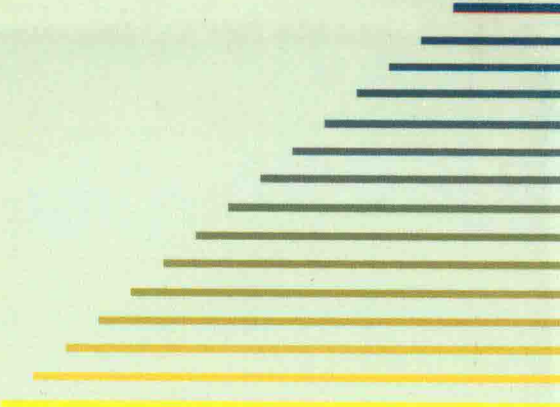
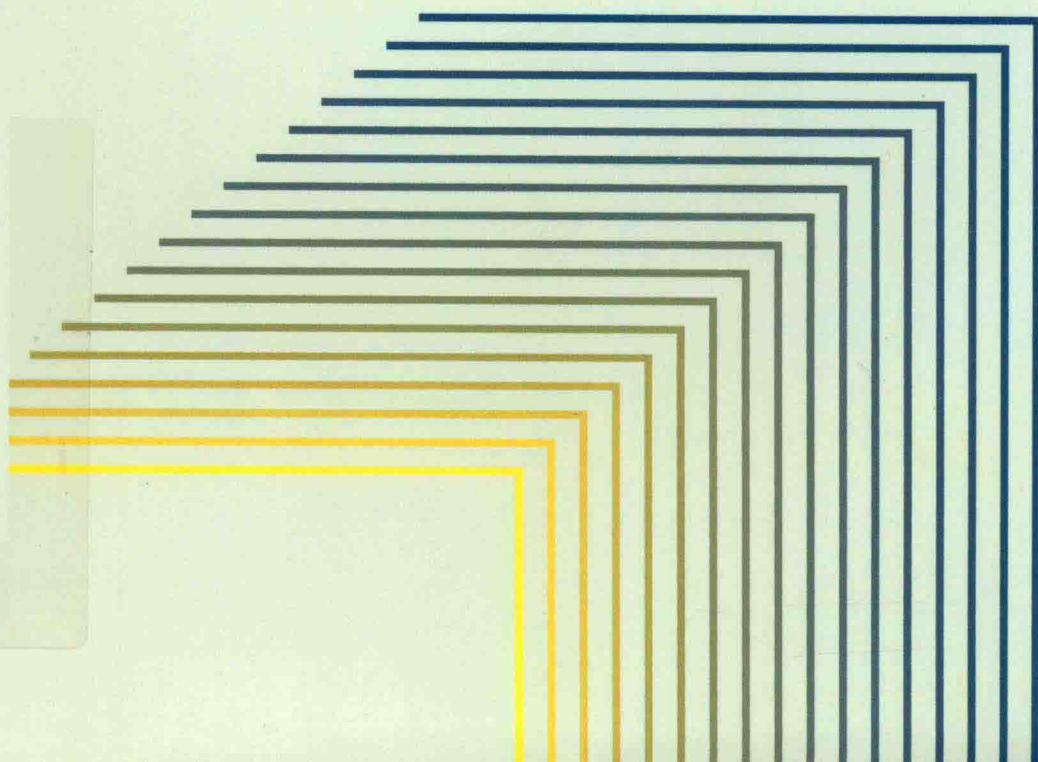




王静萍 著

任务复杂度对学习者 二语写作的影响研究

The Effects of Task Complexity
on EFL Learners' Writing Performance



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前 言

自 20 世纪 80 年代以来,任务复杂度与外语学习者语言技能的关系成为研究热点,二语习得研究领域对此进行了广泛的讨论,讨论的焦点在于任务复杂度对语言产出流利度、准确度和复杂度有何影响。有关任务复杂度的理论主要有认知假设与有限注意力模型,认知假设中任务复杂度又分为两个维度:资源指引型与资源消耗型。这两个模型对于任务复杂度对语言表现的影响有着不同的预测。有限注意力模型没有区分不同的维度,认为语言表现会随任务难度增加而变差。在任务型写作教学过程中,对于教师和课程开发者来说,选择某一特定类型的任务并能有效加以控制,使得二语学习者能够最大化地产出高质量的文本是一项极其重要而又迫切的使命。过去二十年关于任务复杂度的研究大多集中于其对口语产出的影响,而任务复杂度对于二语写作的影响研究并不多。

