

The Influence of Interlanguage Fossilization on Second Language Acquisition

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Abstract: Interlanguage is a language system that appears in the process of second language acquisition between the mother tongue and the target language. It has a great impact on second language acquisition. To correctly understand this problem and correct the mistakes in acquisition in time is very beneficial to language acquisition and language teaching. Based on the fossilization of interlanguage features, this paper tries to find out the significance and enlightenment of interlanguage in teaching Chinese as a foreign language.

Keywords: Interlanguage; Second Language Acquisition; Fossilization.

1. Introduction

At present, Chinese has become the second language that more and more foreigners learn. The teaching of Chinese as a foreign language has also made certain progress, so the theory and research of teaching Chinese as a foreign language have been popularized, promoted and developed accordingly. Interlanguage theory, which first appeared in the 1970s, is a new theory to analyze the errors in foreign language learning. In the early 1980s, the theory was introduced into China, which aroused the interest of foreign language teaching, especially in the field of teaching Chinese as a foreign language, and Chinese scholars began to do related research on Chinese interlanguage for foreign students. Fossilization is a process that occurs when learning a second language, in which sometimes incorrect linguistic features become permanent in the way a person uses the language, and an aspect can become an obsession when learning a foreign language. The vast majority of second language learners will not be able to speak at the level of native speakers, and almost all will encounter fossilization. The fossilization of interlanguage may be correct or wrong. But fossilization is not equal to wrong, right will also lead to fossilization phenomenon. Therefore, studying fossilization in second language acquisition, elucidating the causes of fossilization and putting forward countermeasures will have positive and significant influence on second language learners.

2. The Concept and Characteristics of Interlanguage

The concept of interlanguage was first proposed by American linguist Larry Selinker in 1972, which refers to an independent language system formed by learners at a specific stage of second language acquisition. He believes that interlanguage is an independent language system between the mother language and the target language, which contains the characteristics of both the mother language and the second language.

The term fossilization was first used by Selinker (1996) in the article *Interlanguage*. Language fossilization is a slow process and an inevitable phenomenon in language learning. It can appear at any stage of second language learning. According to Larry Selinker, fossilization can be divided into

individual fossilization and collective fossilization. Individual fossilization can be achieved through two areas: error and language fossilization. Collective fossilization refers to the universality of learners' second language ability and the recognition of these errors as a normal social phenomenon. The language system of interlanguage is independent. This language system is different from mother tongue and target language, but a transitional language between the two, and has the dual characteristics of mother tongue and target language. Interlanguage is a kind of language that learners use creatively when acquiring second language. Learners constantly supplement and revise the existing interlanguage system by using their existing knowledge of mother tongue and target language, so that the system gradually moves closer to the target language and is infinitely close to the target language, but it is impossible to reach the target language in a complete sense.

Interlanguage has three basic characteristics: penetrability, dynamics and systematicness, as well as transition, variability, creativity, repetition and fossilization. Systematicness and transition are important features of interlanguage, while fossilization is the feature that attracts the most attention of learners and linguists, and is also the most confusing feature. Penetrability means that the rules for establishing second language acquisition objects are variable at any time, that is, the development of interlanguage has stages, but it is not fixed in a certain stage. With the improvement of students' language ability and the continuous infiltration of new knowledge into old knowledge, its errors are gradually corrected and become closer to the target language. Dynamic means that interlanguage is constantly changing, but this change is not directly from one development process to the next development process, but slowly changes the system of transitional links to meet the new assumptions about the target language. This feature also reflects the internal instability of interlanguage and the tendency to change easily. Systematic means that although interlanguage is dynamic, it still has evidence to follow. In fact, since interlanguage is generally different from the language system of the target language, as a countermeasure to simplify learning, interlanguage often forms a new system to adapt to the learning of the target language.

3. The Formation Causes of Interlanguage Fossilization

There are many factors that influence and contribute to the emergence of interlanguage, among which the main factors are: Firstly, negative transfer of mother tongue. "Transfer" refers to the influence of knowledge, skills, learning methods and learning attitudes acquired by learners on learning new knowledge and skills. If the influence is negative, it is negative transfer. The negative transfer of the first language refers to the interference of the first language learning experience on the second language learning. Secondly, interference of acquired knowledge of the target language. Once learners know some knowledge of the target language, they often take it for granted that their limited, inadequate and one-sided knowledge of the target language is applied to new linguistic phenomena, resulting in errors. This bias is called "overgeneralization" in psychology. Thirdly, interference of cultural factors. Due to the different cultural traditions, cultural customs and cultural psychology of different countries, regions and nationalities, it is also easy for learners to make incorrect induction, judgment and deduction on some aspects of the target language. Fourthly, learner's learning method, learning attitude, communication style and other personal factors. For example, learners prefer certain words and syntax or avoid certain difficult sounds and grammatical forms due to personal preferences. Finally, factors of teachers or teaching materials. The phonological phenomena of the target language cannot be accurately or properly summarized by the teachers engaged in language teaching or the teaching materials used. These factors often do not exist in isolation, but intersect. An interlanguage phenomenon (bias), that is, the gap between the rules of the interlanguage and the target language, may be the result of several factors acting simultaneously.

