

Implications of Second Language Acquisition Strategies for Chinese Vocabulary Teaching

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Abstract: Vocabulary is the building material of language, and vocabulary teaching is a very important part in Chinese language teaching. Vocabulary learning has also been one of the focuses in second language acquisition research. Lack of vocabulary will make it difficult to improve any part of language learning such as listening, speaking, reading and writing. International Chinese language teachers should fully grasp theories of second language acquisition at home and abroad, pay attention to learners' acquisition, adhere to the principle of learner-centred and teacher-led, and adjust the teaching mode on this basis. Some studies have proved that the appropriate use of learning strategies can improve the efficiency of Chinese vocabulary acquisition, and at the same time, the study of the second language acquisition strategies used by learners will also play a positive role in promoting the teaching of international Chinese language teachers, who should improve the vocabulary teaching methods in accordance with the acquisition situation of the students, so as to optimise the teaching process.

Keywords: Second Language Acquisition; Learning Strategies; Chinese Vocabulary; Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language.

1. Introduction

Due to the large number of Chinese words and their richness of meaning, they contain the unique culture and unique way of thinking of China. Vocabulary teaching is an important part of teaching Chinese as a foreign language and also its difficulty. Vocabulary learning takes place throughout the process of second language acquisition, and Chinese learners' vocabulary mastery has a direct impact on their language output and communicative competence. Teaching Chinese as a foreign language discipline started late, at present, the research on Chinese as a second language acquisition strategies has not yet been perfected, and the research on Chinese vocabulary learning strategies is even less, the existing research on acquisition strategies is mostly based on English language teaching, and more English vocabulary acquisition strategies are vocabulary cognitive strategies, vocabulary memory strategies, etc., and the memory strategies include schema, chunks of input and output, and so on.

Chinese is an ideographic script and English is an epigraphic script. The difference in the language itself determines the difference in the method of acquiring the language, for example, Chinese has no morphological changes, and dummy words are one of the means of expressing grammatical meanings. The Chinese language has not only a large number of virtual words but also different usage. As one of the main subjects of Chinese language, the lexical meaning of virtual words is not obvious, but mainly conveys grammatical meaning. Therefore, the learning strategies used in acquiring English cannot be copied exactly when acquiring Chinese.

Since the 1970s, the study of second language vocabulary acquisition has gradually become a hot spot in the field of second language acquisition research. "Some scholars (Lewis 1993) believe that vocabulary acquisition is the central task of second language acquisition. Every language ability cannot be learnt and improved without relying on vocabulary, but second language vocabulary acquisition is a lifelong cognitive process, and no one can master the entire

vocabulary of a language"[1] . "In cognitive linguistics, second language vocabulary acquisition is a cyclical and dynamic cognitive process; it is not only the acquisition of a complex cognitive skill, but also a psychological process, and this whole process is articulated by a number of sub-stages." [2] Therefore, the exploration of second language acquisition strategies in Chinese vocabulary still needs to be continued.

Some scholars have proved that learners' use of appropriate learning strategies in Chinese language learning will enhance the efficiency of acquisition. International Chinese language teachers need to understand the use of learning strategies, make effective use of the acquisition theory in teaching, and guide students to use appropriate learning strategies, and this active acquisition process will also affect the teachers' vocabulary teaching ideas. This paper introduces the characteristics of Chinese vocabulary acquisition and the types of commonly used Chinese vocabulary learning strategies, and makes suggestions for international Chinese language teachers' teaching process on the basis of a full understanding of the special characteristics of Chinese vocabulary learning. The paper introduces the characteristics of Chinese vocabulary acquisition and the types of commonly used Chinese vocabulary learning strategies, and makes suggestions to international Chinese teachers on the basis of a full understanding of the special characteristics of Chinese vocabulary learning.

