

# The Influence of TPD between Chinese and English on Basic Writing of Chinese as a Second Language--A Case Study of Linyi University

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**Abstract.** The author first analyzes the errors in Chinese compositions of the students in Linyi University to illustrate the importance of Chinese thought pattern for basic Chinese writing from the perspective of Chinese and English thought patterns. Then the author puts forward some concrete suggestions for the teachers to consciously cultivate students' Chinese thought pattern so as to improve their writing ability.

## 1 Introduction

Studies on TPD (thought pattern difference) between the Chinese and English have been carried on for years in order to promote the development of TCSL. But most of experts devoted themselves to studying listening, speaking, and reading of TCSL, up to now, only few scholars have touched on the problem of TPD in writing, not to mention how to tackle it specifically. However, writing, as an integral part of language teaching, should be put a vital position in TCSL. So, how to improve the ability of native English speakers to write and modify their compositions has become a hot topic nowadays. Therefore, the purpose of the paper is to explore the influence of differences between Chinese and English thought patterns on basic Chinese writing and how to cultivate Chinese thought patterns to the native English learners.

## 2 The Definition of Thought Pattern

The problem of thought pattern has been studied for many years at home and abroad. There are many definitions about thought pattern, among which two definitions of thought pattern are widely acknowledged. First, it can be best described as habitual thinking or understood as a person's habitual thinking which was formed through his understanding of himself and the world [1]. Second, thought pattern, also called as "way of thinking", "thinking mode", and "thinking style", deeply influences intercultural communication. It is a habit of thinking in a particular way or making certain assumptions [2].

From the above, we know that thought pattern is so firm and stable that it cannot be changed easily. And it is widely acknowledged that the general way of thinking of a nation is influenced by the dominant philosophy, worldview, scientific theories, culture and morality of the society. There has been a tendency to think in terms of a dichotomy between east and west, and Chinese thought pattern is represented as spiritual, holistic, introversive, inductive and subjective. While English thought pattern is represented as materialistic, analytic, extroversive, deductive, and objective.

### **3 Errors in Basic Chinese Writing Caused by TPD between Chinese and English**

In this part, the author collects some errors in Chinese writing from foreign learners who study Chinese in International Education Academy of Linyi University. 512 writing tasks of 256 English spoken students of Grade 2014 and Grade 2015 in Linyi University are chosen as a corpus in the study. All the writing tasks are in the final examination of Basic Chinese during the first year (two semesters) in Linyi University. Among the 256 students, 124 students come from Grade 2014, 132 students are from Grade 2015. All the subjects are required to finish their compositions within 30 minutes without the help of the Chinese dictionary or classmates and teachers. Only in this way, their compositions can fully reflect their ability to writing, the errors appeared in their writings can embody the influence of different thought patterns on TCSL.

It takes 4 weeks for the author to collect the whole date. After the collection of data, the information is put into computer for statistical analysis. AntConc 3.2.1 is used in the study. It is a free corpus analysis tool, which contains a large number of tools like concordance, concordance plot, file view, clusters, collocates, word list and keyword list. Based on AntConc 3.2.1, the errors in 512 writings are identified with different thought patterns in the three groups. Next, the three groups are presented by concrete examples.

#### **4 Errors Caused by Analytic Thought in Chinese Writing**

Firstly, let's see the following examples.

(1) 我是汉娜，我二十岁；我学中文，我要多学习；我从北京到临沂，我坐飞机。

(2) 他三十岁左右，他的个子不高不矮，他的脸是瓜子脸，他是大眼睛，他皮肤一点点黑，他笑的时候很好看。

From the sentences above, we can find that every simple sentence is correct, but when these simple sentences combine to a long sentence, the long sentence is stranger and makes us uncomfortable. Obviously, these errors are caused by the analytic thought. Because these sentences reflect a typical English structure--Subject + Predicate + Object, and every simple sentence has a subject and a predicate verb, around which the sentence develops in clear levels. This shows that English belongs to hypotactic language which uses grammatical forms to achieve cohesion of the sentence. Therefore, there are many subordinate clauses in English, while Chinese is paratactic language. The Chinese sentence is diffuse and appears to be dynamic in its process. That is to say, it does not center on a certain predicate verb and it coherent in "spirit", which is the implied logic. This is because traditional Chinese aesthetics focus on holistic thought rather than on analytic thought. Thus, when we can know the implied subject, the subject could be omitted. So the third example should be corrected as the following sentence:

他三十岁左右，个子不高不矮，皮肤有点黑，瓜子脸，大眼睛，笑的时候很好看。

In this way, the sentence sounds smoother and accords with Chinese grammar.

#### **5 Errors Caused by Abstract Thought in Chinese Writing**

Influenced by different thought patterns, there are many differences between sentence structures in Chinese and English. The Chinese sentence structure "parataxis" favors short, simple sentences, with the use of coordinating rather than subordinating conjunctions. The English sentence structure is "hypo taxis", which is subordination in a complex sentence. It maybe includes prepositional phrases, conjunctions, transitional sentences and so on. Therefore, the learners from the west countries easily incline to misuse conjunctions, prepositions so that word order becomes chaotic in Chinese writing. Let's see the following examples:

(1) 我还去了很多地方，但是我的能力不足，写不出来，所以太可惜了。

(2) 我想汽车站肯定也有很多人，不敢出远门了。

(3) 我的好朋友接我在机场。

Obviously, the three sentences above are errors. The first sentence should cut out “所以”, because there no exists causal relationship in the sentence. On the contrary, the second sentence lacks the conjunction “所以”, because there exists causal relationship in the sentence, and the front clause is the cause, the latter clause is the effect. The last sentence embodies the problem of word disorder. The prepositional phrase “在机场” should be removed to the behind of subject. To translate the third sentence into English, “My friend picks me up at the airport”, we can easily figure out that the third sentence accords with English grammar and abstract thought pattern.

