

What Is the Role of L1 in L2 Acquisition?

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Abstract

Based on the longitudinal studies on the second language acquisition, the role of L1 in L2 acquisition consists of 6 different areas: (1) with the behavioral theory to explain the SLA, focusing on the role of conditions; (2) to explain the interaction of SLA, emphasizing communication and social needs; (3) to explain the SLA with the cognitive theory, emphasizing the logic and thinking processes; (4) with the nativist theory or biological theory to explain SLA, stressing the inherent genetic capacity; (5) to emphasize the learner and learning strategies. (6) L1 transfer in L2 acquisition of phonetics, lexicology, syntax, semantics and pragmatics. In this article, the longitudinal studies of language transfer will be summarized and the observations will be listed to support the role of L1 transfer in L2 acquisition. Variety of findings indicates that the role of L1 transfer in L2 acquisition can never be neglected.

Key words: SLA; language transfer; Phonetic transfer; Lexical transfer; Pragmatic transfer; The role of L1 in L2 acquisition;

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INTRODUCTION

Since the second language acquisition came into being in the 1960s, it has become a hot study, especially the role of L1 in L2 acquisition. From the 1980s, the research areas of second language acquisition continue to expand and the problems discussed tend to deepen. Those studies have had a positive, extensive and far-reaching impact on general rules of language, cognitive development, language development, social language issues and cultural universality of language problems and other issues, meanwhile, the studies also played an important role in guiding L2 teaching and reform. So far, researchers have summed up six different scopes:

- a. With the behavioral theory to explain the SLA, focusing on the role of conditions;
- b. To explain the interaction of SLA, emphasizing communication and social needs;
- c. To explain the SLA with the cognitive theory, emphasizing the logic and thinking processes;
- d. With the nativist theory or biological theory to explain SLA, stressing the inherent genetic capacity;
- e. To emphasize the learner and learning strategies;
- f. L1 transfer in L2 acquisition of phonetics, lexicology, syntax, semantics and pragmatics. SLA theory can be summarized into three categories, namely nativist theory, environmental theory and functional theory. Chomsky and Krashen are the major representatives of the nativist theory, who believes that human beings are born with the ability to learn a language. Within the capacity of language, some abilities or rules are possessed by all mankind. Thus, what all mankind have in common in language learning is called “universal phenomenon” or “universal grammar (UG).”

Universal Grammar consists of a series of language qualification rules or parameters. Second language acquisition is based on the parameters of the existing language to acquire another language. Krashen’s monitor theory of SLA research fields is the most comprehensive

theory. The monitor theory holds that natural acquisition is a subconscious process, but language learning is a conscious process. Learners can use their own language control and regulation systems to adjust their language behaviors, and the first language, namely, the native language is one of the variable factors in language control and regulation system.

The environmental theory stresses the environmental factors such as personal experience, to the importance of language development, which tries to use the learner's external variables (environmental impact) to explain the process of language acquisition. Schumann (Schumann) cultural adaptation model is one of the most typical representatives. This model indicates that the second language acquisition is determined by the learner's mother tongue and its cultural differences. Acculturation level determines the level of language development. First, the cultural adaptation of the target language can control the amount of exposure to learners; second, it reflects the learning purpose of a learner. Schumann thinks that the second language acquisition can be totally controlled by the learner's input and purpose of learning.

Functional theory, also known interaction theory, it uses a variety of factors (congenital and environmental factors) to explain the language learning process; their representatives are Gibin and ZISA groups. Gibin believes that syntax derived from the human features of utterances, and face-to-face communication, language comprehension and language production-related psycholinguistics and pragmatics, leads to syntax changes. ZISA group found that the processing of discourse is determined by learners' strategies and the learners' L2 development, including their own policies used to the changing of language materials. Each new policy contains the old and gives a new content to ensure that students can learn more and more complex structures. Therefore, the learner's strategy restricts the intelligibility of teaching materials. In SLA research fields, L1 knowledge having the impact on the target language is one of the important issues explored by many linguists and the psychologists. In recent years, foreign language acquisition research is based more on Chomsky's parameters theory as structure and explores whether the learners can succeed in learning a foreign language during the L2 learning process. Some studies found that foreign language learning can be successful without L1 interference, (Hilles, 1986; Uziel, 1993) while others draw the opposite conclusion. Some foreign scholars (Clashen & Muysken, 1989; Tsimpli & Roussou, 1991) seldom study Chinese people who are learning English. Wang Yuehong (Hen'nan Normal University) conducted a survey of China's college students, through the analysis of survey, Wang concluded that: The level of L1 has great impact on foreign language learning.

