

“1 + 1 > 2”

外语学习
模式



*Foreign Language
Learning: “1+1>2”*

高一虹 著

北京大学出版社

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序

本书作者高一虹是北京大学教授、博士生导师。在出版本书以前,作者已有多种论文和专著问世,而今天她终于有机会将自己在博士论文中所做的研究系统地呈现给读者。作为她的导师,我有幸目睹作者的成长和本书的完成过程,愿与读者分享内心的激动和喜悦。

一虹在从事本项课题研究,以及她以后的学术活动中,都坚守这样一个信念:外语学习者应追求目的语文化与母语文化的相互促进以及以此为基础的人格完善,她借用人本主义心理学家弗洛姆的概念,将此称为“生产性双语学习”,并用抽象公式表示为“ $1+1>2$ ”。我们知道,有不少外语行家介绍过他们自己学习外语的经验,出发点和终点都离不开目的语和目的语文化,似乎与母语无关。甚至出现令人咋舌的奇谈怪论,如“要学好外语就要找洋妞同居”;有的学了几句外国话后,便高唱“中国文化落后论”,居然干起口诛笔伐黄土地黄皮肤的行当。按这个套路学外语,岂不把后生变成假洋鬼子?一虹的研究宣判了“削减性双语学习”的死刑,分析了“附加性双语学习”的局限,指出“生产性学习”才是正道。不信,一虹访问了数十名经过无记名投票公认的“最佳外语学习者”,无不精通中外文化,其中许多是巨匠。那些在洋文化冲击中迷失方向的人,不妨学习本书;那些哀叹中国缺少大师级人才者,会从本书看到曙光。一虹也绝不是迷信陈规惟国粹是问者。她的成长经验表明,不论是祖国文化,还是外来文化,凡精华继承之,凡糟粕摒弃之。这一倾向渗透于本书对许多主题的论述:母语文化归属、目的语文化归属、文化意识、文化休克、工具性动机、归属感动机、开放性、批判能力、共情能力、整合能力,等等。

一虹之所以取得上述成就,得益于她注意对第一手资料的收集。她不仅向大师级名人请教;也注意在北京大学英语系团结同事和学生,定期组织语言学沙龙,十余年始终不懈,在京城高等学府享有“老字号”的盛誉;她还为诸如“青春热线”的社会服务机构当义工,与那

2 Foreign Language Learning: “ $1 + 1 > 2$ ”

些有这样那样苦恼的青年倾心交谈,交流情感,消除他们的疑惑。她本人也能从谈话过程中收集无比丰富的、活生生的对话式语料。当然,任何语料只是没有经过加工的矿砂。一虹还十分注意掌握处理材料的方法。在哈佛大学访学时,她认真学习了语言学研究方法和统计分析技术,这使她能从粗矿砂中提炼出真金。

尽管如此,我认为能把这些工作做得如此完善的原动力,来自一虹的爱国热情。也许有人不知情,一虹有优裕的条件和多次机会移居国外与父母团聚,但她始终认为她的事业在国内,祖国在呼唤她;也许有人不知情,她在国内图不了轻松,公婆多病需照顾,她承担着近乎全部家务。在这些背景下近观本书作者,一虹,奇女子也。

胡壮麟

2001年6月6日

于北京大学蓝旗营小区

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Abstract

In existing research of bilingualism, two concepts have been extensively adopted, i.e., *subtractive bilingualism* and *additive bilingualism*. While specific definitions vary a little, some basic features have been agreed on. With subtractive bilingualism, the native language and native cultural identity are replaced by the target language and target cultural identity. With additive bilingualism, the learner's native language and native cultural identity are maintained while the target language and target cultural identity are acquired in addition. Based on an empirical study of recognized "best foreign language learners" and drawing on Fromm's "productive orientation" as well as Maslow's theory of basic human needs, the present author proposes "*productive bilingualism*" as an alternative to subtractive and additive bilingualism. With productive bilingualism, the command of the target language and that of the native language positively reinforce each other; deeper understanding and appreciation of the target culture goes hand in hand with deeper understanding and appreciation of the native culture. In the process of learning another language and related culture, the learner's personality becomes more open and integrated at the same time. Subtractive bilingualism is symbolized as " $1 - 1 = 1$," additive bilingualism as " $1 + 1 = 1$ ", and productive bilingualism as " $1 + 1 > 2$."

