The Study of Korean Students' Chinese Vocabulary Acquisition and Cross-Cultural Awareness

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Abstract. Cultural learning is a constant part of language learning, and the vocabulary of a language is closely related to its culture. Lack of understanding of the cultural meaning behind vocabulary will lead to errors in word acquisition. Culture related vocabulary is a key part of vocabulary teaching in Chinese as a foreign language, which often becomes a difficult point for students to learn and teachers to teach, and vocabulary errors also emerge in endlessly. More and more researchers and teachers of Chinese as a foreign language pay more attention to the cultural meaning of vocabulary, and pay attention to the cross-cultural conflict caused by vocabulary. This paper studies Korean students' Chinese vocabulary acquisition and cross-cultural awareness, enriching the research on Korean vocabulary teaching and cross-cultural vocabulary teaching strategies.

Keywords: Korean Chinese learners · cross-cultural vocabulary · error analysis

1 Introduction

Language is a part of culture and it is difficult to avoid using language in intercultural communication. Among the elements of language, the one most closely related to culture is vocabulary. In the area of teaching Chinese as a foreign language we should consciously integrate vocabulary teaching with multiculturalism, paying particular attention to those words that are likely to cause communicative errors or create communication barriers, and many of these words come from cultural words. Cultural words specifically refer to those words that imply a rich cultural connotation, whose meaning cannot be understood directly from the words, and have a fixed cultural additional meaning.

Guo Haiying (2010) lists four kinds of vocabulary comparison problems that can be encountered in teaching. Long Chao (2011) conducts a cross-cultural awareness study on the Chinese vocabulary learning of European and American students. Liu Fangjun (2014) focuses on the significance of customs and manners and emotional values in cultural introduction, emphasizing the full use of cultural introduction to improve the effectiveness of classroom organization and teaching. Research on the acquisition of culturally-informed Chinese vocabulary by Korean students. As Korean students are an important group of learners of Korean, it is necessary to understand their acquisition of

culturally relevant vocabulary. Du Yuanjing (2017) discussed and analyzed the Korean vocabulary of the same word with the same meaning and the same word with different meaning in Korean, respectively. Du Jia (2010) summarized the differences in cognitive perspectives between Chinese and Korean as reflected in the vocabulary: differences in customs, differences in patriarchal concepts, and differences in regional culture. Hu Linli (2021) selected Chinese-Korean homonyms and anagrams with a high incidence of bias, and analyzed the biases that tend to occur when learning Chinese vocabulary and their influencing factors, and focused on teaching strategies for homonyms and anagrams.

This paper will add to this by focusing on vocabulary with cultural elements in the context of the Developing Chinese textbook series, in relation to the teaching of Korean Chinese vocabulary and students' cross-cultural awareness.

2   Research Methods

2.1   Literature Review Method

We read a large amount of literature and cutting-edge research results, mainly from vocabulary teaching, second language acquisition and intercultural communication, and sort out the concepts and research methods proposed by previous authors.

2.2   Questionnaire Survey Method

The data source of this paper mainly relies on questionnaires, which are distributed to analyse and collate the data. The questionnaire survey mainly referred to the word lists of Developing Chinese Intermediate Comprehensive 1 and 2 and Intermediate Speaking 1. The vocabulary related to intercultural awareness was compiled from this textbook, and two types of questions, single-choice and multiple-choice, were set to understand the students' mastery of vocabulary.

2.3   Case Study Method

The case study method is a study of a particular object or a certain group of people to investigate a phenomenon or issue. In this paper, after examining the students' language background as Korean, a text survey in the form of a questionnaire was conducted. 76 native Korean learners of Chinese were the main targets of the survey to examine the students' acquisition of several aspects such as word meaning itself, word meaning expansion, word meaning association, historical and cultural words, word meaning derivation and metaphor, and associative meaning.

3   Analysis of Cross-Cultural Vocabulary Acquisition Among Korean Students

The questionnaire was distributed in the form of an online questionnaire named Questionnaire Star to Korean students with Chinese learning background. A total of 76 questionnaires were distributed, and 76 valid questionnaires were collected, with a 100%

recovery rate. There were 29 male students and 47 female students, of which 19 were under 18 years old, 53 were between 18–30 years old, 2 were between 31–50 years old and 2 were over 50 years old. The length of Chinese language study was mainly focused on 2–3 years, with a total of 39 students, 17 within one year and 20 over 3 years.