It is worth noting many studies indicate that the most significant role of L1 in L2 acquisition is the L1 transfer. Let's start with the definitions of SLA, L1, L2,

and language transfer and so on. Then what is SLA? Briefly, SLA refers to the second language acquisition. To be specific, second Language Acquisition (SLA) is the common term for the name of the discipline. In general, SLA refers to the process of learning another language after the native language has been learned. Sometimes the term refers to the learning of a third or fourth language. The important aspect is that SLA refers to the learning of a nonnative language after learning the native language. The second language is commonly referred to as the L2. As with the phrase with "second language," L2 can refer to any language learned after learning the L1, regardless of whether it is the second, third, fourth, or fifth language. By this term, we mean both the acquisition of a second language in a classroom situation, and as we are in more "natural" exposure situations. The word *acquisition* in this article is used as second language studies as it is a term that refers to anything dealing with using or acquiring a foreign language, English.

Then, we have to learn what L1 and L2 are. L1 means one's native language. Chinese, for example, is our native language while English is the native language of the UK, the USA, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. German is the native language of Karl Mark. L2 can be referred to any language *after* teach the L1, regardless of the second, third, fourth or fifth language. For example, Mr. Smith's L1 is English, and after that, he begins to learn Latin language, so Latin is his L2. No sooner had SLA, L1 and L2 been defined or explained than language transfer had be explained. As we know, many decades of SLA studies indicate that the major role of L2 acquisition is language transfer.

Then what is transfer? Transfer is defined as " (in learning theory) the carrying over of learned behavior from one situation to another") Richardsetal, 2000, p.484). The history of theoretical study of transfer is comparatively short, but the way it has been explored is zigzagged beginning in the post-war years and carrying on into the 1960s, there was a strong assumption that most of difficulties facing the L2 learners were imposed by his or her first language. Thus, contrastive analysis was developed. However, as Professor Hu said:" The pendulum swung to another extreme following Chomsky's severe attack on behaviorist's view of language learning around 1960. L1 influence was minimized in the 1970s..." (Ellis, 2002, p.588). During that time, Creative construction hypothesis was the dominant voice. Yet, "new theories do not generally succeed in replacing their predecessors, but continue to coexist with them uncomfortably." (Spolsky, 1990, quoted in Ellis, 1999, p.73). After that is a stage of reappraisal development, following which there has been a renewed interest in L1 transfer in the past 20 years or so. The reason for this might be that "the paradigms for first language acquisition cannot be imported directly into account of second language acquisition, but neither can they be ignored" (Bialystok, 1999, p.120). Then what is the implication of language transfer?

Anyone who is learning a first language will come across the issues of language transfer. Language transfer is an acquisition experience during the process of learning, which will influence other learning. By the nature of language, language transfer can be divided into positive transfer and negative transfer. The experts refer to it as "L1 transfer." Language transfer generally consists of both the native language knowledge transfer and the knowledge transfer of the society and culture. Language knowledge is made up of phonetics, vocabulary, syntax, semantics and discourse as well as the structure and rules of knowledge, while the social and cultural knowledge refers to that of the cultural and social norms. In foreign language learning, the role of L1 transfer cannot be completely got rid of. The negative transfer cannot be avoided, which may prohibit the mastery of the authentic foreign language due to the interference with phonetics, semantics, sentences and grammatical structures. In addition, L1 culture will impede L2 learning; learners may use their own cultural practices to apply a foreign language and cultural habits, resulting in pragmatic errors. Transfer, however, can be divided into interlingual and extralingual transfer, in both situations there are negative and positive transfers. Transfer will be negative when there is proactive inhibition. In this case errors will result, transfer will be positive when the first and second language habits are the same. In this case, no errors will occur." (Ellis, 1999, p.22). That is, a previously learned event can either facilitate (positive transfer) or inhibit (negative transfer) the learning of a second event. At one time, the role of the L1 was considered noting but negative and interference. Even nowadays, whenever transfer is mentioned, people are used to putting the blame on negative transfer and take it for granted that transfer is, at least, one of the important factors responsible for errors that second language learners committed. While they are putting overdue emphasis on negative transfer, they are ignoring the function of positive transfer that can accelerate L2 language learning. In fact, both negative and positive transfer can be found in Chinese college students' English writings. In either case, lexical transfer, syntactical transfer or discourse transfer may take place. We have notified that the types and sources of some transfer examples found in my Chinese college students' English writing. Then how many types of transfer are there in general? Generally speaking, there are five different major categories: a. Phonetic transfer; b. Lexical transfer; c. Syntactical transfer; d. Semantic transfer; e. Pragmatic transfer. Here the five aspects will be covered. The first, second and fifth will be discussed in details

