

The Influence on Chinese Students' English Writing Caused by the Difference of Chinese and Western Thinking Model--to Analyse from The Perspective of Conceptual Fluency

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ABSTRACT. *With the rapid development of economy and society, The interaction among China and western countries is becoming more and more intensive as well as the substantial opportunities of cultural communication increasing. However, because of the difference of Chinese and western thinking model and the negative transfer caused by Chinese on Chinese students' English learning, it is very easy for us to encounter the hint of Chinglish in Chinese students' English writing. This writing aims at cultivating a certain English thinking model of Chinese students in English writing which is needed to be used in a real way through Conceptual Fluency Theory in order to get rid of Chinglish writing and enhance students' English comprehensive writing abilities. Conceptual Fluency Theory, knowledge about how the target language reflects or encodes its concepts on the basis of metaphorical structure and other cognitive mechanisms, should be applied into English classes in which students learn about it to improve their writing skills. Finally, students may write an authentic composition rather than a Chinglish article.*

KEYWORDS: *The difference of Chinese and western thinking model; Middle school English writing; Conceptual Fluency*

1. Literature Review

1.1 Chinese Students' Problems in English Writing

With the fast development of the society, the education has been paying more attention by people around the world. In China, writing is regarded as a main subject that it may be more important than reading, listening even speaking in some certain fields. It is not difficult for educators to summarize some problems that occurred in middle school students English writing.

Initially, grammar is part and parcel of English writing. That is to say if a student want to write an authentic English article, grammar is a basic principle. Some researchers and educators find that lots of Chinese students make grammar mistakes when they are writing articles. For instance, there may be two verbs in a sentence or the writers could not understand the pronoun "it" that they wrote represents even or a sentence is produced without a subject, etc. Such kind of mistakes are all appeared in Chinese students' writing no matter in which grade. Therefore, grammar learning should be greatly contributed by teachers and students themselves. In addition, vocabulary should be focused on extremely by students. An increasing number of specialists both abroad and in home indicate that using vocabularies disorderly is common phenomenon among Chinese students. Students may all have an experience that if they are writing an article when they encounter misunderstand words or unable words, they will need a translation application to translate this word and write it down in their writings although it may be not precise. This kind of behavior may mislead their English writing learning and contrast students learning about English countries' cultures. Finally, coherence is also playing an important role in English writing. It goes without saying that connectives are utilized widely to connect two sentences, separate phrases or two complete paragraphs. However, Chinese students are not accustomed to use connectives that essays may be straightforward without any decorations. It is not a normal article. These three main problems lead to the difference between Chinese students and their country's students; simultaneously, their English writing levels may differ in thousands of ways.

1.2 The Reasons Causing Chinese Students' Problems in English Writing

From what I have mentioned above, some scholars have analyzed those problems and then summed up the reasons causing Chinese students' problems in English writing.

On the one hand, geographical environment is the main reason. In ancient time, China was located at an enclosed atmosphere belonged to typical agricultural society. People worked depending on favorable climatic geography and human conditions so that human's thought were traditional and controlled by philosophy concept. By contrast, British and American people lived in an ocean circulation which was in turmoil field with violence and awful weather. This kind of condition models their characters expanding and risking, desiring to conquer others. They experienced plenty of wars and defenses so that they thought they are independent and unique that they are willing to be opposite with any others. To be more specific, geographical condition stimulated people's nature and then influenced their thinking models. In accordance with Chinese thinking model, the oriental nation emphasized on organizing language through internal logic while British and American people focused on reasons and forms that they would like to strike a balance between the meaning and syntax. That is to say when a Chinese student is writing an English article, he/she would hide some words or sentences which depend on its semantic and syntax structure in order to express their minds. Such articles are lack of grammar, coherence and logic connectives.

1.3 The Differences between Chinese and Western Thinking Models

The differences between Chinese and western thinking model have been minimizing in recent years. However, some basic thinking models are difficult for Chinese students to change. It is no denying that these thinking models are nature and their minds are influenced by traditional thoughts.

