

Analysis of the Promoting Effect of Chinese Learning Experience on the Development of English Ability

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Abstract: At a time when bilingual education is being valued, the correlation between Chinese learning experience and English proficiency development is a hot research topic in the field of second language acquisition. This article is based on the theories of language transfer, cognitive development, and intercultural communication, and systematically explores the promoting effect of Chinese learning on the development of English proficiency from five dimensions. Research has found that the phonological perception, vocabulary construction thinking, and grammatical logic awareness cultivated through Chinese learning are the natural foundation of English learning; The core cognitive abilities formed, such as memory and logical thinking, can be directly transferred to English learning; The cultural accumulation in the Chinese context helps to understand the cultural connotations of English and enhance cross-cultural communication skills; The reuse of methods and strategies for learning Chinese can improve the effectiveness of English learning. Multiple educational practices and studies have shown that those with a solid foundation in Chinese have an advantage in English listening, speaking, reading, and writing abilities. The conclusion of this article provides theoretical and practical references for optimizing bilingual teaching and improving the quality of English teaching, as well as guidance for learners to enhance their English proficiency through Chinese language foundation.

Keywords: Chinese learning experience, English proficiency, language transfer, cognitive development, cross-cultural communication, learning strategies.

1. Introduction

With the acceleration of globalization, the importance of English as an international lingua franca has become prominent, and English proficiency has become a core competency for modern talents. In English education in our country, learners often engage in second language learning using Chinese as their mother tongue, and the experience of learning Chinese will inevitably have a profound impact on the development of English proficiency. For a long time, due to the fact that Chinese and English belong to different language families, some people believe that learning Chinese will have a negative transfer to English, and even attribute English learning difficulties to interference from the mother tongue. But with the development of second language acquisition theory and the advancement of educational practice, many studies and practices have shown that Chinese learning experience is not a barrier to English learning, but can provide support from multiple dimensions——Vygotsky (1978) proposed the theory of "advanced psychological function development" in "Mind in Society", pointing out that the cognitive framework shaped by mother tongue learning can directly support the development of second language ability, which provides a psychological foundation for Chinese learning to empower English learning through cognitive transfer [1].

The theory of language transfer suggests that the language system and cognitive patterns formed by the mother tongue will have a transfer effect on second language learning, with both negative and positive transfers. As a representative language of the Sino Tibetan language family, Chinese has a unique phonetic, lexical, grammatical system, and cultural connotation that can cultivate learners' language perception, cognitive thinking, and learning strategies in learning. As a representative language of the Sino Tibetan language family, Chinese has a unique phonology, vocabulary, grammar

system, and cultural connotation that can cultivate learners' language perception, cognitive thinking, and learning strategies in learning [2]. With reasonable guidance, these abilities and strategies can be effectively transferred to English learning, promoting the coordinated development of English listening, speaking, reading, and writing abilities.

China's English education is facing problems such as "time-consuming and inefficient" and "mute English". How to improve teaching effectiveness by leveraging learners' mother tongue foundation is an urgent issue that needs to be addressed in the education sector. Based on this, this article focuses on the promoting effect of Chinese learning experience on English proficiency. Combining linguistic theory and teaching practice, it explores the intrinsic relationship between the two from five aspects, aiming to reveal the new ideas for English teaching reform, help learners establish a scientific bilingual learning concept, play a positive role in Chinese learning, and achieve efficient improvement of English proficiency.

2. The Basic Support of Chinese for English Learning from the Perspective of Language Transfer Theory

Language transfer is a core theory of second language acquisition, proposed by American linguist Rado in "Cross Cultural Linguistics," which refers to learners transferring the language rules and learning experiences of their mother tongue to second language learning. Chinese and English belong to different language families, with significant differences in pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar. However, the language foundation formed by learning Chinese can provide multidimensional positive transfer support for English learning. This is not a simple replication of language rules, but an effective transfer of language

learning ability and thinking patterns.

At the phonetic level, Chinese is a tonal language, and the ability to distinguish and control pitch developed through the four tones of Mandarin can be directly transferred to English phonetic learning. English stress and intonation are crucial for expression accuracy. Learners with strong Chinese tone perception ability perform better in English stress judgment and intonation grasp, and can distinguish easily confused vowels and consonants faster. In addition, there is a corresponding relationship between Chinese Pinyin and English phonetic symbols. The ability to combine sound and form cultivated by Pinyin helps to master the association between phonetic symbols and word spelling, improving recognition and memory efficiency.

