

第二语言语用习得: 中国学习者英语“请求”言语行为习得研究

PRAGMATIC DEVELOPMENT IN A SECOND LANGUAGE :
A CROSS-SECTIONAL STUDY ON THE ACQUISITION OF
ENGLISH REQUESTS BY CHINESE LEARNERS

杨仙菊◎著



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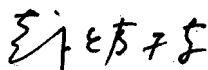
序 言

中介语语用学是一门在二语习得领域和语用学领域都具有很大研究潜力的交叉学科。随着英语教育在中国各个年龄阶段、各个领域的普及,我们发现对英语知识的掌握停留在词汇、语法、阅读等层面是不够的,英语知识的运用在全球化的大环境中显得尤为重要。然而,如何在一定的语言环境中用英语得体、合适地表达自己的意图是困扰大多英语学习者的问题之一。研究表明,对英语语言知识的积累并不能保证语用能力和语用意识的同步发展。中介语语用学这门学科的产生为解决这些问题提供了理论框架和实践指导。近年来国内学者也开始关注学习者的英语语用能力。但是,从二语习得角度研究中国学习者中介语语用能力的发展过程和规律的学者却为数不多。杨仙菊博士在本书中所进行的调查研究无疑是一种新的尝试,从理论和实践方面都对这门新兴学科的发展做出了一定贡献。

杨仙菊博士的这本专著从日常生活中最常用的语用现象——言语行为入手,通过横向设计调查不同英语水平的学习者产生的英语“请求”言语行为并分别与英、汉语本族语者语料进行比较,旨在发现母语为汉语的学习者英语语用能力习得的特点和规律以及影响二语语用习得的因素。作者的研究表明:不同英语水平的学习者的“请求”言语行为体现出不同的中介语特征;除语言水平外,学习者英语语用能力的习得还受母语语用迁移、课堂教学中的语用输入等因素的影响。这种新的研究视角以及研究方法拓展了言

语行为研究的思路、丰富了其研究方法,是比较成功的“小题大做”,其研究方法可供同类研究参考。由于这本专著的研究对象涉及面较宽,包括初中生、高中生以及大学生,因此对整个英语教学大纲的制定和教学过程具有一定的指导作用。

中介语语用学是一门年轻的学科,亟须完善和发展,因而作者进行的尝试必然会有不足之处,希望广大年轻的学者能加入到这个领域,为中国英语教育做一些实用的事情。同时也希望杨仙菊博士能和更多感兴趣的学者加强交流共同努力,以推动中介语语用学在国内的发展。



2009年3月于上海

前言

本书是在作者的博士论文基础上修改而成的。在中介语语用学(Interlanguage Pragmatics)理论指导下,研究母语为汉语的学习者英语语用能力习得的特点和规律以及影响二语语用习得的因素。本书通过横向设计调查不同英语水平的学习者产生的英语“请求”言语行为语篇并分别与英、汉语本族语者语料进行比较发现:不同语言水平的学习者的语用能力处于不同的发展阶段,其“请求”言语行为体现出不同的中介语特征。除语言水平外,学习者二语语用能力的习得过程受母语语用迁移、课堂教学中的语用输入等因素的影响。本研究的发现对语用教学的大纲制定和教学过程具有一定的指导作用。

全书共分七章。第一章导论简要介绍本书的研究背景、研究意义以及结构。第二章回顾中介语语用学习得研究的现状,包括对语用能力的界定、中介语语用学的研究范围、理论视角、发展趋势以及该学科的研究方法。第三章回顾对英语“请求”言语行为(以下称“请求”)的研究。首先对“请求”的定义和分类进行回顾,为本研究的调查问卷的设计提供依据;其次对“请求”语篇的结构进行回顾,包括中心语(Head Act)、内部修饰语(Internal Modification)以及外部修饰语(External Modification)等;然后重点回顾了国内外学者对“请求”进行的不同视角的研究,包括跨文化对比研究(cross-cultural study)和习得研究(developmental study),并呼吁中介语语用学的研究重心应该从前者转向后者;此外,还特别

回顾了国内学者从中介语语用学角度对“请求”的研究现状,指出习得研究在国内刚刚起步。第四章详细介绍本书的研究方法,包括调查问题、前期研究、调查工具的设计、数据收集以及数据分析的具体框架。第五章分析数据并分四个方面汇报研究结果,重点分析了二语语言水平和母语语用迁移对语用习得的影响。第六章独立成章强调语用教学的作用,结合第五章的研究结果特别讨论了教学可能对语用习得带来的负面影响,并从大纲设计、教材开发以及教学方法三个方面提出语用教学的具体建议。第七章为结论部分,对本研究的主要结果进行回顾之后,指出本研究的不足之处和尚未解决的问题,从而为今后的中介语语用学研究提出建议。