Accordingly, positive transfer can accelerate second language learning or acquisition while negative transfer will inhibit the language learning. That is to say, one can never neglect the role of L1 in L2 acquisition because language transfer plays a very important role in second language learning or acquisition. Let's begin with phonetic transfer first.

1. WHAT IS PHONETIC TRANSFER?

Any language has its own specific and unique phonetic rules. Any person who is learning another language will be influenced by the ways of one's native pronunciation and this phenomenon is the phonetic transfer in English language learning. The learning psychology defined it as: a secondary school in another study has the impact of prior learning on subsequent learning effects, follow-up study on previous learning. Theoretical task transfer: the transfer process is the integration of old and new experience, based on old and new knowledge, namely the use of existing knowledge and experience, through analysis, synthesis, summary and other thinking processes, to achieve the transfer of new knowledge. Transfer of learning can be classified according to the direction of the impact of the role of transfer and forward transfer of the role of reverse transfer. Any kind of learning another language plays a catalytic role or the occurrence of beneficial effects of transfer is positive, otherwise it is negative.

This section gives an overview of the theoretical and empirical developments in the research of second-language phonological acquisition. It summarizes the current advancements in the above-mentioned field in terms of eight aspects:

- a. Relations between L2 speech perception and production;
- b. L2 phonological studies;
- c. L2 speech segmental studies;
- d. L2 speech acquisition models;
- e. L2 speech suprasegmental studies;
- f. L1 transfer in L2 phonological acquisition;
- g. Non-linguistic factors in L2 phonological acquisition;
- h. L2 speech instruction. On that basis, it also highlights the future directions in L2 speech teaching and research. Let's discuss L1 transfer in L2 phonological acquisition

Some recent studies have found that second language learners' pronunciation causes deviation, mainly by the impact of L1. The phonetic transfer consists of three aspects:

- a. Kind of strategy to solve L2 pronouncing difficulties;
- b. The transfer process;
- c. The result after solving the pronouncing problems (Hammarberg, 1990). Previous research mainly adopted the method of contrastive analysis during studying L1's impact upon L2 phonological acquisition, hoping to explain the learner's errors and predict their learning difficulties. However, contrastive analysis cannot systematically explain whether all the differences between L1 and L2 can be using the same approach. Thus, Major (1998) proposed Similarity Differential Rate hypothesis, which assumed that the phenomenon of two languages

in different acquisitions can be acquired faster than that in similar phenomenon, although the absolute rate of acquisition is different. When L1 learners listen to L2 pronunciation, they unconsciously take them to compare with their L1 mapping system. Flege (1998) put forward the Speech Learning Model (SLM) thinking whether language learners can detect a phoneme from the second language speech can match the corresponding one in L1 and whether there exist any differences between L1 and L2 in phonemes by many factors, two of which are related to language: first, whether the learners can perceive its similarities and differences between the two. The second is the nature of the adopted method in L2 phonological contrast reality, L1 level and the L2 learning experience. Another issue is the level of language transfer. Contrastive analysis of the early focus on discourse transfer, in fact, transfer occurs in a multi-level, including the transfer of stress and syllable division process, the transfer of prosodic structure and the speech types in the highest levels of transfer (Leather, 1999.) Archibald (1998) found that L1 learners whose language (for example, Chinese) constitutes without stresses, are learning L2 (for example, English) with stresses, who cannot store in the form of prosodic structure, but store in the form of vocabulary. We increasingly recognize that transfer is not a simple process and the existing language transfer study underlies an important issue that no one has explained the changing of the learner's stage of development patterns over time. The researchers over-rely on the comparison and contrast between L1 and L2 in the phonological phrase, but cannot see the trajectory of development and change (Major, 1998). In fact, transfer and universal grammar will play different roles if the learners' learning tasks are different.

