learners' metacognitive awareness, enabling them to better plan, monitor, and evaluate their own learning; The more cognitive strategy tools there are, the more appropriate learning methods can be selected when facing different learning tasks. The learning outcomes have significantly improved. The improvement of emotional attitude and learning interest is the driving force for achieving self-directed learning. The enhancement of social interaction and the ability to utilize learning resources can expand the learning environment and increase learning opportunities for learners.

Future research can further compare the effectiveness of different types of strategy training and the factors that affect individual differences among learners, track and investigate the long-term effects of strategy training, and explore new forms of strategy training in the information technology environment. As the understanding of the relationship between language learning strategies and learner autonomy deepens, strategy training will better assist Chinese EFL learners in the development of autonomous learning.

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