

Analysis of the Characteristics of Learning Chinese as a Second Language

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Abstract: Chinese as a second language teaching is not only a second language teaching, but also a foreign language teaching. The learning characteristics of non-native Chinese speakers also belong to the important content of second language learning research. This article analyzes the characteristics of Chinese as a second language learning from the comparison of Chinese learning for children and adults, Chinese learning for men and women, and Chinese learning for Chinese learners in the Chinese circle and non-Chinese circle. It is hoped that by studying the general characteristics of second language learning and the general rules of foreigners' learning Chinese, it can provide a reference for the study of Chinese teaching as a foreign language, and can help the scientific degree of teaching Chinese as a foreign language.

Keywords: Chinese; Second Language; Language Learning Characteristics

In the 1950s, the opening of the “Chinese Language Course for Eastern European Exchange Students” marked the beginning of Chinese teaching as a second language. From the 1950s to the present, Chinese teaching has gradually expanded from pure foreign language teaching to related research fields such as the ontological study of Chinese as a second language teaching and the study of Chinese as a second language acquisition. Affected by the Western educational concept, Chinese teaching has gradually changed from the traditional “teacher-centered” to “student-centered”, and the factors that affect Chinese learners' Chinese learning and the learning characteristics and characteristics of different learners have been derived. This article intends to analyze and explain the different characteristics of different groups of Chinese learners in learning Chinese from the three aspects of age, gender and motivation.

1. Age

Children's learning of their mother tongue mainly depends on innate factors, while adults' learning of a second language mainly depends on acquired efforts. The learning characteristics of the two are very different.

First of all, it takes a very short time for children to master their mother tongue. Studies have found that children cannot master complete sentences and grammar before the age of 1.5, but by the age of 3.5, they can master complex grammar and express complex sentences. In just two years, children have made rapid progress in language learning. Adults will never learn a second language as fast as children learn their mother tongue. They tend to get twice the result with half the effort, and they are not as effective as children with longer efforts.

Secondly, no matter what kind of language in the world, as long as children are in a specific language environment, even if no one deliberately teaches them, they can easily learn a specific language. However, it is difficult for an adult to live in a second language living environment and no one specializes in it. It is difficult to learn the local language, or it takes a long time

to learn part of it. The speed and quality of learning are far behind children.

Furthermore, no matter whether the children's intelligence level is equivalent, the starting time of language learning is the same, the learning content is similar, the learning process is the same, the actual situation of mastering the mother tongue at the same stage is the same, no matter what method is used, the result They are not much different. However, the ability of adults to learn a second language is closely related to the intellectual level and learning ability of learners. The speed and quality of learning by people with dull aptitudes are far behind those of smart people.

In summary, children's learning of mother tongue and adults' learning of a second language are different in terms of the degree of innate factors, the role of learning ability, and the language environment. Similarly, Chinese children learning Chinese and foreign adults learning Chinese are different types of language learning.

2. Gender

Gender differences are also one of the influencing factors of foreign language learning. The learning abilities of men and women are inherently different. Men usually tend to think rationally and are generally better than science subjects, such as mathematics, physics, chemistry and other subjects. Men's performance is often better than women. Women are better at perceptual thinking and are often better than men in subjects such as Chinese and English. In the 1960s, sociolinguistic research on the impact of gender differences on language ability indicated that women's language ability is stronger than that of men. Famous scholars Vlachos and Andreou believe that gender is regarded as one of the key factors affecting foreign language or second language learning.^[1] Compared with young men, women in their early years have shown an innate advantage in mother tongue learning, and this language learning ability has gradually migrated to second language learning.