Keywords: subtractive bilingualism, additive bilingualism, productive bilingualism

Contents

Chapter 1 Introduction	(1)
1.1 Research objective	(1)
1.2 Characteristics of the model	(2)
1.3 Main idea of the model	(4)
1.4 General organization	(4)
Chapter 2 Background of the Study	(7)
2.1 Language learning and culture learning	(7)
2.1.1 Language, culture and thought	(7)
2.1.2 Language learning, socialization, and cognitive development	(18)
2.2 The bilingual: how the two languages interact on him/her	(28)
2.2.1 The cognitive psychology level	(28)
2.2.2 The educational psychology level	(30)
2.3 The social psychology level: attitude, motivation, and cultural identities in L2 learning	(31)
2.3.1 The acculturation model	(31)
2.3.2 The nativization model	(36)
2.3.3 Personality development models	(37)
2.3.4 Other acculturation models	(39)
2.3.5 Additive bilingualism and subtractive bilingualism in the acculturation models	(42)
2.3.6 Comments on the acculturation models	(43)
2.4 Summary	(50)
Chapter 3 Theoretical Basis and Empirical Research Design	(51)

2 *Foreign Language Learning : “1 + 1 > 2”*

3.1	Maslow’s theory of basic need hierarchy and self-actualization	(51)
3.1.1	Hierarchy of basic needs	(51)
3.1.2	Self-actualization	(53)
3.1.3	Comments on Maslow’s theory of basic needs and self-actualization	(58)
3.1.4	The self-actualizing L2 learner	(65)
3.2	Research design for empirical study	(67)
3.2.1	General rationale	(67)
3.2.2	Research questions	(68)
3.2.3	Method	(68)
3.3	Summary	(72)
Chapter 4	Results and Discussion	(74)
4.1	Common qualities of informants	(74)
4.1.1	Openness	(75)
4.1.2	Criticalness and transcendence	(91)
4.1.3	Incorporation	(96)
4.2	Psychological process	(124)
4.2.1	Sub-group characteristics	(124)
4.2.2	Common patterns of psychological process	(133)
4.3	Summary	(140)
Chapter 5	A “1 + 1 > 2” Model of L2 Learning	(144)
5.1	L2 learning as “1 - 1 = 1,” “1 + 1 = 1,” and “1 + 1 > 2”	(144)
5.1.1	Subtractive bilingualism and “1 - 1 = 1”	(144)
5.1.2	Additive bilingualism and “1 + 1 = 1”	(145)
5.1.3	Productive bilingualism and “1 + 1 > 2”	(146)
5.2	The role of attitude and motivation in a general framework	(149)
5.3	The learning process	(151)

5.4 Sociocultural competence as L2 learning outcome	(154)
5.4.1 Components of sociocultural competence	(154)
5.4.2 Sociocultural competence as open and closed capacities	(161)
5.4.3 The relation between the three components of sociocultural competence and three levels of culture	(164)
5.4.4 Creativity and sociocultural competence—the bucket theory	(166)
5.5 Summary	(168)
Chapter 6 Pedagogical Implications of the “1 + 1 > 2”	
Model	(169)
6.1 The significance of studying the “best learners”	(169)
6.2 The need of treating sociocultural competence as an educational objective	(171)
6.2.1 Doses of C2 exposure as both objective and subjective products	(172)
6.2.2 Contemporary China is undergoing profound value change—seen from a semantic differential test	(179)
6.2.3 The era for the training of sociocultural competence	(183)
6.2.4 Critical competence facilitates linguistic competence	(191)
6.3 Suggestions for pedagogy	(192)
6.3.1 Include various aspects of C2 critical competence in the curriculum	(192)
6.3.2 Construct check lists of C2 and C1 literacy	(193)
6.3.3 Make Chinese Culture a required course	(194)