During the period of writing an English article, the expression of sentence structure claims that the difference occurred in any way in the article. The first one is the difference between hypotaxis and parataxis. In accordance with the analysis of Chinese and English, it is greatly easy to find that Chinese emphasizes on hypotaxis while English focuses on parataxis. The essential thinking model may play an important role in their writings. At the same time, the tendency of subject or object ideas in a sentence is also part and parcel of the differences. In China, people are used to participate in and make themselves be subject. By contrast, western people see something in an object position and they are critic. The second one is the difference of the expression habit. Due to the deep disparity of different cultures, the expression habit also becomes more different. The western culture requires people keep a watchful eye on themselves. It is more flexible and free for them to think of something. However the Chinese traditional cultures control people's mind that Chinese have to do things according to the rules. Therefore, the orient lay emphasis on entirety and speak /writing from the general to the special.

1.4 The Definition of Conceptual Fluency

Conceptual fluency theory is knowledge about how the target language reflects or encodes its concepts on the basis of metaphorical structure and other cognitive mechanisms. It is not enough for researchers and students to just know about conceptual fluency, but also apply this theory to English class and their learning. The core conceptual system includes denotative network, connotative network and metaphorical network which means that it needs students concept the world foreign language rather than learn about target language's cultures to match the object matters simply. In class, conceptual fluency theory could motivate students to do best, especially for chinese students. Because the new learning method may challenge students so that they prefer to spend much more time learning English. To put it differently, they can enhance their English skills. Conceptual fluency also needs conceptual reorganization to help students learning English including isomorphic, over japping and rearchitecture. Students may write an authentic English writing rather than a chinglish composition though conceptual fluency.

2. Empirical Research

2.1 The Purpose of Research

In order to better understand the differences caused by Chinese and western thinking models in chinese students' English writing learning, the author interviewed 100 middle school students and these students had positive feedback on the questions, which could better reflect the actual situation of Chinese middle school

students' writing problems. The main contents of the questions include students' understanding of Chinese thinking models and western thinking models, what kind of aspects could be influenced during the procedure of English writing, and what are the differences of different degree students' compositions in accordance with their recognition of thinking models and what is the best method for them to deal with "chinglish" models in middle school students English writing, and so on.

2.2 The Subject of Research

The survey was mainly aimed at the students. The author selected 100 students from five different level middle schools. It was mainly used to understand the differences of Chinese and western thinking models in middle school students' English writings. The author took in an anonymous way and each class from the first grade to the third grade of the school was chosen as a survey subject. The questionnaire requires that students have to give the actual responds to each question and think carefully through their real experiences. In order to find out whether students have more interests in English writing, what problems involved during writing articles and whether they think of thinking models as a significant factor which may affect their English writing study.

2.3 The Methodology of Research

Based on quantitative study, questionnaire and interview lasting 4 weeks was employed in the paper in order to make the research more persuasive. The investigation includes questionnaires from students and interview records from English teachers in five middle schools.

Before the experiment, questionnaire was distributed among 100 different students. Furthermore, at the beginning of this term, the author had obtained the grades from test. Based on the results of the test, the author picked out 100 students as under-achievers. After 4 weeks' experimental research, the author modified the questionnaire a little. And then the questionnaire was made on the students in experimental class. From the comparison of the two questions, the author tries to prove if the two different thinking models influence the middle school students' English writings. As well as, the author made an interview in order to get an idea whether middle school students could have a willing to learn about western thinking models.

2.4 The Process of Research

Process is tended to be a better description of the team members who complete the task better, and decide what kind of behavior should be kept or changed, so that keeping effective working relationships. And to describe the effectiveness of the members' contribution to cooperation activities, so as to accomplish the whole team's goal.

The process of the whole survey is chiefly divided into 4 steps. The first step is that the author complete a questionnaire to investigate how much the students know about different thinking patterns between Chinese and western. And the second step is to do a pretest and to score the compositions of these 100 middle school students. Then, the author picked the last researching samples from their articles. Besides, in this step the author was to identify the errors and items in the samples caused by the effects of different thinking models and managed to find the gap between different level's students. The third step is to introduce and apply conceptual fluency theory in English writing class among those students. The final step is to classify and analyze that what is the most difference between western and Chinese thinking patterns and whether it is effective for middle school students to learn about conceptual fluency theory.