2. Chinese Vocabulary Acquisition

2.1. Characteristics of Chinese Vocabulary Acquisition

Vocabulary acquisition is the central task of second language acquisition. Listening, speaking, reading, writing and translating cannot be separated from the reliance on vocabulary, and second language learners need to master a certain amount of vocabulary and have considerable vocabulary knowledge in order to carry out language activities. The Chinese vocabulary system has a large number of members, a loose structure, and a hierarchy that seems neither sufficient nor perfect, with most words having more

than two meanings, distinctive personalities, and individual words possessing two lexemes at the same time, and the use of which is even more varied in specific contexts, with a wide range of rules, reflecting a great deal of instability in the process of vocabulary evolution. From the point of view of the co-occurrence plane alone, there is also a constant addition, deletion and replacement of old and new words. The vocabulary system has formed an orderly and open complex system through the exchange of material, energy and information with the external environment along with the development of the society and the succession of the external environment. Therefore, vocabulary teaching is not centred on teaching only the forms, sounds and meanings of vocabulary, nor does it stop at memorising dictionaries; remembering does not mean that it can be applied. International Chinese language teachers should correctly understand and appreciate the true meaning of "vocabulary-centred teaching". Words are not isolated, but always exist in a network of aggregation and combination, and it is only in this network that the meaning and usage of vocabulary can be grasped.

2.2. Learners' Chinese Vocabulary Learning Strategies

The essential attribute of learning strategies is the learner's self-regulation and control of the learning process. "O'Malley & Chamot categorise learning strategies into three main groups according to the information processing model: metacognitive strategies, cognitive strategies and social and emotional strategies." [3] Metacognitive strategies are used to evaluate, manage, and monitor cognitive strategies, and to regulate language learning by defining learning goals and plans, and evaluating learning outcomes; cognitive strategies are used in language-learning activities to solve problems by directly analysing, transforming, or synthesising the learning material; and social-emotional strategies provide the learner with greater exposure to the language. Each category includes a number of sub-categories: 1. Metacognitive strategies: advance preparation; focused attention; selective attention; self-management; prior practice; self-monitoring; self-evaluation. 2. Cognitive strategies: repetition; translation; deduction, re-organisation; use of key words; use of contextual situations; transfer; speculation, etc. 3. Social and emotional strategies: collaboration; questioning for clarification purposes.

(1) Cognitive Strategies for Chinese Vocabulary Acquisition

Cognitive strategies mainly refer to the effective recognition, comprehension, organisation, retention and extraction of information, and are a class of internally organised cognitive skills that regulate and monitor cognitive processes. The information processing process of cognition involves the flow of information through the stages of selective perception, short-term memory to long-term memory and extraction. Information flow from one stage to another, from one form to another form are subject to the regulation and guidance of the executive monitoring process (i.e., cognitive strategies), i.e., cognitive strategies are the operation of the executive system in learning activities. Because people's learning is always operated through cognitive strategies. Knowledge can only be acquired through observation; knowledge can be understood and comprehended through imagination and thinking; knowledge can be consolidated through memory; and attention is the

organisation and maintenance of these activities of observation, imagination, thinking and memory. The main function of cognitive strategies is to help learners achieve cognitive goals in the cognitive activities they engage in. Generally speaking, the higher the learner's level of Chinese language proficiency, the greater the variety of vocabulary learning strategies used. High-level learners are more adept at using a combination of vocabulary learning strategies than low-level learners. Elementary learners tend to understand the meaning of words only by looking them up in the dictionary. As their language level increases, learners look up words in the dictionary not only to grasp the meaning of words, but also to understand the usage of vocabulary words and how they are used in contexts, and they are more adept at expanding their vocabulary by taking notes and making use of contextual linguistic environments. Some studies have proved that as learners' language level increases, the less frequently they use mnemonic strategies. Beginner level learners use mechanical memory more often, such as using vocabulary lists and the mechanical repetition strategy of reading while writing, etc. The higher the level, the more frequently learners use such strategies.

(2) Metacognitive strategies for Chinese vocabulary acquisition

Metacognitive strategy is also known as supervisory regulation strategy. It is people's self-awareness and self-regulation of cognitive activities, mainly including self-evaluation and self-management two parts. Self-evaluation is an individual's judgement and estimation of his or her own behaviour, thoughts, abilities, etc.; self-management is a person's ability to manage himself or herself, including dominating and adjusting his or her own learning, setting up long-term and short-term goals for learning, and self-motivation. From the viewpoint of its consciousness function, it enables learners to choose similar strategies for materials with similar characteristics or approximate learning situations, and realise the migration of strategies. From its regulatory function, metacognition can regulate and control learning activities through a variety of feedback information, through this mechanism, learners can detect various situations that occur in the learning process, and accordingly instantly judge and evaluate the effectiveness of their own activities, and adjust or choose new cognitive strategies at any time, and when there is a new learning situation that is similar to that of the past, the learners can be under the control of metacognition and smooth Learning strategy transfer.