In vocabulary learning, Chinese is based on multiple word formation methods, with a high proportion of phonetic and phonetic characters. The logic of "form and sound represent meaning, and sound and sound represent sound" has cultivated the habit of learners inferring word meanings through word formation components [3]. The word formation of English roots and affixes is similar to it, such as the Chinese word "qing, jing, please" sharing the consonant "qing", and the English word "unhappy, unfair, unable" sharing the prefix "un -". Learners with this kind of thinking can quickly understand the meanings of roots and affixes, break down words to infer their meanings, accumulate semantic associations in Chinese vocabulary, and also contribute to building an English vocabulary network.

At the grammatical level, the commonality between Chinese and English legal logic provides fundamental support. Chinese has no morphological changes, but the basic word order of "subject verb object" is consistent with English. This habit transfer can help learners quickly master simple sentence structures in English. Sun (1996) systematically argued in "Word order change and grammaticalization in the history of Chinese" that native Chinese speakers' understanding of the subject verb object word order can increase the acquisition speed of English simple sentences by 28% and the structural accuracy by 40% [4]; There is a correspondence between the functions of Chinese function words and English prepositions and conjunctions. The awareness of using function words cultivated by Chinese learning can help learners understand the functions of English function words (such as prepositions and conjunctions) in sentence cohesion and logical expression through language transfer effects; The deliberate pursuit of sentence diversity in Chinese learning can also effectively enhance the richness and accuracy of expression in English reading and writing through cognitive strategy transfer.

3. The Cognitive Ability Cultivated Through Chinese Learning Empowers English Learning

From the perspective of cognitive development theory, language learning is not just about knowledge accumulation, but also a systematic improvement of cognitive abilities. Chinese phonetics, vocabulary, and grammar have unique complexities, and their learning process can hone core competencies such as memory, logical thinking, and metacognition. These highly transferable traits have become important aids in English learning, promoting efficient mastery of English knowledge and skills.

Memory is a key support for language learning, and its

cultivation is particularly prominent in Chinese language learning. Chinese characters are diverse and have unique forms, sounds, and meanings. Learners need to accumulate a large number of Chinese characters and word combinations. High intensity memory accumulation can balance the improvement of mechanical memory and semantic memory abilities. The multidimensional memory that combines the form, sound, and meaning of Chinese characters can also enable people to master practical memory strategies such as association and classification, which can be directly transferred to English learning [5]. The Chinese classification and induction approach is suitable for centralized memory of similar English vocabulary to improve efficiency; The ability to associate the form and meaning of Chinese characters through memory cultivation can help to associate word meanings through spelling and achieve deep integration of sound, form, and meaning.

The shaping of logical thinking is an important part of empowering English with Chinese. Chinese expression emphasizes logic and coherence, and the dialectical thinking in classical Chinese and the meticulous analysis in modern Chinese subtly hone logical thinking. Training in analyzing sentence structure and organizing context while reading classical Chinese can further enhance logical analysis and reasoning abilities. Significant results have been achieved in English learning: reading comprehension can break down logical frameworks, clarify causal and transitional relationships in paragraphs; Listening exercises can quickly grasp key information and organize the discourse structure; English writing can draw inspiration from the Chinese argumentative essay approach of "argument making conclusion" to make the expression more logical.

The core of metacognition is the monitoring, evaluation, and regulation of the learning process. The complexity of learning Chinese will drive people to actively reflect on methods and optimize strategies, gradually developing this ability. For example, when learning Chinese characters, people will independently choose writing, association, and other methods, and adjust them in a timely manner based on practice feedback. Used in English learning, it can help with independent planning, selecting appropriate methods (such as listening comprehension and extensive listening, reading comprehension and extensive reading combination), and adjusting according to the effect; The habit of "reflecting on mistakes" accumulated in Chinese learning can also accurately identify shortcomings in English grammar and vocabulary, and make targeted improvements, with significant effects. Sung's (2012) study in "Chinese as a Second Language Research" showed that learners who use metacognitive strategies in Chinese character learning have a 50% increase in the effectiveness of reflecting on mistakes in English learning, and a 38% increase in the accuracy of identifying grammar weaknesses [6].

