

Analysis of the Transfer of Existential Sentences in Second Language Acquisition

Yafei Sun*

College of Humanities, Xi'an oil University, Xi'an, Shaanxi 710000, China

*Email: 23272812328@qq.com

Abstract

The phenomenon of language transfer is closely related to second language learning. The author finds that second language acquisition is always affected by language transfer. Although the meanings of existential sentences are similar in English and Chinese, they have different structures and sentence patterns, which leads to the influence of Chinese existential sentences on middle school students. Through a random survey of 100 English-chinese translations, the author finds a large number of mother tongue transfer. Based on the analysis of positive transfer and negative transfer, this paper puts forward three aspects of L1 transfer: concept transfer, structure transfer and function transfer. Through the analysis of concrete examples of transfer phenomenon, we find out the factors which are beneficial to English existential sentence learning and the factors which are disadvantageous to English existential sentence learning. So that learners and educators can overcome or avoid these negative factors, make full use of positive factors so that learners can learn faster and better.

Keywords

Transfer; Second Language Acquisition; Existential Sentences.

1. Introduction

With the emphasis on English teaching in China, acquisition transfer as a subtle influence on second language acquisition has gradually attracted the attention of researchers. The phenomenon of migration and comparative analysis has been controversial in the west, and there are many books about it. However, China has been committed to the study of English test-taking, for the real reaction of students in the process of learning transfer analysis is not much. Acquisition transfer obviously pays more attention to the actual operation of learners, so it can play a more obvious guiding role. There are many factors that restrict the transfer of acquisition, such as the structural differences between the target language and the native language, the cultural and social background differences, and even the individual cognitive differences. Therefore, researchers need to study the constraints of L1 transfer from the perspectives of linguistics, sociology and cognitive psychology, which is extremely complex. The author believes that the combination of acquisition transfer theory and students' actual learning can help us to find out the advantages and disadvantages of language transfer.

Most of the existential sentences in English focus on the use of the there be sentence pattern. Similar to Chinese existential sentences, English existential sentences also play an important role in the text. However, the use of the there be sentence pattern is far less than that of the existential sentence in Chinese. As a result, the use of many sentences and translation is very irregular. This includes the influence of existential sentences on students' Chinese learning, and the lack of there be translation and comprehension. This involves the phenomenon of transfer of acquisition to a large extent, so the study of this phenomenon is of great importance to both students' English learning and teachers' teaching.

2. The Concept of Language Transfer and the Phenomenon of Language Transfer

2.1. Language Transfer

Oldin's definition of migration is now widely accepted, that is, migration is the effect of similarities and differences between the target language and other known (and perhaps incomplete) languages [1]. The concept of migration varies from version to version. By definition, we can see that language transfer is not only the influence of mother tongue on second and third languages, but also the influence of other languages on mother tongue and the influence of non-mother tongue. Of course, this paper does not deal much with the influence of second and third language on mother tongue and non-mother tongue. In this paper, the transfer mainly refers to the English existential sentence on the Chinese as the mother tongue of middle school students.

2.2. The Phenomenon of Language Transfer

The phenomenon of language transfer refers to the feedback in the practical use of language caused by language transfer in SLA. In this paper, the phenomenon of transfer refers specifically to the feedback of Chinese middle school students in their practical application due to the influence of their mother tongue. According to the nature of migration, migration can also be divided into positive migration and negative migration. In many scholars' articles, especially in experiments, the phenomenon of migration has been discussed.

Palmberg mentions his research in an article On lexical inferencing and the young foreign language learner. He found that "11-year-old elementary school students can successfully distinguish English words that have not yet been learned." [2]. The researchers attribute this to the consistency of spelling between English words and Swedish words, Palmberg proposes to give learners a greater understanding of the commonalities between the mother tongue and the target language, and to use and exploit those commonalities, although he does not propose a similar concept of positive transfer, but this coincides with the positive transfer phenomenon that should be actively utilized in this paper.

Yu liming has made an analysis of positive and negative transfer in language transfer and second language acquisition, and has made an investigation and data comparison with specific Chinese students' negative transfer of mother tongue in English writing, a scientific analysis of Chinese students' mother tongue interference in writing is presented [3]. The mistakes he made in middle school are divided into interference mistakes and non-interference mistakes. These disturbing errors and the quality of middle school students' compositions written in English are undoubtedly the linguistic phenomena caused by language transfer.

The transfer phenomenon lies in Daily study, this article carries on the study through to the student's investigation experiment the transfer phenomenon collection.

3. Investigation and Analysis

In order to get better, more detailed and more comprehensive transfer of the phenomenon of research, the author in the school of students in the survey experiment, collection of examples. This section provides an overview of the specific research topics and examples. Of course, there are still many problems due to personal ability, will also be explained in the following.

