



军校环境对大学生 英语词汇学习策略的影响

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摘要

本书采用实证研究方法和手段,调查论证了军队院校非英语专业大学生词汇学习的观念和所采用的主要策略,分析解释了策略和词汇量、英语水平之间的关系,通过对比军校优生和差生(仅就英语成绩而言)、军校生与地方大学生在词汇学习观念和策略使用上的差异,分析并揭示了军校环境对学生词汇学习策略的影响相关度。

本书研究对象为某部队院校二年级本科学生。作者在参阅文献、与学生面谈的基础上,针对性地设计了调查问卷、词汇测试和英语水平测试试卷。研究过程中,先进行了小型试点试验,检查了试卷的信度、效度,并做出适当修正。在此基础上,进行了大范围的实地测试工作。利用 SPSS 软件包,对数据进行了定量和描述相结合的统计分析。统计结果显示:

1. 军校环境下,“词汇应该由老师教”的观念与词汇量和英语水平正相关。这预示,大学英语教学将对军校生的词汇学习产生较大影响。在词汇学习中,军校生频繁使用上课记笔记策略和电子词典策略。然而,他们却很少使用协作策略(该策略的运用最能反映军队凝聚力的特点)。

2. 在词汇学习观念和策略使用方面,军校优生和差生无明显差异,二者都不擅长运用学习策略。此外,差生比优生更频繁地使用教师参考书策略。

3. 与地方大学生相比,军校生缺乏学习主动性,不擅于使用元认知、认知、记忆等策略。

由此可见,军校环境对学生词汇学习策略的运用具有重要的影响。

通过分析军校环境的特点,作者解释了导致上述结果的原因,并提出:

1. 军校教师应该加强学生对词汇学习的元认知管理,通过策略培训,帮助学生了解并使用更多适合军校环境的学习策略。

2. 改变“一言堂”的传统授课方式,利用军队强调集体和协作精神的特点,大力倡导学生应用词汇学习中的协作策略。

针对军校学生对词汇学习的元认知策略和认知策略的运用情况,研究者在教学过程中有针对、有意识、系统地对军校学生进行元认知策略培训以及认知策略培训,包括猜词策略、双语词典策略和记笔记策略,以探索培训能否对军校学生的词汇学习产生积极的作用。研究结果表明:

1. 元认知策略培训能提高军校学生词汇学习的积极性以及在词汇学习中运用元认知策略的主动性,他们能有意识地将注意力分配到重点词汇的学习上,并自主地对词汇学习进行合理的计划、监控和评估。

2. 猜词策略培训能激发军校学生根据上下文线索和单词的构词结构对生词意思进行猜测的兴趣,培养学生识别和使用不同猜词线索的能力。使用猜词策略的军校学生在词汇的短期记忆和长期记忆效果上都得到了提高。与猜词策略相比,使用双语词典策略的军校学生对词汇记忆的保持效果相当。而与只使用猜词策略或双语词典策略的军校学生相比,使用先猜词后查字典策略的学生在词汇方面则保持了更好的短期记忆和长期记忆效果。

3. 记笔记策略培训可以提高军校学生在词汇学习中运用记笔记策略的主动性以及培养学生记笔记的能力。记笔记具有两种功能,即编码功能和外储存功能。记笔记的编码功能有利于词汇储存在记忆中,外储存功能则使词汇学习者能够复习词汇笔记,从而有利于词汇记忆的提取。因此词汇学习中,只记笔记的军校学生比不记笔记的学生保持更好的短期记忆和长期记忆效果,而记笔记并复习笔记的军校学生比只记笔记的学生在短期记忆和长期记忆方面表现更优异。

由于受调查对象的范围所限,对于影响军校学生语言学习策略的众多因素以及适合军校学生运用的词汇学习策略还需进行更为全面的研究,以便找到适合军校特色的行之有效的教学方法。

关键词: 词汇学习策略,军校环境,元认知策略,猜词策略,记笔记策略

Abstract

In recent years, a number of theoretical and empirical studies concerning vocabulary learning strategies (VLS) have been conducted. However, little investigation has been made on the VLS of the college students in military schools in China.

The current study aims to investigate the VLS among Chinese non-English majors in a military context, the effects of cadets' VLS on vocabulary size and English proficiency, differences between successful learners and less successful learners (as far as English achievement is concerned) on their vocabulary learning beliefs and strategies use so that the conclusions can be reached as to in what aspects and to what extent military context influences college students' strategies.

To this end, an experiment was conducted among sophomores in a certain military academy. The experimental measures included questionnaires, vocabulary tests and English proficiency tests. The author compiled them herself, based on multiple sources, say, reference books and students' self-reports. A pilot study was conducted in two classes to ensure the reliability of the questionnaire. Then, a huge amount of data were collected and computed in the Statistic Package for Social Science (SPSS) .