According to personal experience, the language learners from southern China and southwest China areas such as Anqing learners, south of Anhui Province, and the learners from Chongqing, one of the four municipalities directly under the Central Government and those who are from Sichuan Province, cannot tell the difference between /n/ and /l/. The typical examples are: 'banana' pronounced as balala, the word 'next' as 'lex't'. Some other learners as the ones from Jiangxi Province cannot tell the difference between /r/ and /l/, for example they pronounce the word 'root' as 'loot'. Such phenomenon is called the negative transfer in pronunciation, which will keep the correct pronunciation from being formed. That goes without saying; it will cause pronouncing difficulties in L2 learning. The consonants as /p b t d k g/ and /m n/ will be facilitated while pronouncing them because the Chinese *pinyin* contains those phonemes which are very similar to the English ones. This phenomenon will help the learners learn English better, which is positive transfer. Some other times, no transfer will occur in pronouncing. For instance,

/ʃ 3 tʃdʒ θ ð/, some of the phonemes we have but English speakers don't. Further, Chinese learners of English usually pronounce long vowels short and short

vowels long because Chinese pinyin do not contain long vowels and short ones.

Apart from phonetic transfer, lexical transfer also plays a crucial role in L2 acquisition. Thus, we should know something about lexical transfer.

2. WHAT IS LEXICAL TRANSFER?

More than three decades has witnessed an expansion of research scope of second language vocabulary acquisition (SLVA) in China. This section presents a thorough overview of the relevant research that has covered the following 5 aspects:

- a. Incidental vs. intentional SLVA;
 - b. Strategy research of SLVA;
 - e. Vocabulary width vs. depth;
 - f. L1 transfer effect;
 - g. Corpus based SLVA comparison.
- Since the 1970s, second language vocabulary acquisition in second language acquisition has become a hot research field; some scholars (Lewis, 1993) think that vocabulary acquisition is the central task of second language acquisition. Each of the language abilities to be formed and improved inevitably relies on the vocabulary, but the second language vocabulary acquisition is a cognitive process associated with life, since no one can master all the vocabulary of a language. Therefore, the second language vocabulary acquisition has become a big headache for a large number of learners and researchers work their hearts out to study. More and more SLVA scholars from both home and abroad undertake the research on the second language vocabulary acquisition. They have discussed and done the empirical studies from different aspects (Laufer, 2001; Long, 2002; Pu, 2000; Shu-jing, 2005, etc.), a tendency to form in full swing. They continue to push forward the research of the second language vocabulary acquisition. Here and now, it is necessary to conduct a comprehensive research review, and look into the future research in SLVA. This section focuses on the analysis of 10-year period (1995-2005) of important articles in this field published in China's domestic core journals on second language vocabulary acquisition, and the results of foreign-related have also been involved, but the foreign second language vocabulary acquisition will not be reviewed here.

Since the 10-year period between 1995 and 2005, the domestic study of second language vocabulary acquisition involves the following aspects:

- a. Incidental vocabulary acquisition and learning;
- b. The second language learner's vocabulary learning strategies;
- c. The acquisition of breadth and depth on target vocabulary;
- d. L1 transfer in L2 acquisition process;
- e. The comparison of L1 vocabulary acquisition with L2 vocabulary acquisition between the corpus-

based second language learners and the native learners. What about the Incidental Vocabulary Acquisition and Learning?