4. The Implications of Interlanguage Fossilization for Second Language Acquisition

4.1. Optimize Second Language Input, Reduce Native Language Interference

The interference from the mother tongue, that is, the negative transfer of the mother tongue, is one of the important reasons for the fossilization of interlanguage. In the process of second language acquisition, learners should strengthen the correctness of the input of the target language, improve the quality of the input, make full contact with the target language, improve the language sense, and minimize the interference of the mother tongue. According to the "i+1" language input hypothesis proposed by Krashen, learners should be provided with language input slightly higher than their own interlanguage level. This requires learners to choose learning materials with scientific and reasonable arrangement, moderate content difficulty and accurate language teaching according to their own second language mastery, so as to improve the effectiveness of language knowledge input and gradually master the language rules of the target language. At the same time, it is necessary to strengthen the comparative learning of language differences between the mother tongue and the target language, and be good at predicting pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar and other errors that may be caused in learning. Through repeated comparison, practice and error correction, the influence of negative transfer of the

mother tongue on second language learning can be reduced.

Secondly, we should strengthen the understanding of the differences between the mother tongue and the target language. We should not only pay attention to the mastery of language knowledge, but also pay attention to the recognition and understanding of the cultural differences behind the two languages. According to Krashen's input hypothesis, during language learning, it is necessary to understand relevant cultural background knowledge based on the content learned, moderately improve the quality of language input, and make language learning more interesting and diversified. In daily life, the habit of watching Chinese movies, listening to Chinese radio, reading Chinese magazines and original works, and listening to lectures on traditional Chinese culture should be formed. Cultivate cross-cultural awareness and interest and expand the input of the cultural background of the target language through relaxing entertainment, including the local customs, aesthetic orientation, values and thinking mode of the target language country in the macro aspect, and the education system, medical system and financial institutions in the micro aspect. Be good at comparative analysis of two different cultures, summarize commonalities and differences, enhance cultural communicative competence, and reduce the occurrence of pragmatic fossilization of interlanguage.

4.2. Cultivate Learning Motivation

One factor that can not be ignored to determine the success or failure of Chinese learning is the learner's learning motivation and learning attitude. Correct learning motivation is helpful to prevent and reduce the fossilization of interlanguage. Learners should gradually develop integrated learning motivation, instead of using their mother tongue only as a tool to achieve a certain practical goal, establish a comprehensive and complete learning goal, comprehensively master the language foundation and application skills of the target language, and realize its communicative function. Learners should correct their attitude towards Chinese learning, fully understand the significance of learning Chinese, enhance their confidence in learning Chinese, persevere in learning, actively correct learning mistakes, constantly improve their own language structure, and gradually get closer to the target language.

4.3. Master Learning Strategies and Communication Strategies

The lack of learning strategies and the abuse of communicative strategies are also the main causes of fossilization of interlanguage. In language learning, learners should learn to use effective methods and means to process and integrate the information in the target language, so as to incorporate it into their own interlanguage structure. According to research, O.Miley pointed out that learning strategies mainly include metacognitive strategies, cognitive strategies and social-emotional strategies. Learners should be good at using metacognitive strategies to systematically plan learning, and implement self-monitoring and self-assessment. To adjust the learning process and improve the learning efficiency by comprehensive use of cognitive strategies such as analytical reasoning and induction; In language communication, avoid using communication strategies such as avoidance, substitution and simplification at will to achieve the purpose of communication, resulting in complacency, weakening learning motivation, hindering the improvement of second language level, and leading to language

fossilization; It is necessary to increase the training of language output, find plenty of opportunities to use the target language for daily communication, strive to improve their cross-cultural communication awareness, effectively improve language application communication ability, and effectively avoid language fossilization.