The questionnaire was adapted from the questionnaire used by Long Chao (2011) in his master's thesis "A Study on Cross-cultural Awareness of Chinese Vocabulary Learning among International Students in Europe and the United States", and was combined with the word lists in the Intermediate Comprehensive Books of Developing Chinese and Spoken Chinese I. The questionnaire is set up as multiple-choice questions, with both single-choice and multiple-choice questions. The vocabulary used in the questions is selected from the textbooks named Intermediate Comprehensive and Intermediate Spoken Chinese. The single-choice questions test students' mastery of the colour, associative and cultural meanings of the vocabulary, while the multiple-choice questions test students' acquisition of the range of word meanings.

3.1   Question Bias Rate

According to "error rate = error corpus / total corpus", the error number and error rate of 20 words are calculated. Through calculation, the average error rate of 17 words in single choice questions is 43%, and the average error rate of three words in multiple choice questions is 68%.

3.2   Types of Bias

3.2.1   Ambiguous Lexical Scope

There are a large number of Chinese words in the Korean language, and those that are homographs with Chinese can be classified as homographs with full synonymy, homographs with full synonymy and homographs with incomplete synonymy. In this paper, the lexical scope is mainly compared with Chinese and Korean homographs. "néng lì"is a completely synonymous word with the same form, and the error rate is 41%. "xīn wén" is a homonymous word, with an error rate of 78%. "fā dá" and "bǎo xiǎn" are homographs with incomplete synonyms, and the error rates are 67% and 58% respectively. The total correct rate of students' acquisition of this part is 34%.

3.2.2   Confusion of Color Meanings

Questions 21 and 26 were on the vocabulary of "qióng guǐ" and "conceited" respectively, and the percentage of Korean learners acquiring these two derogatory words mistakenly was 18% and 41% respectively.

3.2.3   Lack of Associative Meanings

The lack of associative meaning refers to the fact that on the basis of the background of the differences between Chinese and Korean cultures, some words can evoke associative meanings in the culture of the Chinese people but fail to do so in the eyes of Koreans. 37% of them understood the associative meaning of "bái sè", the color of white. And

88% understood the associative meaning of "méi huā", a kind of flower named plum blossom, correctly. The total error rate of students' acquisition of these two words is 24%.

3.2.4   Misuse of Historical and Cultural Words

Historical words refer to food or phenomena in history, such as "zǎi xiàng", "shàng shū"and"fù mǎ".Questions 13, 14 and 16 are based on the words "qí páo", "chuàn ménr" and "gāo kǎo".The average error rate of students' acquisition of these words is 38%.

3.2.5   Ambiguity in Terms of Address

The correct answer to question 11, "When you meet Jin Na, a senior classmate at school, you should call her", was "xué jiě". But 14% of students still chose "Jin Na qián bèi". In China we do not usually address "qián bèi"as seniors. The correct answer to question 12, "You can call a taxi driver", was "shī fu", with a correct rate of 39%. Thirty-eight per cent of Korean students chose "xiān sheng" and 23 per cent chose "lǎo shī". This is a misuse of each term of address by the students.

3.2.6   Ambiguous Derivative and Metaphorical Meanings

Questions 15, 17, 22 and 25 tested Korean Chinese learners' acquisition of "yè māo zi", "xiāng xià", "pào" and "gē da". Both derivational and metaphorical meanings are transitive meanings of a word, with derivational meaning being the meaning derived from the basic meaning. Metaphorical meaning refers to the new meaning that arises when the basic meaning of the word is used to compare it to something else. The results of the questionnaire on the derivational and metaphorical meanings of words show that the overall percentage of students who got this section mistakenly was 46%.

3.2.7   Misunderstanding of Idioms

Questions 18, 19 and 20 tested Korean Chinese learners' understanding of the idioms "xīn huī yì lěng, wǔ huā bā mén, láng tūn hǔ yàn". The average error rate of students' acquisition of these words is 47%. Nearly half of the Korean learners misunderstood those three idioms. There are still many Korean learners of Chinese who infer the meaning of an idiom from the meaning of a single word in the idiom.

4   Reasons for Misuse

4.1   Students

Students' attention to Chinese words involving cultural factors is weak. According to the survey on students' learning background, there are 57.89% of the students would only pay attention sometimes.

Students were more accustomed to inferring the meaning of words through their semantic meanings. A high percentage of 65.79% of students ticked the question "Combining morpheme meaning to understand word meaning is not applicable to all words like idioms.

Students tend to rely on their mother tongue or factors related to Chinese in their mother tongue to acquire Chinese. The questionnaire results showed that the lowest percentage of correct error types was ambiguity in the range of meaning of words, with the lowest percentage of Chinese and Korean homonyms with perfect synonyms at 22%, the highest percentage of homonyms with perfect synonyms at 59%.

Korean students' biases in the use of cross-cultural related vocabulary are also related to their motivation and learning strategies. Korean students are generally more introverted and less engaged in classroom interactions.