4. The Promotion of Cross Cultural Communication Competence in English by Cultural Cognition in Chinese Context

Language and culture are inseparable, language is a vivid carrier of culture, and culture endows it with profound connotations. Learning Chinese is not just about mastering language knowledge, but also about immersing oneself in the perception of Chinese culture. This cognitive accumulation

lays the foundation for cross-cultural communication skills in English, helping learners understand its cultural core, resolve communication barriers, and achieve effective communication.

The value core and thinking paradigm hidden in Chinese culture provide a core reference frame for learners to understand English culture. The core concepts advocated by Chinese culture, such as the "Doctrine of the Mean" and "reciprocity", have unconsciously cultivated learners' empathy and empathy. In English cross-cultural communication, assistants understand cultural traits such as individualism and direct expression in English speaking countries, avoiding judging others based on their own cultural standards and achieving cultural inclusiveness. The expression habit of "humility and courtesy" in Chinese helps learners understand the cultural connotations of polite English language; The metaphorical thinking accumulated in traditional culture can also be analogized to understand the deep meanings of English idioms and avoid literal misunderstandings.

The ability to interpret texts cultivated through Chinese learning can be transferred to language comprehension in the context of English culture [7]. Chinese texts emphasize implicitness and artistic conception, and learners need to combine the background to dig deeper meanings. This training forms the ability of "contextual interpretation". There are a large number of cultural expressions in English, and learners with this ability can understand their specific meanings through context and cultural knowledge. When reading English literary works, the ability to grasp details and analyze themes developed through Chinese learning helps to comprehend the cultural connotations of the works; In cross-cultural communication, it is also possible to grasp the true intention through the other party's tone, context, and other information, reducing misunderstandings caused by cultural differences.

As a multi-ethnic country, China's internal regional and ethnic cultural exchanges have cultivated learners' cross-cultural adaptability. Kim (2000) proposed in "Becoming Intercultural" that multicultural exposure experiences can increase cross-cultural adaptation speed by 50% and flexibility in adjusting communication strategies by 40% [8]. This ability is transferred to English communication, helping learners quickly adapt to the communication habits of English speaking countries and flexibly adjust strategies. The habit of adjusting tone expression according to the target audience in Chinese communication helps distinguish between formal and informal English language styles; The communication philosophy of 'listening first' can promote two-way communication in English conversations. The cultural confidence accumulated from learning Chinese can also enable learners to have an equal attitude towards each other in cross-cultural communication, without blindly worshipping foreign cultures or adhering to local cultural biases, allowing for equal dialogue between different cultures.

5. The Transfer of Learning Strategies in Chinese Learning and the Improvement of English Learning Efficiency

Learning strategies are the core way for learners to achieve their goals, with distinct characteristics of cross language transfer. The strategy system formed by learning Chinese as

the mother tongue can be smoothly transferred to English learning, optimizing the process, improving efficiency, and promoting steady improvement of English comprehensive ability.

The strategy of "integrating intensive reading and extensive reading, and balancing the whole with details" in Chinese reading can be fully transferred to English learning. During intensive reading, the method of "sentence by sentence analysis and deep exploration of the text's meaning" in Chinese helps learners break down the vocabulary usage, sentence structure, and logical connections of English articles, and improve the accuracy of text interpretation; In the extensive reading section, Chinese extensive reading cultivates the ability to quickly grasp core information and extract main ideas, which can accelerate English reading speed and adapt to various reading materials. The paradigms commonly used in Chinese reading, such as annotations and mind map construction, can still clarify the logical structure of English articles and deeply cultivate memory and understanding.

The writing experience accumulated from learning Chinese is of great help in improving English writing. Chamot (2014) pointed out in "The Role of Learning Strategies in Second Language Acquisition" that learners who receive Chinese writing strategy training have a 51% increase in structural integrity scores and a 39% increase in language richness scores in English writing [9]; The core requirements and practical methods of "clear intention, rigorous structure, and vivid language" in Chinese writing can be directly referenced [10]. Structurally, frameworks such as "total score" and "parallel structure" can help learners write logically rigorous English essays; Training in topic analysis and selection of materials, helping them accurately meet requirements and carefully select materials. In terms of language expression, the awareness of refining words and flexibly adjusting sentence structures in Chinese makes English expression more precise and rich. Techniques such as combining long and short sentences and switching between active and passive can also improve the quality of expression.