The following results can be summarized from the research.

1. Descriptive analysis and correlation analysis reveal that the cadets' belief that "Words Should be Learned by Teachers' Instruction" appears positively correlated with both vocabulary size and overall proficiency, which indicates cadets' achievements owe a lot to teachers' diligence and devotion in College English teaching. In addition,

“Taking Notes in Class” and “Use of Electronic Dictionary” strategies are employed frequently among cadets, while the cooperation strategy enhancing military cohesion is not usually used in vocabulary learning.

2. T Test also indicates that differences between the successful students and the poor students in vocabulary learning beliefs and VLS use are not significant at all, and neither good students nor poor students use VLS actively. Poor students tend to use “Teacher’s Books” more often in learning vocabulary.

3. Contrastive studies with college students indicate that cadets are less active in the employment of Metacognitive, Cognitive and Memory strategies, and particularly, they are incompetent in regulating and planning their own studies.

Due to the fact that students in a military context show striking differences in the above aspects with those in a college context, we can conclude that military context has a vital impact on students’ VLS.

By analyzing the specific features of military context and explaining the reasons of the findings, the authors made some proposals.

1. College English teachers in a military context should enhance cadets’ metacognitive regulation, help them try and master some strategies which are effective and fit in with military context, and avoid cadets’ misuse of some strategies.

2. The traditional teacher-oriented teaching style in a military context needs improvement, and cooperation strategy should be strongly recommended to cadets in their vocabulary learning.

In accordance with the findings of the investigation on the metacognitive and cognitive strategies of military students’ vocabulary acquisition, the authors launched the metacognitive and cognitive strategies training which suits the military context in order to testify the rationality of the training. In the study, the cognitive vocabulary learning strategies that were instructed are the guessing and BIDIC

strategies and the note-taking strategy. The analyses of the training results reveal the following three findings:

1. The metacognitive strategies training boosts cadets' motivation of vocabulary learning and awareness of applying the metacognitive strategies into their vocabulary learning. The cadets who receive the metacognitive training may have a clear sense of which words are necessary for them to learn. In addition, they may plan, monitor, regulate and evaluate their vocabulary learning process autonomously.

2. The guessing strategy training increases cadets' interest in guessing meanings of the unfamiliar words based on the contextual clues and word constructions and cultivates their abilities of identifying and employing various of contextual clues and word constructions. The cadets who employ the guessing strategy probably achieve better results in both the short-term and long-term retention of the newly learnt words. Compared with the guessing strategy, the BIDIC strategy leads to a similar level of vocabulary retention. While significant differences in the vocabulary retention level can be found between the cadets who employ the strategy of first guessing and then looking up a bilingualized dictionary and those who merely employ the guessing or the BIDIC strategy.

3. The note-taking strategy training enhances cadets' awareness of applying the note-taking strategy into their vocabulary learning and cultivates their abilities of taking notes. Taking notes serves the two functions, the encoding function and the external storage function. The encoding function facilitates words' storage in memory and the external storage function facilitates words' retrieval. As a result, the cadets who merely take notes perform better than those who don't take notes in the short-term and long-term retention of the newly learnt words, while the cadets taking notes with later review greatly outperform those who merely take notes in the word retention.

Undoubtedly, there is necessity for more comprehensive research

on a wide range of variables affecting use of VLS in a military context so that teachers can find some teaching methods more efficient and more appropriate for cadets.

Key words: vocabulary learning strategies (VLS) , military context , metacognitive strategy , guessing strategy , note-taking strategy

前 言

词汇作为构成语言的三大要素之一,是提高学生听说读写和交际能力的基础。词汇教学在整个大学英语教学过程中有着重要的作用,加强词汇教学理论研究,改革教学方法,培养学生建立合适的词汇学习策略,为自主性学习打下基础,显得尤为重要。

近年来,英语词汇学习策略的研究对象,主要集中于地方高校大学生,有关军队高等院校这一特殊环境下大学生群体的英语词汇学习策略研究尚少涉猎。军队高等院校作为承担培养军事指挥、工程技术、政工管理人才任务的主要场所,不仅具备地方高校的特点,更有军队的典型属性,军校学员既是大学生,又是现役军人,奉献、服从、守纪、团结、协作是他们区别于普通大学生的必备素质,他们的词汇策略运用情况应该引起足够重视。

