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英语进行体的第二语言习得： 认知—功能语言学视角

A Cognitive-Functional Approach to the L2
Acquisition of English Progressive Aspect

胡荣 著

外语教学与研究出版社

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中文摘要

情状体假设 (the Aspect Hypothesis) 是第二语言时体习得研究中一个重要但又颇具争议的理论框架。该假设认为, 第二语言时体标记的发展和习得受到动词情状体的影响。情状体假设预测英语进行体标记首先用于活动动词, 然后扩展到完结动词和达成动词, 并且不会错误地扩展到状态动词。进行体标记与活动动词之间的显著依存关系, 及其与状态动词之间的相互对立, 得到了大多数实证研究结果的支持, 但是关于进行体标记向完结动词和达成动词的扩展, 实证研究中仍然存在许多分歧。动词的情状体影响和制约第二语言时体标记的习得, 但其对二语时体习得的解释仍不完整, 且缺乏统一的理论框架。

本研究从理论分析出发, 对英语进行体的第二语言习得从理论及实证的角度展开进一步探索。通过在认知—功能语言学的理论框架下对“体”的概念的分析, 指出“体”的表达受到多种句子成分的制约, 并且具有主观性的特点, 在谓语句层面上, 由动词的情状体和体标记的意义共同构成。同时运用认知语言学对时体结构分析的方法, 发现英语进行体标记所表达的“在进行中”, “暂时性”, “反复性”, 以及“逐渐接近”等意义与人的视觉结构相联系, 是有理据的, 而不是任意的。基于这样的理论观点和发现, 本研究假设英语进行体标记的第二语言习得不仅受到动词情状体的影响, 而且受到进行体标记所表达的意义的影 响, 两者相互制约, 相互影响。

为了检验认知—功能语言学框架下这一假设的合理性，本研究针对进行体与动词情状体以及进行体标记的意义之间的关系设计了包括写作、选择正确形态和可接受性判断等三项研究工具。分属三个不同水平组的 90 名中国英语学习者以及 16 名英语本族语人士参加了本项实证研究。实证研究的结果支持动词情状体和进行体标记的意义对进行体标记发展和习得的共同作用，以及两者之间的相互影响。在本研究所涉及的中级英语学习者中，进行体标记不仅和活动动词之间存在密切的联系，而且主要用于表达“正在进行中”的意义；当进行体标记用于表达“正在进行中”和“逐渐接近”的意义时，进行体标记会扩展到完结动词；进行体标记没有被扩展到达成动词以及“反复性”的意义；进行体标记被正确地扩展到状态动词，表达“暂时性”的意义。

本研究的结果弥补了情状体假设对二语时体习得解释的单一性，对英语进行体的第二语言习得做出了新的解释，确立了认知—功能语言学的理论框架对于解释二语习得的合理性和有效性。本研究对于二语习得研究的重要启示在于，统一的理论框架以及假设检验的研究方法是促进二语习得研究发展的重要途径。

关键词：英语进行体 二语习得 认知—功能语言学

Abstract

It is identified in existing second language (L2) tense-aspect acquisition research that the development of L2 tense-aspect morphology is constrained by the inherent semantic features of the predicate verb (lexical aspect), which is formulated as the Aspect Hypothesis. It is predicted by the Aspect Hypothesis that progressive marking is initially associated with activity verbs, gradually extended to accomplishment and achievement verbs, and will not be incorrectly overextended to stative verbs. However, such predictions are not fully supported by empirical findings and the existing controversies are seen to rise from the theoretical and methodological inadequacies of the Aspect Hypothesis.

The present study further promotes this line of research by adopting cognitive-functional linguistics as the theoretical framework in its investigation of the L2 acquisition of the English progressive aspect. Within this framework, aspect is seen as compositional and subjective in nature. At the predicate level, the lexical aspect of the predicate verb and the meaning of the morphological marker jointly contribute to the aspectual meaning of the sentence. The meanings of the English progressive aspect, including in-progress, temporariness, repetitiveness, and preliminary stage, are found to be motivated, rather than arbitrary, as a result of the speaker's profiling. Based on

such linguistic understanding, it is hypothesized in the present study that the development of the progressive morphology in L2 English is jointly constrained by lexical aspect and meaning of the progressive marker.

Empirical data collected through composition, preference task, and acceptability judgment test from 90 EFL learners at three proficiency levels and 16 native speakers of English provide support to the theory-derived hypothesis. Progressive marking is found to be most strongly associated with both the activity verbs and the in-progress meaning of the aspectual marker; it is extended to accomplishment verbs mainly when it is associated with the in-progress and preliminary stage meaning; the extension of progressive marking to achievement verbs to express the meaning of repetitiveness is very limited; and progressive marking is found to be overextended to stative verbs to evoke the temporariness meaning in a native-like fashion.

Due to its foundation in the cognitive-functional linguistic framework and improved methodology, the present research overcomes the limitations of the Aspect Hypothesis and adds a new dimension to the account of the L2 acquisition of the English progressive aspect. A unified theoretical framework and hypothesis-testing methodology are seen to be effective measures to stimulate substantial progress in SLA theory and research.

Key words: English progressive aspect, L2 acquisition, cognitive-functional linguistics

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