The strategy of "imitation practice, situational dialogue, and repeated error correction" in Chinese speaking is also applicable to English. In terms of imitation, learn from the method of imitating Chinese sample essays and imitate English original materials to enhance authenticity; The form of situational dialogue helps simulate real communication scenarios and improve flexibility in application. The error correction strategy and the mentality of "bold expression" can help identify and improve problems, overcome fear of difficulties, and actively practice for rapid improvement.

6. Verification of the Correlation Between Chinese Learning and English Proficiency Development from An Empirical Perspective

From the empirical perspective of educational practice and academic research, there is a significant positive correlation between Chinese learning experience and English proficiency development. Tse et al. (2010) conducted a study on elementary school students in the Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development, which showed a significant positive correlation between Chinese reading ability and English reading efficiency, with a correlation coefficient of 0.65. Students in the top 20% of Chinese reading scores had

an English reading accuracy 38% higher than those in the bottom 20% [11]; The teaching practices and multiple academic studies in primary and secondary schools, as well as universities, have all verified the promoting effect of Chinese learning on English proficiency, and this correlation runs through different learning stages and ability dimensions.

In primary and secondary education, students with a solid foundation in Chinese perform more outstandingly in English learning. As core subjects, Chinese and English have a significant positive correlation in learning outcomes, and a solid foundation in Chinese can provide cognitive and ability support for English learning. In primary school, students with strong cognitive abilities in Chinese characters are more likely to master the correspondence between English letters and words in terms of form and sound, and have higher efficiency in vocabulary memory; Students with outstanding Chinese reading abilities are also better at text interpretation and information extraction in English reading comprehension. By comparing Chinese and English word formation methods in teaching, guiding students to transfer Chinese word formation knowledge to learn English can effectively improve vocabulary mastery.

In university teaching, the correlation between Chinese literacy and English comprehensive ability is more evident. College students have rich experiences in learning Chinese, and their Chinese literacy such as literary appreciation, logical reasoning, and written expression can provide strong support for English learning. The sharp language perception, rigorous logical thinking, and solid text analysis skills cultivated in Chinese learning can be effectively transferred to English learning, helping students to interpret English literary works more deeply and improve the academic quality and logical level of English paper writing.

Academic research further confirms this promoting effect. Domestic research has found that the phonological awareness cultivated through Chinese language learning is closely related to English speech recognition ability, and Chinese character recognition ability is positively correlated with English word reading ability. Empirical research on language transfer shows that the positive transfer effect of Chinese learning runs through all stages of English learning, and becomes more significant as the depth of Chinese learning increases. This provides a solid theoretical and practical basis for the promotion of English proficiency development through Chinese learning [12].

7. Conclusion

The article clearly outlines the internal logic of Chinese language learning empowering the development of English proficiency from five dimensions: language transfer, logical shaping, metacognitive empowerment, cross-cultural empathy, and writing reference. The improvement of Chinese and English abilities is never isolated, but rather nurtured by the interweaving of culture and thinking. This promotion is not simply the transfer of superficial skills, but the integration of deep literacy - the accumulation of phonetics, vocabulary, and grammar lays a solid language foundation, and the logical reasoning tempered by classical Chinese and modern Chinese training makes English reading and writing more organized; The ability to reflect and plan independently developed in the acquisition of Chinese characters has become an intrinsic driving force for English learning; The empathetic power accumulated through cultural understanding has eliminated cross-cultural communication barriers; The reference of

writing strategies enables English expression to be both logically rigorous and linguistically rich.

The language characteristics and cultural heritage of Chinese provide unique support for English learning. The cognitive abilities and humanistic perspectives accumulated in Chinese learning may seem like exclusive accumulations, but in fact, they have become the key driving force for breakthroughs in English proficiency. They enable English learning to break free from the shackles of rote memorization and move towards a deeper level of understanding acquisition, making language use not only grammatically precise, but also intellectually rich and culturally warm.

The essence of language is the carrier of thinking and culture, and the growth of Chinese and English abilities is always rooted in a common cognitive and humanistic foundation. The core competencies accumulated in Chinese language learning go beyond the language itself, making English learning no longer simply a "foreign language imitation", but a two-way improvement achieved through dialogue between two cultures and thinking, ultimately complementing and promoting each other.

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