本书从资源指引型与资源消耗型两个维度探讨任务复杂度对二语学习者写作表现的影响,比较两个模型的预测在多大程度上切合二语写作的情况。同时,本书还将学习者的二语水平作为一个因素,探讨其是否与任务复杂度对写作表现有交互影响。

南京某高校 8 个英语教学班的 305 名非英语专业学生参加了本次研究,其中 4 个二年级班英语水平较高,4 个一年级班英语水平较低。写作任务为要求学生确定度假的宾馆,任务条件分为 4 类:(1)有 10 分钟任务前准备时间,确定度假的宾馆需要达到 3 个要求;(2)没有任务前准备时间,确定度假的宾馆需要达到 3 个要求;(3)有 10 分钟任务前准备时间,确定度假的宾馆需要达到 6 个要求;(4)没有任务前准备时间,确定度假的宾馆需要达到 6 个要求。两个年级各 4 个班分别完成其中一项任

务。任务完成后研究者对写作文本从流利度、准确度与复杂度三个方面进行分析。每个班随机抽取4名学生,共32名学生进行访谈。

对学生写作文本和访谈材料的定量和定性分析得出了以下结果:

1. 资源指引型维度具体操作为写作中需要处理的因素数量,通过增加因素的数量提高任务复杂度,结果显示学习者二语写作语言的流利度、准确度和词汇复杂度有显著提高,但句法复杂度有所降低。通过访谈发现学习者在写作过程中对内容和语言的关注度大于对文章结构的关注度。随着任务复杂度的提高,学习者投入的注意力越多,语言表现越优秀。

2. 资源消耗型维度具体操作为是否提供任务前准备时间,结果发现任务前准备时间条件下,二语写作语言流利度显著提高,而准确度与复杂度与没有任务前准备时间条件下相差无几。通过访谈发现学习者在任务前准备时间中使用得更多的是认知策略而非元认知策略,高水平学习者比低水平学习者更为有效地利用任务前准备时间。

3. 学习者的二语水平与任务前准备时间对写作语言表现有交互影响,换句话说,任务前准备时间对于高水平学习者来说可以起到积极作用,但对于低水平学习者来说没有任何帮助。二语水平与任务因素数量对二语写作语言表现没有交互影响,也就是说,增加因素数量无论对高水平学习者还是低水平学习者都会促进他们二语写作语言流利度、准确度和复杂度的提升。

本书的学术价值在于:第一,无论是 Skehan 和 Foster 的有限注意力模型所提出的假设还是 Robinson 的认知假设都建立在口语产出的研究基础之上,验证这两个假设的实证研究也都是对口语产出的研究,事实上研究者也逐步认识到任务复杂度对写作的重要影响,便借助已有的两个假设对之进行验证,由于写作与口语对认知及工作记忆的要求不一,有关写作的研究得出的结论与两个假设有出入,但至今没有形成针对写作提出的任务复杂度对语言表现影响的假设。本书提出了这样的假设。第二,任务复杂度有两类:资源指引型(Resource-directing)(任务涉及的因素多少、此时此地、有无推理要求)和资源消耗型(Resource-dispersing)

(有无准备时间、单一/双重任务、有无背景知识)。Skehan 和 Foster 的有限注意力模型所提出的假设与 Robinson 的认知假设没有针对这两个维度分别讨论,而是笼统地归纳任务复杂度对语言表现的影响,更没有考虑这两个维度的交互影响,而事实上写作任务的设计往往会不可避免地同时涉及两个维度,因此本书提出了两个维度交互影响写作表现的假设。第三,Skehan 和 Foster 的有限注意力模型所提出的假设与 Robinson 的认知假设没有考虑不同语言水平学习者的情况。本书讨论了任务复杂度对不同二语水平学习者的写作表现是否影响也不同。

