

Analysis of the Advantages of Children's Second Language Acquisition and Research on Bilingual Education Strategies*

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Abstract—Why can children learn the first language (native language) in a short period of time? What's the process of language acquisition? What is the relationship between first language and second language acquisition? What is the best time to acquire a second language? This article introduces the rules of children's acquisition of the first language, expounds the methods, interrelationships of children's acquisition of first and second languages and the best period of language acquisition and the advantages of second language acquisition in early childhood. Some constructive opinions are put forward based on the problems that have arisen in Chinese children's English teaching have put forward.

Keywords—children; second language acquisition; bilingual education

I. INTRODUCTION

From the relationship between language and thinking, language is a tool of thinking, and thinking can be carried out in native language or in foreign languages. Children are in a sensitive period of language development. If they are unable to engage in coordinated activities in a timely manner or lack a suitable environment, children will forever lose this natural chance of winning. The results of speech psychology and neurolinguistics research also show that people have a critical period in the development of neural tissue. During the critical period, children can obtain several linguistic symbols at the same time. During this period, neural mechanisms of the first language and the second language are the same.

II. HOW DO CHILDREN LEARN THE FIRST LANGUAGE

Children are born unable to speak and understand words, but usually by the age of four they have learned basic vocabulary, syntactic rules and language pronunciation. This is true of children in any country in the world, and there is probably no child who cannot learn his or her own mother tongue. Children have already built a sound language structure before entering school, but they don't wake up with

*Fund project: Shaanxi Province Education Science "Thirteen Five-Year Plan" project "Innovation and Practice of Preschool Education Practice Teaching Model Based on Integration of Production and Teaching Research", Phased Achievements of Comparative Research Team of Preschool Education of Xi'an Translation Institution.

comprehensive language ability overnight — language is acquired in stages, and each stage is closer to adult language, and through this continuity, adult language ability is finally achieved. These stages are universal. On the one hand, our innate language talents lay the foundation for the development of our language. On the other hand, the environment is equally important, because children need to be stimulated by language input to output language.

There are three factors that influence language acquisition: language, children, and parents. As children grow up, their cognitive ability develops along with their cognitive development, and then their language and communication skills develop. Their parents input language through maternal love, simple repetition, chattering and even exaggerated rhythm to help their children continuously obtain language information. So at six months of age, the baby starts babbling, and the first words with the highest frequency of input are "Mom... Mom... Dad... Dad..." The babbling period lasts for about 18 months, and the child will send a lot of single-word sounds like "Good! No! Bad! Go!" and so on. By the age of two, the child was able to pronounce double sounds like "How nice! Not good! Bad guys! Go away" and so on. Children between the ages of two and three will express their complete meaning in three-word sentences, such as "I love you," "It's fun," and "Hello, mom." Studies and statistics show that most children will recognize 1000 words when they are three years old, and they can master more than 10000 words when they are six years old. It laid the foundation for starting a formal school education.

Children is by imitation memory, analogy or rule extraction to acquire language, linguists believe that people are born with language ability, their understanding and creative ability through the middle school education (six to adolescence) get sustainable development, and the children's effective communication skills are at this stage to get long-term development. In short, language acquisition and communicative skills development of children began very early in life, and then continued to develop progressively throughout the youth.

III. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE FIRST LANGUAGE AND THE SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

A. Synchronous Acquisition

There are two situations in which a child can acquire more than one language at a time. One situation is that both parents use a language for their children, such as: mother speaks Italian to the child, father speaks English; another case is one of the parents speaks two languages at the same time. For example, the mother and the father both communicate with the child in Italian and English. The children in this environment have become bilingual learners at the age of three to four. A Chinese friend who married a French husband had a son and a daughter after marriage. The mother only used Chinese at home. The father only spoke with the child in French. In such an environment, the child only spoke Chinese to the mother and French to the father. It became an early bilingual synchronization learner.

B. Orderly Acquisition

One case in which bilingualism is learned is that parents speak a language to their children, but others around them speak another language. It is clear that the orderly acquisition of a second language is related to age and environment. Imagining a Chinese couple immigrated to the United States; they speak Chinese to their daughter at home, at the age of three the child starts kindergarten education in English training, at the age of four, the daughter can communicate with her playmates in English and continue to speak Chinese with her parents at home. As a result, the daughter in the acquisition of first language (Chinese) three years later started to acquire a second language (English). When acquiring a second language, its speed, proficiency, and fluency depend on certain psychological and social factors. A large number of empirical studies have shown that "the starting age for learning a second language is important": children have an advantage over adults.

IV. THE ADVANTAGES OF ACQUIRING A SECOND LANGUAGE IN THE EARLY STAGE

Empirical research tells us that if a child begins to acquire a second language around age six, he or she can become as proficient as native speakers, even if it is informal or casual; on the contrary, if a child doesn't start until he or she is 14, even if he or she works extra hard, it is also can be failed to become as proficient as his or her mother tongue. Therefore, it is very important to acquire a second language in the early stage (about six years old), especially to the mastery of the phonology and basic syntax. From a neurological point of view, the brain function of young children is more malleable than that of adults, because during this critical period, children have the following advantages to acquire language:

- Children have a strong desire to make friends, and language communication is their main way to make friends;
- Children have more time to experience and train language communication;

- Children are more likely to imitate impulsively, which makes it easier for them to understand and use speech patterns in communication, rapidly transforming and forming their own language style;
- Children do not feel restrained and embarrassed when they say wrong words (because society and parents are tolerant, inclusive and kind to them);
- Family members will also tolerate and even enjoy children's lovely wrong words;
- Adults will adjust their language expression (speed, level, and difficulty) to suit their children at any time;
- Children's speech is strong, content is specific, not boring, more interesting.
- In childhood, their main activity is to learn languages and gain knowledge about the world (strong curiosity).