一、研究现状

中介语语用学(Interlanguage Pragmatics)是语用学和二语习得的交叉学科,研究学习者第二语言(以下称“二语”)或目的语的理解、使用和习得状况。早期的中介语语用学研究以跨文化对比研究为主并取得了大量成果(如,Blum-Kulka等,1989),对学习者的二语语用能力的习得研究尚处于起步阶段。二语言语行为的习得是最受关注的语用现象之一并取得了一定的研究成果(如,Rose & Kasper, 2001; Kasper & Rose, 2002)。然而,国内外对言语行为的习得研究仍然存在不少问题:(1)国内对学习者的二语语用能力的研究仍以跨文化对比研究为主,习得研究刚刚起步;(2)在言语行为的习得研究中,很少有同类研究关注母语为汉语的学习者如何习得英语言语行为;(3)同类研究的受试多为不同语言水平的大学生,极少关注更低教育水平或认知水平的学习者。因此,对中国学习者英语语用能力的发展规律和特征的研究在国内尚处于起步阶段。

二、研究内容及方法

鉴于国内二语习得领域缺乏对语用能力发展状况的研究,本研究采用背景问卷、开放式问卷和元语用知识评估问卷,对初中、

高中、大学三组不同水平的英语学习者产生的英语“请求”言语行为进行横向研究并分别与英、汉语本族语者语料进行比较,以发现中国学习者第二语言语用能力的习得特征。本研究选择“请求”作为调查内容的原因如下:首先,作为“指令性”言语行为,“请求”本身是威胁面子的、强加性的,它需要交际者遵守礼貌原则并根据请求对象及内容等语境特征选择合适的策略;其次,由于本研究涵盖不同年龄和英语水平的学习者,调查的内容必须是大家都熟悉、交际中最普遍的言语行为,作者的前期调查证实了本研究的所有受试都学习了英语“请求”的表达方式,因此选择“请求”在一定程度上能反映中国学习者的整体语用能力。本研究的调查工具在传统的“语篇补全对话”的基础上发展而成,采用了开放式请求情景问卷,在问卷的设计上尽量接近语言使用的真实环境。研究方法为横向研究(cross-sectional study),即包括不同二语语言水平的学习者,和纵向研究相比受试数量大、操作方便而且结论更具有概况性。

三、研究结果

本研究借鉴 Blum-Kulka 等人在 CCSARP 项目中使用的“请求”分析框架建立了本书的数据分析框架并对学习者和本族语者的语料进行了分析。通过分析“请求”的主要成分——请求策略、请求内部修饰语和外部修饰语,考查中国学习者习得“请求”时的语用语言能力和社交语用能力的特征。主要结果如下:

(1) 在请求策略方面,所有受试包括英、汉本族语者使用的规约性间接策略最多,直接策略次之,非规约性间接策略(暗示策略)最少。在直接策略中,低水平组表达请求时使用的祈使句最多,高水平组最少。与低水平组以及中等水平组相比,高水平组使用的规约性间接策略最多。虽然学习者和英语本族语者在使用规约性间接策略的数量上无显著差别,但是学习者使用的该策略的种类有限而且比较单一。此外,部分学习者尤其是中、低水平组和英语

本族语者没有回答问卷中的某些情形,前者可能是受英语水平所限,而后者可能觉得在这些情形中提出请求的难度很大。

(2) 在三大类请求内部修饰语中,与英语本族语者相比,学习者在提出请求时较少使用句法缓和语,但是他们使用的词汇缓和语和加强语在数量上和英语本族语者没有显著差异。和其他两类缓和语相比,学习者使用的加强语最少。高水平组在使用内部修饰语方面明显优于低水平组和中等水平组,但是与英语本族语者相比他们使用的内部修饰语在种类和数量上都比较有限。此外,低水平组和中等水平组在使用内部修饰语方面没有表现出显著差异。

(3) 在请求外部修饰语方面,学习者与英语本族语者以及汉语本族语者在表达请求时使用的外部修饰语种类相似。其中“解释原因”(grounder)和“感谢”(thanks)的使用频率最高,“提供(物品、服务等)”(offer)、“道歉”(apology)、“承诺(补偿、回报等)”(promise)以及“预备语”(preparator)等次之。在各类外部修饰语的总数上,低水平组使用的外部修饰语明显少于高水平组。