The impact of metacognitive strategies on learning is indirect but still very important. It requires learners to have a clear knowledge and understanding of their own learning, and to plan, purposefully and consciously evaluate, monitor and manage their vocabulary learning, so as to achieve the purpose of improving the effectiveness of vocabulary learning. Metacognitive strategies include planning, selective attention, and self-monitoring and evaluation. Planning is a strategy where learners can set goals and plans for their vocabulary learning beforehand. Selective attention strategies refer to whether enough attention is devoted to important vocabulary and vocabulary that needs to be comprehended, learnt, and mastered, and whether enough stimulation is obtained from these vocabulary words or cues. This includes whether learners know which words to pay attention to when they encounter certain words and whether students pay attention to these words and know that they should memorise or write them down. Self-monitoring and assessment

strategies mean that students monitor and check the implementation of their vocabulary learning programmes and reflect on their learning after vocabulary learning activities, check their strengths and weaknesses in vocabulary learning, make timely adjustments to their learning methods, and summarise the more efficient or acquisition-promoting learning methods for future use; and take timely remedial measures for the deficiencies they have identified. Remedial measures are taken for the identified deficiencies. This is reflected in the fact that students regularly check their vocabulary learning over a period of time and optimise their vocabulary learning methods on this basis.

3. How to Improve Chinese Vocabulary Teaching based on Second Language Acquisition Strategies

3.1. Instructional Design Aspects:

Lv Wenhua (1999) published "The Concept of Establishing Morpheme Teaching:" "Morpheme teaching is a gap in teaching. Apart from helping the recognition of Chinese characters and eliminating misspellings, the main function of morpheme teaching is that it can greatly improve students' ability to learn vocabulary, master vocabulary and use vocabulary correctly. The way to solve the difficulty of words is to establish morpheme teaching. By mastering a certain number of morphemes and word formation, the vocabulary can be expanded rapidly." [4] Morphemes and monosyllabic words can be used as a starting point in teaching Chinese as a foreign language vocabulary at the elementary level. Teachers can collate some common basic meanings and attach great importance to the recurrence rate of their different meanings, so as to avoid the situation in which students only understand the basic meaning but not the derived meaning, and only understand the rational meaning but not the colour meaning. Teachers should pay attention to vocabulary repetition when preparing teaching plans, and guide learners to deepen their memory of vocabulary through classroom games and other activities. Research on second language vocabulary acquisition under controlled conditions shows that among the three cognitive skills of conscious word translation, word recognition, and word sense preparation, the formation and development of conscious word translation ability is faster than both of the latter two. It is thus clear that "1V1 translation" style code-switching and meaning annotation is a stage that cannot be omitted in the teaching of Chinese as a foreign language vocabulary for beginners, and the key is to make full use of all kinds of learning styles (intentional and unintentional learning), all kinds of cognitive skills (direct method, translation method, listening method, etc.), and all kinds of tools (dictionaries, lexicons, computer software and word games), and to make full use of all kinds of cognitive skills, computer software and word games) to enable students to memorise common morphemes and monosyllabic words one by one, taking care to do this as much as possible in dynamic and interesting word games.