All of the above personal and social conditions that are beneficial to language acquisition are only available to children, and adults often do not. Therefore, we say that language acquisition in early childhood is more advantageous.

There used to be a girl named Isabella, who was locked in the attic until she was six years old. After a year of training, she was able to communicate freely with her second-year companion at the age of seven. And a French wild boy named Victor was 12 years old when he was discovered. After several years of intensive training, he only learned basic written expression, and his verbal ability will be difficult to make up for life. All of this shows that language acquisition is hard to succeed after a critical period. Not to mention the acquisition of a second language.

V. THE INTERACTION BETWEEN THE FIRST LANGUAGE AND THE SECOND LANGUAGE

Usually the first language (that is the mother tongue) interferes with the acquisition of a second language, but sometimes the opposite is true. The form of interference can be foreseen by comparing the similarities and differences between the two languages. The phonemes, syllables and rhythms of different languages are diverse in quantity and form, so it is not easy for learners to master a second language as proficient as the mother tongue. For example, there are no phonemes [t], [l] in Japanese, and no some consonants groups, as a result, when the Japanese speak English, "thrill" become "surirus" in which [s] replaces [t], and [r] replaces the sound of [l]. In Chinese dialects, there is a [l] sound, but no [r] sound, so when some English learners speak English, "Rice grows near the river" become "Lice glows near the liver".

The influence of the first language is also manifested in the act of speech, in which people in one cultural language may be more adept at apologizing, praising, asking and so on than people in another cultural language, such as Chinese and English. For example, in the request, the German is more straightforward than the British, so the German who learns

English is considered rude by the British. And the Chinese people are known for their etiquette. In the greeting, they often say "Have you eaten yet?" or "Where are you going?" and so on, it is confusing to Americans.

However, the knowledge of the first language does not always have a side-effect on the second language. Therefore, researchers all acknowledge that the knowledge of the mother tongue of the second language learner can help and promote the acquisition of a second language. For instance, Both English and Chinese have the same constructive syntax SVO (subject-verb-object), and Japanese is SOV (subject-object-verb), so the syntactic structure of Chinese learning English is much easier than that of the Japanese.

Stainberg believes that this kind of promotion is so great, if there is a proper environment, where children are exposed to "natural environments" rather than "classrooms", the second language will be learned faster than the first language. It just explains a common phenomenon: why young immigrants between the ages of four and five can fluently master a second language in less than one year.

VI. SUGGESTIONS ON ENGLISH TEACHING FOR CHILDREN

English as a compulsory first foreign language learning has been carried out in the country's conditional primary schools, all secondary schools and universities, but why only 10% of the students become the best, and most of the students think it is too difficult to master?

Comprehensive analysis of English teaching at all stages, I think the following aspects can be more effective in improving the effect of Children's English teaching.

First, at present, primary schools with qualified teachers all over the country start to learn English from the third grade (8 years old); English is taught in class once a week and is often occupied by Chinese and math teachers. According to the key period of early acquisition of language in children, I think this age can be advanced to the first grade of primary school, and even kindergartens can carry out simple and interesting English enlightenment education, to gain a perceptual knowledge of English and to cultivate interest.

Second, the learning environment affects the inhibition of learners, which in turn affects the use of language communication. In China, students mainly learn English in class. Hence, it is necessary for teachers to create a relaxed, interesting, lively and happy classroom environment to reduce students' inhibition and make students take the initiative to study happily and effectively.

Third, strengthen the standardized training of primary school English teachers. Quite a few English teachers in primary schools have problems such as non-standard pronunciation, slack speech, and unprofessional teaching. Just thinking: if the enlightenment teacher's pronunciation is not standard, not fluent, the consequences are serious, schoolchildren are affected by "preconceptions", after which it is difficult to correct the wrong pronunciation.

Fourth, many primary schools in China have large classes of 40-50 students, some of them even reach 60 students, which is very detrimental to the enlightenment of language education. It increases the difficulty for teachers to control the classroom, and it is hard for teachers to understand and correct the wrong pronunciation of children in time. Under the premise that small classes cannot be carried out in primary schools, the society should vigorously advocate and standardize social forces to run schools, and provide second English classes for the majority of English lovers, which not only enriches children's extracurricular life, but also lays a foundation for the cultivation of foreign language talents in China.

Fifth, through continuous reforms, especially the reform of the examination system, China's foreign language teaching has increased the share of listening test and increased the oral test, which has made a qualitative leap in teaching strategies; It is abandoning the traditional grammar-translation as the focus, and the teacher-centered "dumb" English era is turning to the era of listening and speaking, and the student-centered communicative strategy, but it is not enough, it needs to be deepened and sustained.

VII. CONCLUSION

China needs more and more foreign language talents to integrate with the international community, and foreign language teachers have a long way to go. Linguists' distinction between language "learning" and "acquisition" points out a new direction for the teaching of second language. The second language can be "acquired" unconsciously rather than deliberately "learning". However, creating a better language acquisition environment puts higher demands on children's English teachers: to ensure that children can obtain a large amount of comprehensible information input, on the positioning of teaching order to consider the development of children's cognitive ability, in the teaching process to give children appropriate motivation, to help children establish a second language confidence, to form a correct self-valuation. Only in this way, can children really learn language in the language environment, so that children's English teaching achieve more practical results and good development.

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