The 1980s rise of the communicative approach promoted the studies of vocabulary learning emphasized the role of incidental learning. 'Incidental vocabulary acquisition' was first put forward by Nagy, Herman and Anderson (1985) during the study the children's learning their L1 vocabulary, that is, learners focused on other tasks such as reading, listening to music, retelling the main ideas at the same time they kept some of the words they did not intend to (Laufer, 2001). Joe (1998) thinks that the majority of learners belong to the incidental vocabulary, as opposed to the rote learning, looking up the words in the dictionary, do the vocabulary exercises and other conscious learning, comparatively, the incidental acquisition is an unconscious process. Nation (1990) also divided vocabulary learning into direct learning and indirect learning. The former refers to various kinds of learning with the focus on vocabulary. The latter focuses on the information that speech conveys with the incidental vocabulary acquisition. Some domestic scholars have also conducted special studies of the incidental vocabulary acquisition on Chinese students. For example, a Chinese scholar, Gai Shu-hua (2003) designed a survey with different reading aims and tasks, finding that reading purposes have a great impact on the incidental vocabulary acquisition. Retelling after reading can keep longer time to promote more sustainable vocabulary acquisition than reading and answering questions. Duan Shi-ping and Yan Chen-song (2004) used three different ways of notes studying L2 learners' new words and memory retention of incidental vocabulary acquisition. The results showed that: both the multiple-choice annotations and the individual definitions have greatly promoted the incidental vocabulary acquisition, but the way of multiple-choice annotations seems more beneficial than the single notes in the incidental vocabulary acquisition; similar to Gai's findings, they also found a large number of learners whose incidental vocabulary acquisition could be sustained much longer. Some other scholars compared the incidental vocabulary acquisition with the intentional vocabulary learning or indirect / direct learning (Dong, 2003; Zhang, 2002). Dong Yanping's findings indicated that based on the communicative language teaching in the form of the indirect learning with the increase of direct learning will benefit learners, especially the output capacity of the low-level learner's vocabulary; Zhang Qingzong, Wuxi Yan from the perspectives of cognitive learning process, explored the degree, in the process of direct learning, processing the form and semantics will influence the second language vocabulary learning. They have found the direct learning of the semantic cognitive processed (attention—non-contextualization— contextualization) vocabulary has a positive role in promoting learning effects. The understandings of test persons and the

output level including the volume of vocabulary as well as the vocabulary retention are higher than that of form processing group (attention - reading and copy the words). To L2 learners in classroom learning, if only relying on the incidental vocabulary acquisition process to expand their vocabulary and master their vocabulary knowledge while setting aside the conscious learning, I am afraid that pigs might fly, but also it is detached from the teaching reality. Let alone learning a new language as L2 learners actually means building a new conceptual system (Dai, 1998). Vocabulary as an expression vector of concepts, from the very beginning, exists in the learner's conscious mind. There is little possibility of subconscious incidental vocabulary acquisition. Apart from conscious learning, the input must be paid full attention to before its being absorbed (Schmidt, 1990). Therefore, based on the existing language encyclopedic knowledge that L2 learners began to perceive, intake, encode and store L2 vocabulary. Thus, there is no much sense to distinguish L2 incidental vocabulary acquisition from L2 conscious learning. They are only two learning ways of vocabulary acquisition, complementing each other. They are fifty fifty. The wording in this article will no longer distinguish between vocabulary acquisition and vocabulary learning. L2 vocabulary learning and L2 vocabulary acquisition will be exchanged, depending on different interactive situations.

Since the second language acquisition research transferred to how to learn, various kinds of foreign relevant studies of vocabulary learning strategies have sprung up. Domestic related research started late, but still great achievements have been made, which involves all aspects of vocabulary learning strategies. For instance, a lot of research done on the relevancy between vocabulary strategies and learners' achievements, which has explored what strategies, will influence the effect of vocabulary learning? To what extent? Wang Wenyu (1998), Zhang Ping (2004) et al, have adopted different testing subjects, different research methods, but the results they've achieved, are very similar, namely metacognitive strategy and part of the cognitive strategies and vocabulary volume and vocabulary knowledge have significant correlation.

Changes in learners' vocabulary learning strategies, and differences were compared and analyzed. For instance, Zhang Ye, et al (2003) used the O'Malley & Chamot (1990) strategy classification method to investigate the stage changes of non-English major students' vocabulary learning strategies during the four years' undergraduate study in the Naval Engineering College and the College at other places. The findings indicate that vocabulary learning strategies belong to a process of dynamic changes. The first year students used vocabulary learning strategies in lower frequency but made big differences, which is the formation of the initial stage. The second and the third years presented the stage of formation and stabilization. The fourth year is the differentiation stage of vocabulary learning strategies, due to the lack of a

common goal, which increases the differences for the students to use vocabulary learning strategy. There exist some differences, but in a slight way, between good learners and poor learners, in using vocabulary learning strategies. Good learners are good at using the strategies of deep information processing. The scholars such as Wu Xia and Wang Qiang, whose surveys belong to good learners' strategies, while Zhang Ye's survey belongs to poor learners' vocabulary learning strategies such as self-assessment selective memory, word-guessing, which are taken granted as effective vocabulary learning strategies.