4.4. Focus on Learner Emotion

The majority of foreign learners still mainly rely on classroom teaching for their second language acquisition. Teachers play an important role in the process of students' language acquisition and need to pay attention to learners' emotional states and give play to the positive role of emotional factors in promoting second language acquisition. When learners make mistakes, teachers need to provide negative cognitive feedback and point out students' mistakes, but they should not treat them as a flood and blindly criticize and blame students to discourage their learning enthusiasm. They should guide and analyze the mistakes, provide appropriate exercises to help students consolidate their understanding of mistakes and master correct language knowledge, so as to avoid repeated mistakes and lead to fossilization. Teachers should give positive emotional feedback to students' performance in the process of error correction, give timely affirmation and encouragement, relieve students' anxiety caused by learning disabilities, stimulate positive emotional factors, eliminate negative emotional factors, enhance their confidence and interest in learning, and make students in a good emotional state, so as to have a positive impact on their learning behavior and learning effect. Various forms of interaction between teachers and students should also be maintained in the teaching process. For example, in classroom teaching, cooperation and communication between teachers and students play an important role in the implementation of teaching activities. Teachers should be good at observing students' learning reactions, keep in touch with students in time, provide necessary learning help and learning strategy guidance, guide students to learn to reflect and summarize learning experience. Reduce the fossilization of interlanguage and promote the improvement of second language acquisition.

The significance of interlanguage in teaching Chinese as a foreign language

Teachers can guide students according to the laws of interlanguage theory that interlanguage is a dynamic, developing and structured language system in the learning process of language learners. Its permeability, initiative, fossilization and systematic characteristics make us more objective and rational to look at the phenomena such as bias, assimilation and fossilization in language learning, which are inevitable in the process of language learning. In the process of teaching, teachers should give students necessary guidance and reasonable suggestions so that students can develop and perfect their own language system as soon as possible to get closer to the target language system.

The teaching of Chinese as a foreign language has shifted from "teaching" to "learning". Interlanguage is the basis of explaining and analyzing the theory of errors in foreign language learning, and the ultimate goal of second language teaching is to reduce and avoid errors in the process of learning the second language and make learners' mastery level equal to that of the target language. Therefore, the important significance of interlanguage theory for second language teaching is mainly manifested in that it changes the

traditional model of "teaching" and shifts the focus of language teaching to students' learning, prompting us to conduct a comparative study on the relevant factors of teaching and learning. In the field of teaching Chinese as a foreign language, error analysis, contrastive analysis and interlanguage analysis have been combined to study the process of learners' learning and acquisition. It is helpful to analyze the common errors of students and arrange the teaching to improve the teaching and learning effect.

It opens a new way of thinking for the study of teaching Chinese as a foreign language. From a dynamic perspective, interlanguage theory regards language learning, especially second language learning, as a process of getting closer to the target language. It provides a good breakthrough for us to understand the influence of mother tongue on second language learning and reveal the mystery of the intermediate process from language input to language output, which has great value in language learning theory. Teaching Chinese as a foreign language is also a kind of second language teaching. The significance and value of interlanguage theory for second language teaching are also reflected in teaching Chinese as a foreign language. The introduction and in-depth study of interlanguage theory have opened up new ideas, added new contents and opened up a new research field in the theoretical study of teaching Chinese as a foreign language. In practical teaching, new methods have been summarized, more materials have been accumulated, and new achievements and breakthroughs have been made.

5. Conclusion

Through this study, we find that interlanguage fossilization is a very common phenomenon for learners, which is always accompanied by the process of second language acquisition. Therefore, in order to summarize the methods and experiences to avoid fossilization of interlanguage, we analyzed the causes of fossilization and found that this phenomenon is caused by both internal and external factors of learners, such as negative transfer of learners' mother tongue, interference of learned knowledge, learning methods, cultural factors, and teachers' teaching. Teachers can achieve the reduction of fossilization by improving the level of learners, making learners have strong cultural adaptability and avoiding negative transfer of mother tongue. In addition, teachers can further reduce the fossilization of interlanguage by providing learners with a large amount of high-quality input and sufficient feedback.

The introduction of interlanguage makes the study of second language learning shift from the study of mother tongue and target language to the study of learner, that is, the development of learner's own language. The theory of interlanguage makes people start to look at the learner's language from the perspective of development and with an objective attitude, and no longer criticize the mistakes in the learner's language blindly, but realize that the learner's language has its own characteristics and language errors are inevitable natural phenomena. This has positive implications for both language learners and language teachers. Learners can overcome the fear of making mistakes and shy from practice. Psychological teachers can understand learners' interlanguage level through mistakes no longer as enemies and help learners achieve better development on the interlanguage continuum with corresponding means. Of course, second language acquisition is an extremely complex process, and the comprehensive effects of various social

factors, individual factors, input and output ultimately determine the language level of learners, so the research on other factors should not be ignored.

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