

A Study of Uyghur language Native Speakers' English Trilingual Acquisition Based on the Multilingual Mental Lexicon Model

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Keywords: Multilingual psychological vocabulary patterns; Uyghur language; English

Abstract: The use of language by humans to convey information, store information, and obtain information through text recognition are all manifestations of language psychology. The interpretation of multilingual vocabulary extraction under different contexts and task conditions reflects the language control problem behind vocabulary extraction, which is a complex system with multiple structures. Simply focusing on a certain level is not enough to explain the essence of vocabulary extraction in multilingual speech production. The academic community generally believes that psychological vocabulary refers to the vocabulary stored in the long-term or permanent memory of the human brain, which includes all language information such as semantics, morphology, syntax, pronunciation, and form of words. Many vocabulary association tests on native language and its multilingual psychological vocabulary in China have shown that for native language learners, their psychological vocabulary is arranged in a certain order, systematically, and reasonably, and native language psychological vocabulary naturally undergoes reorganization. The complexity and diversity of the trilingual acquisition of Xinjiang minority students have brought various problems to English teaching practice. Based on the multilingual mental lexicon model, this paper studies the trilingual acquisition of Uyghur language native speakers.

1. Introduction

Psychological representation, also known as knowledge representation, is a form of information presented in the human brain, including the selection mechanism by which information is extracted and the structural pattern by which information is stored [1]. Representation is the reflection of objective things, and at the same time, it is also the processed object. The same thing has different forms of representation and different ways of processing it. Studying the semantic representation patterns of multilingual psychological vocabulary helps to understand the language function of the brain, examine the universality and specificity of language, and explore the essence of language, thinking, and behavior [2]. Vocabulary extraction is an important stage in the process of speech production, which enables the speaker to extract vocabulary from the psychological lexicon to meet communication needs. Third language acquisition refers to one or more languages currently being learned, in addition to the learner's mother tongue and already mastered second language [3]. As more and more people have the need to learn more languages, multilingualism has become a norm. In daily life, those who are proficient in using two or more languages are called multilinguals.

China is a multi-ethnic and multilingual country. In the national education system, ethnic education occupies a special and important position. Language education is an important part of ethnic education [4]. With the development of global economic integration, the policy of Language education for ethnic minorities has developed from "Bilingual education" to "trilingual education", that is, minority mother tongue teaching, Chinese teaching and English teaching [5]. English vocabulary learning is one of the difficulties in students' English learning. Mastering a large vocabulary can affect one's English proficiency. Teaching minority students the third language (usually English) is the basic educational policy of the country, and is also the need to cultivate "professional technology+foreign language" talents. Foreign research on third language acquisition originated from various language learning studies and has been regarded as a branch of second

language acquisition research. Since the 1950s, scholars at home and abroad have conducted a lot of research on semantic representation, lexical access mechanism and cortical representation mode of bilinguals' mental lexicon from the perspective of Surveying, achieved fruitful results, and built many theoretical models [6]. Among various research achievements, the theory of trilingual transfer is particularly important, that is, "the characteristics of transfer between multiple languages are not only reflected in the phenomenon of transfer between the mother tongue and the newly acquired language, but also in the phenomenon of transfer between the second language and the newly acquired language. Domestic researchers on third language acquisition began by citing the theoretical achievements of foreign third language acquisition, gradually exploring third language education practices with Chinese characteristics, and promoting the in-depth development of relevant theoretical research [7]. Only by finding English teaching strategies for different levels and types of ethnic students and improving the level of multilingual teaching can we further improve the quality of minority talent training and promote the spread of ethnic culture.

2. Uyghur Language Native Speakers' English Learning Status

2.1. Uneven Levels

From the national situation, the foreign language level of minority students is generally low. The foreign language teaching of ethnic minorities has experienced a trilingual process from mother tongue, Chinese to foreign language. The language use and thinking mode of ethnic minority students are very different from that of Han students [8]. The students' English proficiency is relatively low, mainly reflected in poor vocabulary, lack of systematic grammar knowledge, and insufficient comprehensive abilities. Students have weak basic knowledge, low overall English proficiency, outdated teaching facilities, low professional quality of teachers, and a single form of teaching evaluation. At the same time, there is a phenomenon of class differentiation, where some students may abandon themselves due to poor foundation, some students' learning and comprehension abilities barely meet the standards, and some students may develop a sense of pride and contempt due to "not having enough to eat".