In addition, with respect to the research on the abilities of different learners to use memory strategies, models and effects in the process of vocabulary acquisition, from another point of view, the research enriches the study of second language vocabulary strategies. Wu Li-lin (2001) using the qualitative methods of analysis, by using respondents, self-statements, personal interviews, learning behavioral observations, field tests, etc., applied the comparative analysis on the differences between two strong memory learners and two weak learners in vocabulary memory. She found that the strength of memory is determined by various kinds of factors, such as their attitudes and motivation, management strategies and methods, memory psychological and memory physiological, and encoding abilities and other aspects of performance showed sharp differences.

In light of personal observations, teachers should be gratitude to positive transfer when they are bothered by students' misspelling for one thing—seldom do they misuse and misspell those common English words with syllables such as “extra” in the word “extracurricular” and “extraordinary”, “duc” in “introduction” and “productive”, and “tion” in “action” and “position”.

(1) It's important to live in a good environment comfortably.

(2) ...whether I'm right?

Many students can compose sentences like the first one that contains several “large” words without any spelling mistakes, while in the simple sentences like example two they can't “This is because they make use of the learned common syllables to obtain learning transfer.” (Zhang, 2003, p.80). Here “syllable method” is something quite similar to the method of memorizing Chinese characters. For instance, Chinese character “森” (forest) is composed of three parts “木” (wood), and “聽”, five parts: “耳” (ear), “十” (ten), “目” (eye), “一” (one), and “心”(heart). No wonder Chinese students who have rich experience in memorizing Chinese characters can deal with the English words containing common syllables easily. What's more, this sense of familiarity can also lead to a positive transfer in word choice.

(3) His face broadened into a smile.

Many students make a perfect sentence with “broaden” after it was firstly introduced to them because it's quite familiar for them to use the same Chinese version to

modify one's smile. What I mean by “perfect” is that it is not an easy job for a second language learner to produce a lifelike mental image by choosing an appropriate word. But for “broaden”, students can sense its connotation in the same way as they sense the Chinese character “绽” that can also refer to a smile process in which someone's face is gradually broadening.

As for negative lexical transfer, many people have dwelled on it. Here I've found three examples most frequently committed by my students:

(4) He ate all the food there.

(5) This has a bad effect to my study.

(6) He smarts very much, and even hides under the bed.

In Chinese, there is no difference between the verb forms of simple present tense and past tense (4), which may be an obstacle for Chinese students to grasp various verb forms in English; As for (5), although prepositions do exist in Chinese, a Chinese preposition does not always have a corresponding relationship with an English one; In (6), “smart” is an adjective in English and cannot be applied as predicate directly. However, the case is different in Chinese. A large amount of vocabulary learning contains the negative transfer, such as wrong diction of words, improper lexical collocations, and wrong word order. Let's discuss the wrong diction of words first.

In vocabulary learning process, a large quantity of words more or less contain the negative transfer, because the vocabulary of one language contains rich cultural connotation. Different historical backgrounds of word generation will cause big different uses. There are no perfect equivalents between English and Chinese connotations and extensions. For example, (7) I was born in an intellectual's family. My father is a teacher and my mother is an engineer. The word “intellectual” has a narrow sense, only refers to psychologists or anthropologists who have special knowledge or who use their minds creatively, rather than the Chinese connotation which refers to all well-educated persons.

Some Chinese characters are often used in a derogatory sense, but in English no and vice versa. Look at Table 1 below.

Table 1
Different Connotations Between Chinese and English

Chinese (derogatory)	English words	English (commendatory)
Yexin bobo (having an evil desire for success)	Ambitious	Having a strong desire for success or achievement
Daguo fan de (all for meals in one pot)	Equalitarian	A person who believes in the equality of all people

If only the surface meaning is interpreted, the deep meaning is ignored or confused about, the errors will occur in the process of transfer.

2.1 Improper Lexical Collocations

In terms of lexical collocation relationship, English collocation is more sole and more strict than that of Chinese. In the following sentences, Chinese “tanhua” has got several different prepositions.

(8) She is talking to me now.

(9) She's talking with me now.

(10) She's talking at me now.

Another example, Chinese *huanjin*, in English, we have three different words as circumstances, environment and surroundings.