本书采用实证研究方法和手段,揭示了军队高等院校非英语专业大学生英语词汇学习策略的特点,并提出了相应的词汇学习策略培训和教学方法改革。全书共分为九章,介绍了研究背景和理论基础、阐述了典型的词汇学习策略并分别进行个案研究、分析评述实证研究数据、总结反思研究结果。其中,第一、二、四、五、九章由袁沛撰写,第三、六、七、八章由闫红菊撰写,承蒙姬玉珊教授的审稿并多次提出宝贵意见和建议。

本书的最大特点就是基于军校的特殊教学背景,理论联系实际,用实验方法对教学进行探索,通过例证分析、评述,为军校英语教师提供广大的空间去思考、探索,促使教师制订出适合教学对象并切实可行的英语词汇教学方法。希望本书的出版,有助于军队高等院校的大学英语教学改革,有助于军队高等院校大学英语教学质量的提高。

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Chapter One Introduction

1.1 Background of the Research

Vocabulary acquisition has traditionally been neglected in Second/ Foreign Language Acquisition research. Luckily, there has been a prominent shift within the field of vocabulary learning and teaching over the last twenty years with greater emphasis being put on learners and learning rather than on teachers and teaching. According to Laufer,

Vocabulary is no longer a victim of discrimination in second language learning research, nor in language teaching. After decades of neglect, lexis is now recognized as central to any language acquisition process, native or non-native. What many language teachers might have intuitively known for a long time, that a solid vocabulary is necessary in every stage of language learning, is now being openly stated by some second language acquisition (SLA) researchers. (2002:140)

With this shift in emphasis, how learners process new vocabulary and what kinds of strategies they employ to understand, learn or remember the words in foreign language learning has been a primary concern for the researchers. As will be shown, in the recent years, a number of researchers (Gu & Johnson, 1996; Schmitt, 1997; Wu Xia & Wang Qiang, 1998; Wang Wenyu, 1998) have investigated individual vocabulary learning strategies (VLS) or have assessed learner's frequency of vocabulary strategies as well as the benefits of using certain learning strategies in acquiring new words (e.g. Brown & Perry, 1991) by means of a number of test instruments, including

questionnaire, vocabulary size and overall language proficiency measures.

However, the previous studies have paid much attention to the impact of individual differences (e. g. proficiency, motives, gender, etc.) on learners' VLS in foreign language learning without taking account of the influence of different learning context. Wen Qiufang (2003) states, learners' VLS are influenced by many factors which are categorized into two major aspects, learner's factor and the factor of learning context. Since the latter aspect shouldn't be neglected, this book has done much on the factor of learning context.

1.2 Significance of the Study

1.2.1 Learning Context

When it comes to learning context, Gu defines it as follows.

Learning context refers to the learning environment. It is the socio-culturo-political environment where learning takes place. The learning context can include the teachers, the peers, the classroom climate or ethos, the family support, the social, cultural tradition of learning, the curriculum, and the availability of input and output opportunities. Learning context is different from language context which refers to the textual or discursal place in which a particular word or structure can be found. Learning contexts constrain the ways learners approach learning tasks. (2003:2)

Gu's definition suggests that learning context is the learning environment a learner studies in. It consists of two major aspects: the learner's macro environment (social, cultural tradition of learning, the curriculum, etc.) and micro or immediate environment (school's

founding principles and educational direction, classroom, teachers, peers, etc.) . At the basic level, the immediate learning environment (the school or the classroom) , the learning principles (individualized, competitive, or cooperative) assumed by the teacher and the learner's attitudes (feeling of self-efficacy , self-esteem or discouragement) , all interact to form the classroom chemistry of language learning (Williams & Burden, 1997) . This indicates that the immediate learning context determines not just how learning takes place, but also learners' learning styles and learners' view toward the learning task. It is also assumed in Gu's thesis (1996) that a learner's view or "belief" (the term is borrowed from Horwitz 1987 by Gu and used frequently by many domestic researchers.) toward the learning task is important in determining the learner's choice of language learning strategies.

Considering the significance of a learning context to learners' learning strategies, the impact of it on learners in learning a foreign language is one factor worthwhile to be particularly investigated. It can help solve specific problems faced by a group of learners in a specific context. At the same time, we can make efforts to apply some beneficial strategies (e.g. all the metacognitive strategies) proved to be at a level of generality into learners' own context in which these strategies are seldom used.

1.2.2 College Context

Concerning the research done among Chinese college students (Gu & Johnson, 1996; Wu Xia & Wang Qiang, 1998; Wang Wenyu, 1998) , despite the fact that the participants investigated come from different colleges and universities, their learning context indeed can be categorized into one big group — non-military college context (college context hereafter) . Students in a college context do not have so many restrictions, obligations and requirements like students in a military context (cadets) .