The English curriculum is unreasonable, the teaching staff is weak, the teaching quality of English teachers is not high, and the learning situation of students is poor. In addition, there is a shortage of teaching resources and a lack of effective evaluation mechanisms. According to the survey and interview, most ethnic minority students in Xinjiang begin to learn Chinese in primary school. Students will use Chinese for communication in Chinese class, but other courses are taught by ethnic teachers in ethnic languages, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1 Chinese learning of Xinjiang minority students

Chinese learning situation	Frequency	Proportion/%
Whether have taken Chinese lessons	Yes	81.3
	No	18.7
Whether study Chinese in the remaining time	Yes	35.4
	No	64.6

Ethnic minority students completely apply the textbooks of Han students, which is a certain gap from their actual acceptance ability. In addition, the compilation of public English textbooks mostly focuses on consolidating basic language knowledge and cultivating comprehensive skills, so students can hardly raise their interest in learning, let alone invest more time and energy in independent learning outside class. The distribution of ethnic minorities in China is complex, and the types of ethnic groups are diverse. The economic development of various ethnic settlement areas is uneven, therefore, trilingual education faces many difficulties [9].

2.2. Significant Cultural Differences

For ethnic minority students in Xinjiang, their mother tongue is Uyghur language, Chinese is the second language, and the third language is English. The ability of language output of minority

students is poor, and the ability of written and oral expression is significantly lower than that of listening and reading comprehension. I have a fear of difficulty and resistance towards English writing, and I am unable to accurately express my inner thoughts and thoughts. Most students do not meet the requirement of mastering 3500 vocabulary words when graduating from high school, making it difficult to write complete and fluent sentences. Chinese is widely used in domestic universities for teaching, and the medium language for English teaching is also Chinese. Especially in areas inhabited by ethnic minorities, students' second language Chinese has a wider application environment, and the occasions and opportunities for using the third language English have greatly increased. Third language learning is conducive to the development of learners' Metalanguage awareness, which is one of the important achievements in the research of third language acquisition, mainly reflected in the ability expansion of phonological, syntactic, lexical and pragmatic awareness. High frequency code switching between Uygur, Chinese and English, as well as specific problems caused by different religious beliefs, ethnic customs and living habits, also increase the difficulty of English learning for minority students [10].

3. English Teaching Strategies for Xinjiang Minority Students

3.1. Attach Importance to Metalanguage Awareness

The development of minority students' trilingual acquisition is affected by many factors, because their cognitive system is different from that of Han students. The objective language distance, students' psychological language distance, students' Metalanguage awareness and background language level may promote or hinder students' trilingual learning, which are important factors in the process of trilingual learning. Multilingual language awareness includes Metalanguage awareness and cross language awareness, while Metalanguage awareness refers to "a unique ability to look at language itself, reflect on language, and evaluate language", which is a metacognitive ability related to language and its use. The Metalanguage awareness of ethnic minority students develops from the first language, the second language to the third language, and its development process is affected by the students' original language level, language type and age.

People's ability to think in thought language is innate. The imagery thinking in the pre linguistic thinking stage generates content thinking, which is similar to the subject predicate meaning content in the form of argument structure. Conceptual thinking may go through three stages: the thinking subject obtains vague overall sensory pure meaning; The psychological representation of concepts and propositions obtained by the thinking subject; Refine the conceptual content and use language to refer to it (as shown in Figure 1). When formulating foreign language education policies for ethnic minority students, schools should take into account the Metalanguage awareness developed by students' multilingual learning and the factors that affect the development of Metalanguage awareness. In English teaching, teachers should not ignore the role of Chinese Metalanguage awareness, provide bilingual Chinese and English in teaching courseware, properly summarize the similarities and differences between Chinese and English, and pay attention to the cultivation of language ability.