### **6 Errors Caused by Object Thought in Chinese Writing**

Influenced by the objective thought, there are many passive sentences in English. Therefore, the native English speakers used to write passive sentence in Chinese writing. For example,

- (1) 她的作品被展览在大厅中间。
- (2) 那篇文章被修改完了。
- (3) 玻璃杯被打破了。

In fact, these sentences above are errors which should be corrected as active sentences.

| Chinese      | English                             |
|--------------|-------------------------------------|
| 她的作品在大厅中间展览。 | Her work is on display in the hall. |
| 那篇文章修改完了。    | The passage has been modified.      |
| 玻璃杯破了。       | The glass is broken.                |

Although, there are many active sentences in Chinese, the passive voice also is necessary for Chinese. The obvious sign of the passive voice is “被” or “让”. For example,

玻璃杯被我弟弟打破了。

This passive sentence is translated into English: The glass was broken by my brother.

Furthermore, it is very important and difficult for the learners to change the active voice into passive voice. For example,

玻璃杯是我弟弟打破的。

The transition from passive voice to active voice or from active voice to passive voice makes the learners suffering a lot. They do not know where is suitable to use passive voice or active voice.

## **7 Suggestions of Cultivating Chinese Thought Pattern**

### **7.1 To Be Integrated with Listening, Speaking, and Reading**

According to Krashen’s Input Hypothesis, we can know that listening comprehension and reading are of primary importance in the language program, and the ability to speak or write fluently in a second language will come on its own with time. And speaking ability appears after the learners have possessed competence through comprehending input [3]. In order for the learners to progress to the output in the acquisition of the target language, they need to understand input language. (Following the Figure 1)

Input → Intake → Second Language Knowledge → Output [4]

Figure 1 A computational model of second language acquisition

From the above, we can know that writing belongs to the progress of output which is the most important stage based on listening, speaking and reading. That is to say, as the stage of input, listening, speaking and reading a directly influence the writing. And the more second language knowledge the learners intake from listening, speaking, reading, the more knowledge the learners output. Thus, Chinese writing should be integrated with listening, speaking, and reading. Only in this way, the learners from Britain or America can naturally utilize Chinese thought patterns when

they speak or write Chinese.

### **7.2 To Encourage the Learners to Participate in All Kinds of Extracurricular Activities about Chinese**

The teachers should encourage the learners to take part in activities about Chinese as much as possible, such as Chinese poetry club, Chinese music contest, calligraphy class, etc. In this way, the learners can submerge themselves in target language environment in which the learners could touch more Chinese culture, literature, customs and history. Furthermore, the learners are inclined to form Chinese thought patterns in the target language environment, which is beneficial to enhance the learners' abilities to Chinese writing. In addition, by joining in extracurricular activities, the learners submerge themselves in Chinese language environment in which they try their best to speak Chinese and communicate with each other to the extent that the learners' ability to listening, speaking and expressing are also improved at the moment. And once the learners brave to express themselves in Chinese, no matter whether the ability to speaking or writing, they can make great progress. Thus, it is a effective way for the learners to take part in extracurricular activities which arises their interest in learning and inspires their thought. And the closer attention should be paid to extracurricular activities which are important parts of second language acquisition.

### **7.3 To Pay Attention to Teachers' Guidance**

In the process of learning, teacher's guidance and assistance are indispensable in cultivating learners' Chinese thought pattern. Therefore, the teacher should keep a proper attitude towards students' English expressions but never neglect them. As a teacher, he must be proficient not only in teaching skills but in the target language, because a teacher play an important role in disseminating language. In class, teacher is the only authority and judge of the standard Chinese. In addition, students are likely to be attentive to teacher's language and regard it as the standard language, and then they are inclined to imitate it. Thus, in order to improve learners' second language competence all around, a teacher should assist students to develop Chinese thought patterns. First, teachers should help students realize not only the differences between Chinese and English but also those of their cultures. Second, teachers should integrate the culture into that of language in teaching. Third, teachers should guide students to contrast and analyze the two languages and encourage them to transform English thought pattern into Chinese thought pattern. In a word, teachers' guidance and assistance can facilitate students to have an insight into the two languages and their respective cultures, foster Chinese thought pattern which can help them get rid of the negative influence of English thought pattern.

## **8 Conclusion**

Different from the former studies, this paper, from the aspect of different thought patterns, concentrates to solve the complex problem, that is, how to improve the foreign learners' Chinese writing ability. The author chooses the errors of Chinese compositions of foreign learners in Linyi University as an example to illustrate the influence of TPD between Chinese and English on basic Chinese writing. Thereby, based on the errors caused by the influence of different thought patterns on writing, the author offers some effective and practical suggestions which contribute to cultivate Chinese thought patterns. From this paper, we know that the English thought pattern, different from Chinese thought pattern, has negative influence on basic Chinese writing. Therefore, many measures should be taken to cultivate Chinese thought pattern in order to improve the learners' writing abilities. And in this way, not only the learners can make great progress in Chinese writing, but also the teachers can improve their teaching skills.

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