Generalization of the target language is also a cause of bias. For example, when learning words with multiple meanings, students are used to relying on one meaning of the word, leading to the application of a previously learned meaning, such as polysemy, in situations where other meanings would have been used.

4.2 Teachers

In most Chinese as a Foreign Language classes, the classroom language used by Chinese teachers is mainly Chinese or English. There are significant differences in the language structures of English, Chinese and Korean, and using English to explain the target language often leads to imprecise expressions.

The frequency with which teachers revisit a particular category of vocabulary is low, and fewer teachers review vocabulary with a cultural dimension in a thematic way. The method of translation may not completely solve the problem of vocabulary interpretation, especially the vocabulary with Chinese characteristics.

Teachers have a single way of explaining words. On the one hand, many teachers only explain the meaning of the word in the lesson, lacking induction and timely revision, which leads to students forgetting one after another. On the other hand, some teachers like to take out the word list before learning a new lesson and putting the teaching of the text content in the next step of the vocabulary explanation, which leads to students' difficulties in comprehension.

4.3 Teaching Materials

The quality of teaching materials for Chinese as a foreign language varies, and the translation of teaching materials is inappropriate. The strategies of communicative and semantic translation are inappropriate, resulting in a certain degree of misinformation. Secondly, for some vocabulary with cultural elements, the textbooks lack cultural contextual supplements, and students sometimes cannot truly understand the connotations of the words by relying only on the context or the dialogue of the characters. In addition, the word recurrence rate is low, and even some culturally relevant vocabulary only appears in a particular lesson with no recurrence rate.

5   Cross-Cultural Vocabulary Acquisition Measures for Korean Students

Nearly half of the students in the questionnaire think that the length of vocabulary, the meaning of vocabulary, the grammatical usage of vocabulary and the teachers' teaching methods are the factors that affect them to learn a vocabulary well.16% of the students ticked 'the way the textbook explains the words'. This shows that teachers and teaching materials have an important influence on students' correct acquisition of vocabulary.

5.1   Suggestions for Teachers' Teaching

In Speaking lessons. Teachers can categorize the usage of certain types of words commonly used in communication, such as various address words. Secondly, the flexible use of situations, appropriate dialogue, role play and animated video presentations can facilitate teaching and learning and deepen students' understanding of words.

What's more, teachers should also study the materials in the Bias Corpus to understand the common biases that Korean students show when acquiring vocabulary with cultural elements, so as to improve their ability to anticipate students' biases and make lesson planning more effective.

Focus on the part of the vocabulary that is less likely to be acquired correctly. According to the results of the questionnaire, the overall correctness rate is from highest to lowest: words association > words color > historical and cultural words > derivation of words, metaphorical meaning > idioms > address form > range of words. Therefore, teachers had better make a grid of 'commonness and difficulty', giving priority to those words that are more commonly used and easier to master, and words that are more commonly used but more difficult to master.

Infiltrate the comparative analysis method into daily teaching.59.21% of the students thought teachers should compare Chinese vocabulary and Korean vocabulary in the classroom. So teachers should emphasize bouth the structural and cultural meanings of words, focus on the differences between the two countries in terms of customs, history and culture, geography and practices.

5.2   Teaching Materials

Textbooks are the most popular learning materials used by students, and it is important that the content and layout of textbooks are scientific and practical, as well as combining the three guidelines of "structure-function-culture".

The textbook notes pay attention to the accuracy of the translation; if the lesson uses the word in an associative, derivative or metaphorical sense, the basic meaning of the word can be indicated first, followed by an explanation of its use in the lesson. If a word has a tone of voice in the text, then the English paraphrase should also be marked at the same time, rather than simply presenting the conceptual meaning.

The exercises in the textbook are a mixture of mechanical and communicative exercises to ensure that students' output is varied and to reinforce classroom learning.

6   Conclusion

In this paper, 76 native Korean learners of Chinese were surveyed and the following types of errors were found in their learning of cross-cultural vocabulary: ambiguous lexical scope,confusion of color meanings,lack of associative meanings, misuse of historical and cultural words, ambiguity in terms of address, ambiguous derivative and metaphorical meanings, misunderstanding of idioms. Among them, the highest bias rate is for the range of word meaning and the lowest is for the associative meaning of the word. Therefore, the order of word misuse from lowest to highest is: word association > word color > historical and cultural words > derivation of words, metaphorical meaning > idioms > address form > range of words. In the teaching process, teachers should focus on the more commonly used and easily mastered words, compare the homonyms in Chinese vocabulary with those in Korean vocabulary, and pay attention to the structure and cultural meanings of the words.

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