4	<i>Foreign Language Learning: “1 + 1 > 2”</i>	
6.3.4	Teach courses of cultural comparison	(195)
6.3.5	Compile textbooks that integrate components of communicative competence and critical competence	(196)
6.3.6	Develop systems of teaching methods and techniques to cultivate cultural awareness	(197)
6.3.7	Promote classroom and extracurricular activities beneficial to the training of critical competence	(199)
6.3.8	Develop a test measuring critical competence	(199)
6.4	Summary	(200)
Chapter 7	Conclusion	(202)
7.1	Major features and contributions of the “1 + 1 > 2” model	(202)
7.1.1	“1 + 1 > 2”	(202)
7.1.2	Personality transformation on a vertical dimension	(203)
7.1.3	Sociocultural competence	(203)
7.1.4	Culture at the physical, interpersonal and psychological levels	(203)
7.2	Range of application	(204)
7.3	Limitations	(205)
7.4	Concluding remarks	(206)
	Bibliography	(209)
	Appendix: Questionnaire for the Selection of Informants ...	(219)

Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1 Research objective

The present dissertation aims to build an L2^① learning^② theory suitable for foreign language learners, especially EFL (English as a foreign language) learners in China.

The landscape of Chinese L2 education has been constantly changing, subject to national socio-political impact and international influence of language teaching theories. From a craze to learn Russian in the decade right after the founding of the People's Republic of China (1949), China has shifted to a greater enthusiasm to learn English. Along with this transformation is the changing scene of teaching approaches: the Soviet "conscious practice" method in the fifties, the Western audio-lingual method and cognitive code method in the sixties and seventies, and more recently, the communicative approach in the eighties and nineties.

Concurrent with a sweeping process of modernization and socio-economic reform since the 1980s, China's English-language needs have been accelerating at a dramatic speed, and consequently, the entire enterprise of English-language teaching has boomed. Numerous EFL training programs, TV lessons, textbooks, reading materials, exercises

① Unless otherwise specified, L2 in this dissertation refers to both "second language" and "foreign language."

② No distinction is made between "learning" and "acquisition" in Krashen (1981)'s terms.

es, tests, cassettes and software have been developed. Chinese EFL teachers are increasing in number, and also in the proficiency of handling various practical materials and situations.

While catching up with this rapid pace of development in the practicing field, one is urged to contemplate on the mechanisms under the whole L2 learning process, on the social, psychological and philosophical meaning of L2 learning, and related to this, the objective of Chinese EFL education.

Compared with the blossoming creativeness in the production of specific techniques and materials, our theoretical arena has been relatively silent. In this dissertation I shall make an effort, pursuing an L2 learning model that is best suited to Chinese EFL learners.

1.2 Characteristics of the model

Named “1 + 1 > 2”, this model I am trying to build up is noted for several features. First, its primary concern is learning attitude and motivation. Generally speaking, L2 learning models fall into two large groups—those with a linguistic focus (e.g. Krashen’s monitor model, 1981; Carroll’s conscious reinforcement model, 1981; Bialystok’s strategy model, 1978; Ellis’s variable competence model, 1984) and those with a social psychological focus (as reviewed in Chapter 2). The “1 + 1 > 2” model can be classified into the second group.

Focusing on motivation does not mean that it is always more influential than other learning factors. Rather, it is considered of more pedagogical importance. There are a large number of factors that contribute to L2 learning outcome. These include intelligence, language aptitude, age, attitude, motivation, learning context, cognitive styles, personal traits (such as extroversion and introversion), and some others. Among all these I see three most important ones: aptitude, motivation, and environment. Aptitude (including general intel-

ligence) is for the most part a matter of “nature” rather than “nurture,” especially for adult learners. Environment, when referring to the objective surroundings, is also a fixed element independent of individual efforts. The most malleable factor in the learning procedure is then motivation (and attitude which leads to it). Therefore, this factor is pedagogically the most significant.

Secondly, this model is mainly concerned with attitudes toward cultures, including the native culture (C1) and the culture of the L2-speaking community (C2). This stand is based on the assumption that language is a component of culture, and therefore language learning (“foreign language” as well as “second language”) entails culture learning. Besides, in contemporary China, English learning is closely associated with a process of learning the Western cultures and sorting out our own cultural heritage.