This ability is reflected in the learning process. The learning process refers to the learning method adopted by learners in constantly monitoring and adjusting their learning goals through the judgment of their own abilities and task value. It is generally divided into a superficial process and a deep process. The superficial process refers to the process in which learners learn passively. They have low expectations of learning outcomes and meet the curriculum requirements as the goal. They only memorize knowledge in order to cope with the exam, and the learning effect is relatively poor; deep process refers to the process in which learners actively learn. The expected value of learning outcomes is high, and they are curious and interested in the knowledge they have learned, can establish a knowledge system, and have relatively good learning effects.^[2]

Related research shows that most women belong to the deep process, while men belong to the superficial process. The reason is that compared with women, men's language ability is lagging behind, their attention in class is often easily distracted, and their ability to learn independently is low, and they tend to have certain negative emotions, and they tend to learn more simply and repeatedly. It is often said to learn for the sake of learning. Women's emotions are richer and more delicate than men, and their knowledge of Chinese is higher than men's. They have higher expectations for learning outcomes in the process of Chinese learning. They can use their own Chinese knowledge to turn boring learning into their own learning. Interest and the ability to establish a systematic language knowledge system belong to the deep learning process. From the perspective of the frequency of language use, women are more talkative than men due to their own characteristics, increasing the frequency of language output, and self-confidence is also established in this learning process. However, men are less interested in language learning due to the influence of early childhood, and their self-confidence is weaker than women.

3. Motivation

In the 1970s, Krashen proposed a "language monitoring model", which contains five central hypotheses: ① learning and acquisition hypothesis; ② input hypothesis; ③ affective filtering hypothesis; ④ monitoring hypothesis; ⑤ natural acquisition order hypothesis. Krashen believes that the emotional filtering hypothesis among the five hypotheses is "a psychological barrier that prevents learners from fully digesting the comprehensive input obtained in the acquisition." He emphasized the role of emotional filtering factors in the process of second language acquisition.

Krashen tried to explain the reasons for the different learning speed and efficiency of different learners by studying the influence of emotional filtering factors on language input.

Affective filter factors include motivation, self-confidence and anxiety. So he proposed the concept of “emotional filtering”. “Emotional filtering” is a psychological barrier that prevents learners from making full use of the intelligible input they receive to acquire language.

Motivation refers to whether the student’s learning purpose clearly directly affects its learning effect. A clear purpose leads to strong motivation and rapid development; otherwise, it has little effect.

The learning motivation of second language acquisition is mainly divided into fusion motivation and instrumental motivation. Fusion motivation means that the learner has a strong interest in the target language community and hopes to associate with or get close to it, and even one day be accepted by the community and become a member of it and integrate with it. This motivation is generally not directly related to the learner’s personal future and economic interests, but is an internal motivation. Instrumental motivation means that learners use Chinese as a tool for a special purpose (pass a certain test, obtain a scholarship, obtain a certain position, etc.) for easy use. This motivation is related to the future and interests of the individual, and it comes from external motivation.

The Chinese learners who learn Chinese in the Chinese context are mainly divided into language students and degree students. The study time ranges from several months to several years. Some enter China’s formal universities to learn Chinese, and some have corresponding Qualified language training institutions or volunteer-type activities to learn Chinese, and some are management staff of multinational companies stationed in China. Some of these Chinese learners are interested in Chinese culture and history and want to understand Chinese history, culture, and folk customs. This is a fusion motivation. Some people learn Chinese in order to complete their work better and to have smoother economic and trade activities with the Chinese. Others learn Chinese in China and hope to return to their home countries to engage in China-related economic activities. Trade work even stays in China for further study or work, this part is instrumental motivation.

It is generally believed that fusion motivation is more effective in promoting language learning than instrumental motivation, and it is one of the decisive factors for the success of language learning. However, in fact, these two motives coexist among many Chinese learners. Many students choose to engage in related careers because of their interest in China and Chinese culture, and to learn Chinese accordingly; The learning results are helpful to their work and career, and it is also an affirmation of Chinese learning.

4. Conclusion

The effect of Chinese as a second language acquisition is different due to factors such as age, gender, and learning motivation. Different factors also present different characteristics. The learning characteristics of Chinese language acquisition by non-native Chinese speakers are different from the acquisition of Chinese professional knowledge by native Chinese students. On the basis of fully understanding the general characteristics and uses of foreigners’ learning Chinese language, targeted teaching activities, expansion of teaching content, Provide it with a more conducive language learning environment to promote its learning efficiency.

References

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