

当代外国语言学与应用语言学博士论丛

背诵英语课文

——现代中国高等院校中传统的语文学习方法

丁言仁 著

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Learning English Text By Heart In A Chinese University

丁言仁 著

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导 读

传统的语文学习方法强调朗读和背诵范文,强调记忆,我国国内的第一语言、第二语言的教学广泛地应用这一方法。然而,很少有人从事对这种方法的研究。本书记叙了在南京大学四年级英文专业学生(较为成功的英语学习者)中进行的四项以课堂为基础的调查,通过他们对自己阅读和写作过程的描述以及他们对自己英语学习的体会,研究传统的语文学习方法对中国外语专业学生学习行为和信念上的影响,即如何通过朗读和背诵掌握语块,如何在写作中运用语块(chunks of language),以及如何理解传统的学习方法在外语学习中的作用。这里“语块”一个更准确但也不甚通俗的名称是“定式语”,它指的是在人们语言使用或者语言学习过程中被单词化(lexicalize)了的若干单词的线性组合,涵盖了习语、成语、套话、短语、固定及相对固定的搭配以及一些基本的句型,如 of course, how are you, let alone 等。

英语学习较为成功的中国学生主要是通过阅读来学习和记忆语块的。在阅读过程中,即使在他们主要精力用在理解阅读内容的时候,他们仍然会有意识地注意词语的搭配、尤其是注意他们认为重要、有用、值得学习的语块。他们经常有意识地努力记忆语块,并且通过试验性的应用来学习如何在他们自己的口语和书面语中正确运用这些语块。

在英语写作过程中,这些较为成功的学生既运用他们的语法知识,又广泛借用他们记忆中的语块。这些语块的使用可以使他们省去语法的操作直接成句,使他们准确清晰地表达自己,还使他们跟上写作过程中思想发展的速度。

这些学生对于什么样的学习策略对他们的英语学习有效果有着清醒的认识。在他们看来,背诵课文、学习语块尽管十分吃力,但不乏为提高口语和写作能力最为有效的方法之一。

这些调查的发现支持了语言两重性的观点:语言既遵循语法规则(Chomsky 1965),又依赖定式短语(Bolinger 1976)。按照这一观点,在第二语言教学中,尤其是在中国这样的传统语文学习方法仍有相当影响国家的第二语言教学中,除了分析句型、学习语法规则以外,背诵课文和记忆语块应该占据同样的重要位置。

Abstract

A traditional method of acquiring first or second language literacy, reading a text repeatedly as well as learning certain language chunks by heart, is still extensively practiced in China, but little research has been conducted on this method. This research focuses on the ways in which this practice affected the literacy behavior and beliefs of a group of senior-level English majors enrolled in Nanjing University. It consisted of four small-scale studies which, through examining the students' retrospective recalls and journal reports, investigated how they noticed language chunks in reading, how they used them in writing, and what beliefs they held about this method.

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These students also hold conscious beliefs as to what learning strategies work for them. They hold the method of memorizing texts and chunks to be effective in helping them improve both their speech and writing, despite the hardship they have experienced when using the method.

The results of these studies support a view of language as operating both on grammar (Chomsky 1965) and on formulaic chunks (Bolinger 1976). This dual-nature view implies that in addition to learning grammatical patterns, the practice of memorizing text and learning to use language chunks has its place in the second language classroom, especially in countries such as China where this practice has played an important role in first language literacy.

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