(4) 学习者的社交语用能力,即对不同语境的敏感程度体现在两个方面。首先,受试对大多数请求情形中所包含的社会参数(社会距离、听话人的权利或地位以及请求行为的难易度)的评估表现出中英文化差异和语言水平方面的差异。其次,在大多请求情形中,学习者选择的请求策略的直接程度与英语本族语者无显著差别,这说明学习者具有一定的语境意识。但是由于本研究把请求策略按直接程度只分为三大类,这使得我们的结论略显粗略。就每一种具体的策略而言,学习者在不同情形中使用的策略种类单一,如学习者极少使用英语本族语者认为较礼貌的“I was wondering if you...”等形式。此外,不同水平的学习者对语境的敏感程度不同。高水平组比中、低水平组表现出更强的礼貌意识。

以上结论体现了学习者的二语语言水平在语用习得中的作用。不同语言水平的学习者处于不同的中介语语用发展阶段,其

“请求”体现出不同的中介语特征。简言之,随着语言水平的提高,学习者使用的直接请求策略减少,各类规约性间接策略增加;内部修饰语数量增加、种类多样化;对语境的敏感程度增加。但是,本研究中的低水平组和中等水平组即初中组和高中组在很多方面无显著差异。英语水平低的学习者由于缺乏元语用知识而产生语言简单、种类单一的请求;反之,语言水平高的学习者由于驾驭英语的能力强而使用了过多的间接策略和修饰语,因此其请求行为略显冗长并体现出过度概括的特征。因此,学习者不仅要学习各种请求策略,同时也要得体地使用各种内部修饰语和外部修饰语;要提高语用能力,学习者不仅要学习更多的语用语言知识,而且要掌握更多的社交语用知识。

本研究还发现了母语语用迁移以及课堂教学等因素对二语语用习得的影响。学习者在不同的发展阶段都表现出母语语用迁移的特征,这些特征体现在请求策略、内部修饰语和外部修饰语各个方面。教材中不当或不足的语用输入、不同的课堂组织方式、教学内容等可能会对学习者的语用发展带来一定的负面影响,但是有针对性的语用教学能有效地促进语用习得。因此,本研究建议把“教语用知识”纳入教学大纲并提出在课堂上实施语用教学的具体环节,从而更好地利用课堂教学提高学习者的语用能力。

四、研究意义

本书的研究结果具有一定的理论和实践意义。

在理论上,首先,本研究的性质为二语语用能力的习得研究,在一定程度上填补了国内二语习得和语用学领域在中介语语用能力发展方面的研究空白,同时通过对母语为汉语的学习者进行研究,丰富了中介语语用学这门新学科的研究成果。作为第二语言习得和语用学的交叉学科,中介语语用学研究包括对二语学习者语用特征的使用和习得的研究两方面。但是,早期的中介语语用学主要集中在对非本族语者和本族语者语用特征的对比研究

(cross-cultural study),对学习者语用能力的发展过程(L2 pragmatic development)知之甚少,尤其缺乏对母语为汉语的英语学习者的关注。这一领域在国内的研究也刚刚起步。因此,本研究对中国学习者二语语用习得过程的探讨将对中介语语用学的理论发展做出贡献。其次,研究方法上,本研究为横向研究,调查对象为包括初中生、高中生、大学生在内的不同水平的学习者,具有较大的样本,比纵向研究或个案研究得出的结论更具概括性。此外,同类研究的情景设计多为口语中的“请求”情景,缺乏对书面语用能力的研究;但是,除口语交际情景外,本研究还包含了书面语交际中的“请求”情景。最后,本研究的理论框架和分析模式可供同类研究借鉴。

在实践上,本研究结果对英语教学大纲的制定、英语教材的开发、语用教学以及教师培训都具有重要的指导作用。长期以来,英语教育存在着重语法能力轻交际能力、重语言知识轻语言运用的倾向。如,有必要根据语用习得特征在不同阶段的英语教学、考试大纲中呈现对学习者交际能力培养的具体要求,以强化学生的语用意识;教材中对语用习得内容的呈现应该以习得的阶段特征为依据。此外,在教学中,应该尽量避免教学方式、课堂安排、教材输入等因素可能对学习者语用习得带来的负面影响。

由于笔者的研究水平、文献资料等限制,书中定存在各种疏误,望同行专家批评指正。最后,本书的出版受到浙江工商大学外国语学院出版基金赞助和国防工业出版社的大力帮助,在此深表谢意。