本书结果部分验证了认知假设与有限注意力模型,因此进一步充实了任务复杂度理论,并给二语习得研究者、教师以及教学大纲设计者提供了理论和实践的依据。为了有效提高学习者二语写作水平,我们既要深入研究任务特征以及任务对二语产出的影响,又要研究学习者的二语水平,在此基础上设计或选择最能发挥出学习者最佳成绩的任务。任务的选择和难度排序在语言教学过程中是非常复杂的一个问题,任务需要与学习者的交际需求相关,不能过度超出学习者能力范围之外,同时任务还需要有助于学习者语言能力的发展。二语写作课堂上实施基于任务的教学活动中,教师一定要充分了解一项任务的特征、这些特征对学习者的写作表现的影响,在此基础上,选择或设计合适的任务将学习者的注意力引导到目标语言特征和所需掌握的知识上。任务的认知复杂度是很重要的特征之一,因为它能够决定学习者完成任务过程中注意力集中于何处。教师还要充分考虑如何将任务与教学过程融合,譬如是否在任务前或任务后给予学习者显性的指导,或是让学生在对自己独立对应形式一意义过程中发现规律。本书在这一点上作出了一些重要的贡献。本书发现写作任务中需要处理的因素的数量与是否有任务前构思的时间对二语学习者的写作表现有不同的影响,鉴于此,任务设计者与教师需要根据学习者的语言水平与学习目标来选择合适的变量掌握任务的复杂度。如果一堂课的中心在于提升学习者全方位的能力,如语言的流利度、准确度、复杂度,则建议通过增加需要处理的因素的数量提高任务的复杂度。如果一堂课目的在于提升学习者写作的流利度,那么学习者完成任务之前有时间构思

则会起到更好的效果。与此同时,设计或选择任务时还应考虑学习者的二语水平。本书发现无论学习者二语水平是高还是低,增加任务中需要处理的因素的数量都可以促进他们的写作表现。但是,在给予学习者任务前构思时间时要慎重,尽管二语写作教学的教师都确信任务前构思时间对学习者的写作表现不会起负面的作用,但他们不能确保任务前构思时间对学习者的写作表现有确确实实的帮助。本书的结果发现任务前构思时间对于二语水平较高的学习者有很大的帮助,但对二语水平较低的学习者却有负面的影响。

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List of Abbreviations

C/T	Number of Clauses per T-unit
CAF	Complexity, Accuracy, and Fluency
CET-4	College English Test Band 4
DC/C	Number of Dependent Clauses Divided by Total Number of Clauses
DC/T	Number of Dependent Clauses Divided per T-unit
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
EFT/T	Number of Error-Free T-units Divided by Total Number of T-units
Errors/100	Number of Errors per 100 Words
FL	Foreign Language
L1	First Language
L2	Second Language
MSR-D	Mean Segmental Ratio-D
SLA	Second Language Acquisition
W/C	Number of Words per Clause
W/M	Number of Words per Minute
W/T	Number of Words per T-unit

Chapter One Introduction

This study explored the effects of task complexity on second language writing of Chinese EFL learners. Specifically, the effects of two dimensions of task complexity, i.e., resource-directing dimension and resource-dispersing dimension, on students' written language fluency, accuracy and complexity were examined. Meanwhile, the learners' second language proficiency levels were incorporated to consider the interactive effects with task complexity on the learners' writing performance.

1.1 Need for the Study

In recent years in SLA research and language pedagogy, there has been a considerable growth of interest in tasks, both as a construct and as a research instrument. Researchers have developed mainly four theoretical perspectives in the research of second language (L2) tasks (Robinson, 2007; Skehan, 2003). The first one is a psychological and interactional approach, influenced strongly by the work of Long (1985, 1989, 1996). It argues that the interactive nature of language production is considered to be essential to second language acquisition. To be specific, this approach emphasizes the importance of the negotiation of meaning during production. So tasks are studied as catalytic or feedback devices. The second is a sociocultural