Thirdly, the approach taken in this model is one of humanistic psychology. The learner, or the learner’s personality defined in terms of basic need levels, is perceived as the starting and resting point of L2 learning. The person, or for our concern the learner, is the real “carrier” of language, culture, and thought. Therefore, any theory of L2 learning entails a theory of L2 users, or a theory of persons and personalities.

Fourthly, the “ $1 + 1 > 2$ ” model is a learning model which bears implication for teaching. It is primarily descriptive, since it offers a qualitative account of some “best L2 learners.” Based on such description, suggestions are made concerning how pedagogy can facilitate the cultivation of a greater number of excellent learners. For this reason, the model also contains a normative or “prescriptive” (spare the word from negative associations) meaning.

1.3 Main idea of the model

The main idea, as represented in the formula “ $1 + 1 > 2$,” is that language and culture learning in the best case will generate creative energy and elevate personality. The concepts of “subtractive bilingualism” and “additive bilingualism” in previous models either emphasize unfavorable results of L2 learning, or overlook the interaction between two cultural systems. In contrast, “productive bilingualism” or the “ $1 + 1 > 2$ ” model proposed in this dissertation holds that the L2 learning process may resemble that of a nuclear fusion. In this process, atoms of different cultures are forced closely together so that they fuse. This forms a new element in the personality and releases a large burst of creative energy. Personality transformation occurs, but it is not a horizontal one from C1 identity to C2 identity, as proposed by previous models. Rather, it is a vertical one transcending lower level needs.

1.4 General organization

The whole dissertation consists of seven chapters. Chapter 2 delineates the background of the study. Research literature in three major domains is reviewed: the relation among language, culture, and thought; the bilingual mind at different levels; existing L2 learning models with a social psychological focus. This chapter relates language learning to culture learning and cognitive development, presents an understanding of bilingualism, and points out the limitation of the “acculturation models,” especially their inappropriateness when applied to the Chinese EFL context. The analysis points to the deficient and defective personality models entailed in the acculturation theories.

Chapter 3 paves the way for the new L2 learning model by intro-

ducing Maslow's basic need hierarchy and self-actualization theory as a theoretical basis, and by presenting the design of an empirical study. Maslow's humanistic approach to motivation and behavior is compared to Skinner's behaviorist approach and Chomsky's rationalist approach. Analysis is also made regarding the relationship between Maslow's theory of basic needs and Marx's theory of social development, and the applicability of self-actualization theory in contemporary China. In light of this theory, some features of self-actualizing L2 learners are proposed. Following this is the design of an empirical research, a qualitative study that consists of interviewing 52 informants, half of whom are nationally recognized as "best L2 learners."

Chapter 4 presents and discusses the findings. The major common qualities found on the informants include an open attitude toward both C1 and C2, ability of critically evaluating the two cultures, incorporation of different cultural elements, and creativity facilitated by L2 and C2 learning. As to the psychological process, informants show a common pattern of a three-stage development: the innocent player, the conscious striver, and the autonomous self-actualizer. Personality transformation occurs, but it is transcendence of lower-level needs rather than change of cultural identity. Features of sub-groups by age and sex are also reported.

Chapter 5 sets up the theoretical construct of the new L2 learning model, drawing on the personality theory introduced in Chapter 3 and empirical data discussed in Chapter 4. While "subtractive bilingualism" and "additive bilingualism" are rendered as " $1 - 1 = 1$ " and " $1 + 1 = 1$ " respectively, a productive learning outcome of " $1 + 1 > 2$ " is described. This chapter also proposes the concept of "sociocultural competence" as a general learning outcome, composed of linguistic competence, communicative competence, and a "critical competence."

Chapter 6 consists of pedagogical implications of the " $1 + 1 > 2$ " model. It discusses the necessity and possibility of making sociocultural

competence a pedagogical objective, and offers suggestions for curriculum design and teaching methods.

Chapter 7 sums up the major contributions of the new model, defines its range of application, and describes its limitations.