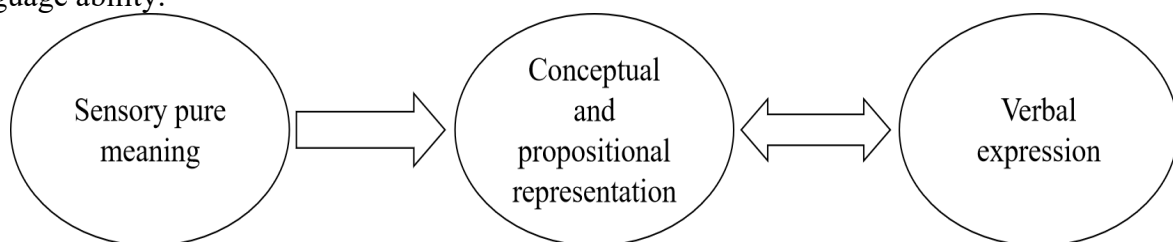


Figure 1 Conceptual thinking process

3.2. Choose Appropriate Teaching Content

At present, colleges and universities do not have English textbooks for ethnic minority students in Xinjiang, and the current College English textbooks are far higher than their academic level.

According to Krashen's Input hypothesis, with the help of contextual culture, learners can digest language with better language ability. In vocational colleges that offer Xinjiang classes or mixed classes between ethnic and Chinese, the use of English textbooks should not be "one size fits all". Uyghur students should choose textbooks similar to or similar to those of Han students to reduce learning difficulty. Xinjiang minority students have a high level of Declarative knowledge and a low level of procedural knowledge, which reflects the typical characteristics of language beginners. Vocabulary annotation is an effective way to improve the efficiency of vocabulary learning of students with English learning difficulties and enhance their understanding of articles. The effect of presenting both the first and second languages simultaneously is better than that of presenting a single first or second language.

The compilation of trilingual textbooks should be linked to their ethnic characteristics and professional attributes, including traditional culture and folk customs, as well as integrating different industry backgrounds and popular topics, so that students feel that language learning is not disconnected from life. The more intimate students are with the material, the easier it is for them to resonate, stimulate practical learning motivation in English, and cultivate and maintain interest in English learning. Due to the difference in regional economy and educational resources, the students from cities in Xinjiang have a better language foundation than those from agricultural and pastoral areas. The language level of Han students in mixed classes is higher than that of minority students. As a tool discipline, English not only requires students to understand the reading, spelling, grammar and other knowledge points of words, but also teaches students how to form words into sentences to facilitate communication, and cultivate their cross-cultural communication ability and comprehensive professional quality. English teachers should not cram in all English or only explain in English and Chinese. They should pay special attention to strengthening the comparative analysis of the three languages of Uyghur, Chinese, and English, helping students correctly understand the differences between languages, maximizing the use of positive transfer and weakening negative transfer, and improving learning efficiency.

4. Conclusions

Under the influence of the "the Belt and Road" initiative, transnational, cross regional and cross ethnic exchanges are growing day by day, and the "trilingual education" of ethnic minorities is increasingly thriving. It plays an important role in inheriting and developing national culture, adapting to the opening up, and connecting with the international community. The study of the rules of English acquisition of ethnic minority students in a multilingual and multicultural context is conducive to changing the low level of English acquisition of ethnic minority students, and it is also conducive to guiding English teaching practice scientifically. It is of great significance to cultivate excellent ethnic minority compound talents and jointly build a community of shared future for the Chinese nation. English vocabulary learning is one of the difficulties in students' English learning. Only close cooperation between schools and teachers can build a platform and bridge for minority students to learn English, and promote the overall improvement of English teaching quality. In minority English teaching, teachers should pay attention to the cultivation of Metalanguage awareness and promote the transfer of Chinese acquisition to English acquisition; Adopting task-based teaching methods, immersive teaching methods, and other forms to improve their language proficiency and cross-cultural communication skills. In the teaching of pronunciation, intonation and vocabulary, we should respect the type differences of the three languages, be good at finding the similarities and differences among them, help students to effectively carry out Code-switching, and promote the "positive transfer" of language.

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