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Abstract

The focus of Interlanguage Pragmatics research has predominantly been on second language *use*, rather than *development*. The present study investigated the second language pragmatic development of Chinese learners at three proficiency levels by focusing on their acquisition of the English speech act of requests. Following a cross-sectional design, the study collected the data of low, intermediate and advanced learners (37, 40 and 57 informants respectively) and of both English native speakers (ENS) and Chinese native speakers (CNS) (36 and 45 informants respectively) as comparison. The data were elicited by a background questionnaire, an open questionnaire with 10 request scenarios and a metapragmatic assessment questionnaire to obtain the demographic information of informants, the production data of requests and the informants' perception of social parameters respectively. The data were analyzed with a coding scheme of requests adapted from the CCSARP by Blum-Kulka et al (1989). Three illocutionary aspects of requests—request strategies, internal modification and external modification were examined to find out the pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic features of learners' requests.

The major findings are summarized as follows:

1. Of the three directness levels of request strategies, conventionally indirect strategies were strongly preferred by Chinese learners as well as ENS and CNS while hints were the least used. Specifically, the employment of imperatives, most frequently used by low proficiency learners, decreased with proficiency. The advanced learners employed significantly more conventionally indirect strategies than both low and intermediate learners. Although none of the learner groups differed significantly from ENS in the frequency of conventionally indirect strategies, examination of the sub-strategies indicated that they differed from ENS in terms of the content and variety of request strategies. In addition, low, intermediate learners and ENS had more cases of opting out and invalid responses in the open questionnaire than the advanced learners and CNS. The reason for learners to opt out was probably the lack of adequate linguistic means and target pragmatic knowledge, whereas ENS did so due to awkwardness of the situations per se.

2. With regard to the internal modification, Chinese learners employed significantly fewer syntactic downgraders in modifying their requests than ENS but they didn't differ significantly from ENS in terms of the frequency of lexical/phrasal downgraders and upgraders. Upgraders, especially lexical intensifiers, were lacking in learners' requests. Although the advanced learners outperformed both the low and intermediate learners, they had much difficulty in employing a wide range of internal modifiers compared with ENS. In addition, no difference was found for the overall performance of the low and intermediate learners in terms of internal modification.

3. Concerning the external modification of requests, Chinese learners employed similar types of supportive moves with both ENS and CNS. Of the supportive moves, "grounder" and "thanks" were preferred by all groups, followed by "offer", "apology", "promise" and "preparator" in a decreasing order. Concerning the total number of supportive moves, only low proficiency learners employed significantly fewer supportive moves than the advanced learners. In addition, learners differed from ENS in the use of some situation-specific supportive moves.

4. Concerning learners' sociopragmatic competence, different groups including CNS and ENS differed in estimates of weight assigned to social parameters (social distance, power and the ranking of imposition) in most situations, showing both cultural and proficiency difference in the perception of contexts. Furthermore, Chinese learners made some sociopragmatic development by employing similar strategies with ENS in terms of the directness levels in specific situations. However, further examination of specific request strategies showed that the variety and range of linguistic forms used to express requests were limited among learners at all proficiency levels compared with those of ENS. The overall performance of low and intermediate learners showed little difference but they both differed from the advanced learners who displayed higher sensitivity to contexts.

To summarize, learners at different proficiency levels displayed different interlanguage features in making English requests. From low to advanced learners, their requests shifted from formulaic requests and preference for imperatives to productive conventional indirectness, to increasing pragmalinguistic

repertoire with increased use of mitigation and complex syntax, and to more variations to contexts. Low proficiency learners' performance was constrained by their low L2 proficiency but advanced learners, who had better control of English, showed a range of interlanguage features such as verbosity and overgeneralization. In order to make a pragmatically appropriate request, learners should attach equal importance to the learning of the modification devices as well as request strategies; learners need to acquire not only more metapragmatic knowledge of performing L2 speech acts but also the knowledge of matching that knowledge with cultural and situational contexts.

The present study also identified the effect of L1 pragmatic transfer and classroom instruction on learners' L2 pragmatic development. It was found that L1 transfer worked on various aspects of learners' requestive behavior. The inadequate or inappropriate input from the teaching materials and the different EFL classroom arrangements might constrain the pragmatic development to some extent but the instruction targeted at L2 pragmatics was proved effective. In order to improve Chinese learners' pragmatic competence, the author suggests integrating the instruction on L2 pragmatics into the curricula and proposes five phases of pragmatic instruction.