2.3 Wrong Word Order

One more difference between Chinese and English vocabulary lies in word order. One of the typical errors of Chinese learners of English is the referential pronouns and some of the adjectives. (11) a. I, you and she will be on duty tomorrow. (×)

b. You, she and I will be on duty tomorrow. (✓)

(12) a. This is the available only reference book about the subject. (×)

b. This is the only reference book available on the subject. (✓)

In the beginning of learning English, when Chinese learners received the compliment from native speakers, “Your English is very good.” Instead of saying “Thank you!”, “No, no, no, my English is very poor.” This phenomenon is pragmatic and cultural transfer. Then what is the pragmatic and cultural about”

3. THE PRAGMATIC TRANSFER

The field of second language acquisition research began in the 20th century, namely, 1950s and 1960s, but up till the 1980s, the research of pragmatic issues was initiated. The concept stems from the hot period of the comparative analysis, which is closely related to the behavioral learning theory and the structural linguistics. The late 1960s to the 1970s, Chomsky's universal grammar proposed, which caused the criticism of the behavioral language learning, thereby comparative analysis in theory and methods were questioned. The role in foreign language teaching started to belittled. The late 1970s to the 1990s, the role regained its position, language transfer was considered as an important learning strategy. The researchers believe that language transfer is cognitive process affected by many factors. Then they began to focus on language transfer of pragmatic environment, cognitive processes, cultural differences and other factors. Pragmatic transfer refers to the L1 pragmatic knowledge having the impact on the use and the knowledge of L2 learning and acquisition. Pragmatic knowledge is the knowledge of language users as part of total communication, that is, in context and discourse constraints, how the speech act is to be understood

according to the speaker's intention to complete. Based on the fusion properties of language and culture, pragmatic transfer can be divided into two categories: pragmatic language transfer and social pragmatic transfer. Pragmatic transfer studies occurred essentially between pragmatic language and social language context. Pragmatic transfer is involved in phonetics, intonation, vocabulary, grammar, and culture. From the macro point of view, pragmatics research covers two major areas, that is, pragmatic language transfer and social pragmatic transfer. This distinction can be mainly traced back to Leech's studies of ordinary pragmatics and Thomas' studies of cross-cultural communication. Leech thinks that pragmatics can be divided into pragmalinguistics and sociopragmatics. Pragmalinguistics refers to specific speech acts with the specific language resources, and L1 learners' pragmatic knowledge with the mapping function upon the second language learning; sociopragmatics refers to interface between pragmatics and society, L2 learners with their native social culture and social norms to achieve the second language speech act (Barnes, Gutfreud, Satterly & Wells, 1983). On the basis of this distinction in a second language acquisition, Thomas summarized two errors that L2 learners committed in the learning process: pragma linguistic failure and sociopragmatic failure.

Kasper applied Leech's two major categories into pragmatic transfer: pragmalinguistic transfer and sociopragmatic transfer. Pragma linguistic transfer is the phenomenon's illocutionary force of one's native language will affect the perception of second language acquisition, resulting in the mapping of form and function; sociopragmatic transfer refers to the language users social pragmatic language in users of second language interpretation and language behavior perceived by the social context of knowledge of their mother tongue. Two categories in this framework, resulting from the transfer utility and direction of view, language can be expressed as with the transfer of the main language used with positive transfer and negative transfer of language.

Positive pragmatic transfer refers to the pragmatic language based on the native language and the social pragmatic knowledge transferred to the L2 context. This kind of perception agrees with speech behaviors produced by L2 users. L1 and L2 revealed the similar pragmatic speech and social pragmatic language features. It is good for L2 learners to use these features properly.

Positive pragmatic transfer proved to promote second language learning. For instance, Chinese “Qing Kaimen” is very similar to the English imperative: “Please open the door!”. When we say, “Ni neng zixi yidian ma?” in Chinese way of indirect speech acts to express our request, in English we may say, “Could you be a little more careful?” and so on. This is suitable both for L1 and L2 speech acts, and other linguistic phenomena that can promote second language acquisition, which has a positive impact during the process acquisition.

When the learner's inter language shows the specific features of pragmatic speech of both L1 and L2 native language and second language to show, this feature is not the one of all languages but a positive transfer .

As the positive transfer contributes to the second language acquisition, it often ensures successful communication. The collection of literature indicates that little research has been done in this area.