3.2. Teaching of Word Derivation Using a Rhetoric-based Approach

The learning strategies of intermediate and advanced basic Chinese learners are somewhat different from those of beginners. When teachers prepare for vocabulary teaching at

the intermediate and advanced levels, they should not focus on cognition-by-cognition, but need to guide students to find ways to memorise vocabulary from a macro point of view. Teachers should provide necessary explanations of the laws of Chinese vocabulary production. No matter how subtle the students' individual learning strategies are, they still need direct instruction from the teacher. Teachers should guide students to know new words by analysing and disassembling word structures. Batia Laufer (1997) divided words in second language reading into three categories: words you don't know; words you think you know & words you can't guess. Inability to guess unknown words is as much an obstacle to second language reading as insufficient vocabulary, misinterpretation of deceptively transparent words. (misinterpretation of deceptively transparent words) are major problems that hinder second language learning. "Teaching of constructions and word justification must be strengthened to enhance students' ability to derive and anticipate words. How to strengthen this aspect of teaching is a challenge both for vocabulary teaching at the intermediate and advanced levels and for the study of Chinese vocabulary ontology." [5]

3.3. Teaching Chinese Language Blocks

A lexical chunk is a string of words stored in the brain in a holistic form Krashen refers to chunks as semi-fixed pattern phrases and Syder calls them lexicalised sentence terms. It has been shown that in second language acquisition, people are accustomed to using some pattern memory or imitation strategies to identify and master a large number of chunks that occur frequently in the corresponding contexts. These chunks range from complex sentences to short fixed phrases, and they provide shortcuts to language interaction for people with low language proficiency. As a carrier of phonology, grammar and pragmatics, chunks are a shortcut to language learning. Most Chinese learners do not master and use chunks well, and chunks are used less frequently. Therefore, teachers of Chinese as a foreign language should strengthen the awareness of teaching chunks and carry out chunks teaching through all aspects of language learning. In addition, a chunk is a complete unit that emphasises overall extraction and memory. The use of chunks can make collocations more authentic, but advocating chunk teaching will increase learners' memory burden at the same time. When learning chunks, learners have to use some memory-friendly learning strategies, such as note-taking and reciting, etc. International Chinese language teachers should not completely deny the significance of reciting and copying for Chinese vocabulary acquisition, but should advocate the use of different learning strategies for different kinds of Chinese knowledge.

3.4. Teaching Methods based on Cognitive Strategies

When faced with a vocabulary task (especially polysemous words, fixed collocations and idioms), learners will first make a cognitive analysis of the vocabulary, and vocabulary memory is no longer pure rote memorisation when there is a point of attachment, and then learners can choose and apply different memory strategies according to the characteristics of the vocabulary in terms of its meaning and structure, as well as their own individual differences. However, in order to maintain the memory in a lasting and solid way, and to extract the information effectively, it is necessary to encode and process the vocabulary information. Task-based deep-processing training and corpus-driven learning training can

help learners build lexical semantic networks and enhance their vocabulary output ability.

Mastering some cognitive strategies is of great significance to vocabulary teaching, such as making full use of dictionaries. By looking up the dictionary, students can learn the pronunciation, meaning, lexical properties and usage of words, etc. Teachers can prepare different example sentences for students to provide a good context for their vocabulary learning.

4. Conclusion

Elementary vocabulary learning determines the success or failure of teaching Chinese as a foreign language to a large extent. Only by laying a good foundation can we acquire more Chinese vocabulary more smoothly. In planned classroom vocabulary teaching, no matter which part of vocabulary learning is involved, it is important to emphasise fun and to avoid boring duck-filling vocabulary teaching methods. Due to their short learning time and limited comprehension ability, beginner Chinese learners have not yet formed good learning habits and are unable to find suitable Chinese learning strategies, which leads to low efficiency in Chinese learning. Teaching Chinese as a foreign language teachers play an important role in improving the efficiency of vocabulary learning by helping learners master vocabulary learning strategies, build up their confidence in vocabulary learning and increase their interest in vocabulary learning in the teaching process. With the improvement of learners' Chinese language proficiency, international Chinese teachers should adjust their vocabulary teaching methods at any time, so that vocabulary teaching does not stop at recognition and sentence construction, but rather guides the learners to develop their self-education ability.

It is because of the complexity of Chinese vocabulary that international Chinese language teachers should be more innovative in their teaching mode and understand the characteristics of the acquisition process of learners inspired by the theory of second language acquisition. Vocabulary learning is not a simple task for foreign learners, as different learners have different Chinese language bases, international Chinese language teachers should adhere to the principle of teaching according to the students' abilities and try different Chinese vocabulary teaching strategies with the support of theories, so as to enrich the research on vocabulary teaching of Chinese as a foreign language.

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