3. Findings and Implication

3.1 Findings

After the completing of the relevant experiments, it is clearly observed that one of the most difficult points during the writing is the application of the grammar. The students could not understand how to use the grammar correctly or even have no ability to use grammar. Due to the different thinking models between Chinese and western, the Chinese students are accustomed to carry out Chinese logic in English writing that the grammar is wrong in accordance with English. The usage of the sentence pattern and the selective of the vocabulary take the same difficulty point, While the development of the discourse is the lowest one among these four choices.

As it can be seen from the relevant experiments, only a few students think that two different thinking models have no effect on students' English writings. However, there is about 88.51 percent students believe that two thinking models could affect their compositions. It is no denying that most students realize the problem that Chinese students could not write an authentic article or paper caused by the huge and wide gap on thinking models. Some of them think of writing English articles with Chinese thinking patterns as a matter of a course. Therefore they do not emphasize how to write in a correct way.

As to the specific option of the methods of improving students English thinking models, most students would like to read some relative materials and watch English videos to help them which take the proportion of 77.23% and 74.26% respectively. To put it differently, listening to English songs and operas are also paid more attention to by students peaking at 60.4%. Comparing with the three items above, having a class to take part in and then learning about the different cultures and customs through professional training, specializing in using English thinking models to write is also an effective way for students to form their English thinking models. Conversation plays an important role in this part in fact and more than half of students choose this item.

The interview outline is mainly prepared for teachers. It is divided into six parts, all this parts are about the teacher's understanding about the differences between Chinese and western thinking models and its effect.

3.2 Implication

After finishing this paper, the author concluded that teachers and learners are supposed to have the scientific attitudes towards the effects of different thinking patterns between Chinese and western, and to make a scientific use of it. In general, the author summarized some detailed methods to improve the students' writing ability in diction, syntax and discourse respectively. Firstly, in the aspect of diction, it is no denying that most of Chinese students acquire English words, phrases and expressions from the textbooks or dictionaries. They used to put stress on the acquirement of the signified meaning of words. And they think that changing those students' way of acquiring English vocabulary is an urgent thing. So the key points of acquiring vocabulary should widen its range for word meaning rather than only on the simple translation equivalents given by most textbooks. Secondly, in the aspect of syntax, the author found that there are so many Chinglish errors in students' writings. Su Dingfang (1996) defined: "Chinglish expressions are fixed collocation, superfluous words and thought pattern misplacing. Chinglish sentence patterns are topic-prominent sentences, multi-predicate sentences and para tactic sentences. The phenomenon of Chinglish is mainly caused by some factors, such as individual characters, thinking logic, economic influence and cultural differences can be served as examples here. To solve this problem, learning to use connective words may help students avoiding this problem. Moreover, this way may also enhance the quality of their sentences and seem more satisfied. Thirdly, in the aspect of discourse, the author suggests that English teachers should explain and introduce the different thinking patterns between Chinese and western to students before teaching students how to write English compositions. Besides, the structure of English articles could be presented to students as a structure guide.

At the end, to require them to read English articles as much as possible is another way to improve students' writing ability which cannot be ignored. As Cai Jigang (2001) reported that "the most effective solution to the negative influence of one's mother tongue is to imitate the linguistic expressions of the foreign language." It is no denying that the much more English articles students read, the much more familiar they become with the idiomatic English expressions. At the same time, reading comprehension can improve writing ability.

4. Conclusion

According to the results of questionnaires, interviews, we can draw the conclusion that the different thinking models between Chinese and western can greatly influence students' English writing. By using conceptual fluency theory, students can actively participate in English writing classroom.

Conceptual fluency theory learning is putting forward based on the existing teaching system and teaching methods, it meets the requirements of the new curriculum. Compared with the previous teaching methods, it is more organized that it has its own set of complete theoretical system support. English teachers in the classroom carry out conceptual fluency theory according to the relevant theory as the guiding basis, so that students are interested in learning English and enthusiasm, but also to promote the exchange of teachers and students and the formation of a harmonious relationship between teachers and students.

Learning about different thinking models also helps students receive a boost of self-esteem. In thinking patterns learning, students can gradually complete the composition with the help of their consciousness and then

get rid of Chinese style writing. Thus, students' English writing skills can be improved in the process of completing the task.

Thinking models learning and conceptual fluency theory learning overcomes the shortcomings of English composition writing, and it is the promotion and innovation of traditional teaching in China. It is suitable for the transformation of educators' teaching and students' learning methods.

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