Kasper's study showed that the level of pragmatic speech, L1 learners can succeed in transferring the specific regular form such as the past tense, modal verbs and pragmatic strategies to the native language context. However, she does not necessarily resort to the fact that L1 learners will use L1 pragmatic knowledge or not strictly enough to complete the interpersonal communication in accordance with their inter-language pragmatic knowledge. Although she believed, in most cases, that the positive transfer would bring successful communication, she also found that positive transfer does not necessarily always lead to successful communication (Ellis, 1996). Baron's findings show that L1 learners will regard their positive pragmatic transfer as the preferable part of the total second language acquisition, and can reveal the unique part of the majority learners, but lack of sufficient empirical studies to prove that positive transfer is to promote or impede successful communication (Hammarberg, 1990). Most existing studies indicates that the positive transfer, generally, contributes to foreign language learning, but whether the positive transfer really promotes foreign language learning or not remains under discussion.

The negative pragmatic transfer refers to the negative transfer of mother tongue-based pragmatic language and social pragmatic knowledge transferred to the second language context. This kind of transfer leads to L2 perception and speech behavior, which are different from L2 users, resulting in communication failure. For instance, L1 and L2 speakers will respond differently to the same utterance as "I bumped into your feet." Chinese learners of English will answer, "It doesn't matter." rather than "That's OK!". At this time, L1 learners will transfer the certain knowledge of native speech acts to the second language to express the same phenomenon. But this kind of the pragmatic knowledge transferred from the mother tongue is different from that of the existing understanding of the speech acts and pragmatic knowledge in second language situations, resulting in pragmatic failure which interferes the second language learning. The negative pragmatic transfer involves a broader scope, including the language barriers that all language users who are using second language to communicate. pragmalinguistic failure, the language barriers that social communication generates, such as pragmalinguistic failure, social pragmatic failure, including intralingual and interlingual pragmatic failure and so on.

Based on my observations, many of the imperative sentences belong to the pragmatic transfer.

- (13) Please open the door.
- (14) Listen to me carefully.
- (15) Please look at my car.
- (16) Could you be a little more carefully?

From those above, we may interpret both Chinese and English sentences convey the same meaning, which is a positive transfer.

Let look at another example:

- (17) Greetings
- A: How do you do?
- B: How do you do?
- A: I am Lao Wang.
- B: I am Lao Ma.
- A: How old are you?
- B: I am 20 years old.

The conversations does not tell where the situation is, but from "I am" rather than "I'm". That is to say, the structure is not conversation pattern. If it is the first time they have met, it is not polite to ask for the age. So the conversation presents us with a negative transfer. Based on computer statistics, L1 transferrable rate indicates that five request policies can be transferred to L2 acquisition, such as would you please..., would you..., would like..., want and NC (hinting), to some extent, especially, "Would you please..." is the highest frequency in transfer.

CONCLUSION

What we have been discussing about is history background of domestic studies on L1 transfer in L2 acquisition. Based on the longitudinal studies on SLA, the role of L1 in L2 acquisition consists of 6 different areas: (1) with the behavioral theory to explain the SLA, focusing on the role of conditions; (2) to explain the interaction of SLA, emphasizing communication and social needs; (3) to explain the SLA with the cognitive theory, emphasizing the logic and thinking processes; (4) with the nativist theory or biological theory to explain SLA, stressing the inherent genetic capacity; (5) to emphasize the learner and learning strategies. (6) L1 transfer in L2 acquisition of phonetics, lexicology, syntax, semantics and pragmatics. The longitudinal studies and personal observations indicate that L1 transfer can be either positive or negative. If L1 teachers and learners should keep something positive and try one's best to avoid something negative, our language teaching and learning can be greatly promoted. All in all, variety of findings indicates that the role of L1 transfer in L2 acquisition can never be neglected.

NOTES

Refer to some longitudinal studies and your own observations to help critically discuss the L1 transfer and unlearning in the development of one's inter language.

The nine major foreign language journals (CSSCI) searched through the China Journal Net CNKI are as

follows: Foreign Language Teaching and Research, Modern Foreign Language, Journal of PLA Foreign Languages Institute, Foreign Languages, Foreign Language and Foreign Language Teaching, The Journal of Foreign Languages, Foreign Language Teaching, The Field of Foreign Languages, Foreign Language Teaching in Shandong Province.

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