3.1. Investigation Experiment Theme

The topic of the investigation experiment is to study the use of there be sentence patterns by middle school students. Through the analysis of the there be sentence pattern correct and wrong, this paper studies the transfer phenomenon of the Chinese middle school students to

the there be sentence pattern. There be sentence pattern in the benevolent version of secondary school textbooks in the first volume of the use of two units to learn this sentence pattern. The There be sentence is defined as having someone or something somewhere.

But apparently in Chinese existential sentences, people not only use “have” to form sentences, “is”, “in” and so on have similar meaning of existential sentences. It is very troublesome to study up, then these are bound to have a certain impact on the understanding of middle school students migration.

3.2. Investigation Experiment Collection

Due to limited personal ability. I was an English teacher in my tutorial class. I collected 100 chinese-english translations of existential sentences by assigning tasks to the students and reading the assignments given by previous teachers on there be sentence patterns, 100 English-chinese translation, 100 chinese-english translation to fill in the blanks, 10 compositions. The material collected involved the following levels of students:

Table 1. The Translation Scores of 100 Junior and Senior High School Students

Grade	Numbers	Scores (full marks120) and Numbers
Seventh grade	45	Under 60 points 10 people 60-90 points 20 people 90-120 points 15 people
Eighth grade	50	Under 60 points 12 people 60-90 points 20 people 90-120 points 18 people
Ninth grade	30	Under 60 points 6 people 60-90 points 10 people 90-120 points 14 people
high school	50	Under 60 points 10 people 60-90 points 20 people 90-120 points 20 people

3.3. Investigation Experiment Result

Through the experimental investigation, the author found that the mistakes of the better students (90-120, out of 120) were mostly concentrated in the use of there be sentence patterns under unknown circumstances, which resulted in the unauthentic sentences. In the same picture and the same composition, the frequency of students using Chinese existential sentences is much higher than that of there be sentence patterns. The students with lower scores (below 60, out of 120) had a great deviation in the use of sentence patterns, the use of words, the principle of proximity, and their understanding of the there be pattern itself. The students with average level (60-90 out of 120) were more concerned with the proximity principle and when to use the there be pattern. The author analyzes the students' learning of existential sentences and summarizes it into positive transfer and negative transfer. Positive transfer is an aspect that students have mastered well. By comparing the characteristics of existential sentences in mother tongue, we find that there are similarities in general. Through the comparison of the characteristics and learning habits of existential sentences in English and Chinese, we can find the negative transfer in Chinese.

3.4. Investigation Experiment Scientific Nature and Deficiency

This experiment investigation sets out from the middle school student actual problem-making phenomenon, collects the material through the concrete problem-making phenomenon. The author selects students of different levels to collect data on existential sentences in English and Chinese. And because the student personal data is complete, the study situation is clear can reflect the true student level. However, due to the author's limited ability, there is no way to involve other regions of China, the data collected by the students can not represent the majority of middle school students in China. Therefore, it is no longer to study those large overall characteristics, not to study the students, but from the specific students of the existing sentence examples to analyze.

4. The Phenomenon of Sentence Positive Transfer Exists in Second Language Acquisition

From the perspective of the phenomenon of transfer, it can be seen that the phenomenon of transfer is not only helpful to second language learning, but also hindering it. The phenomenon that contributes to second language learning is usually called positive transfer, and the phenomenon that hinders second language learning is called negative transfer. Positive transfer refers to the positive effect of learning one language on learning another language while negative transfer generally refers to the negative effect of learning one language on learning another language. In this paper, positive transfer mainly refers to the Chinese middle school students in the process of learning English, the impact of the mother tongue and produce a positive effect. Positive transfer refers to the use of existing language knowledge in learning a second language and the absence of errors in language learning[4].

4.1. Concept Positive Transfer Phenomenon

Concept transfer gradually formed a hypothesis of concept transfer, which gradually developed in the 1990s and developed rapidly in recent years. Concept transfer is a new angle of semantic transfer. The concept transfer hypothesis contains a lot of contents, which can be explained from the aspects of human history, culture, social environment and individual cognition. Involved in linguistics, biology, psychology, education and other aspects of knowledge. Appear, disappear, or exist in a place.

The concepts of existential sentences in English and Chinese are similar. And the use of the two effects are roughly similar. Among the students I surveyed, they were likely to make a variety of errors, in words, in collocations, in prepositional phrases, in tenses, and in be verbs. But every one of them knows that after the verb be, the existential verb is followed by something that appears, disappears or exists. The following is an analysis of the phenomenon of conceptual positive transfer.

- ① There is an apple tree in the garden.
- ② There are five books in the shelves.
- ③ There are two cars in the yard.

Because "there be" sentence pattern and existential sentence are existential sentences, the concept is similar. Therefore, when students do English-chinese translation and chinese-english translation, according to the characteristics of existential sentence can accurately find sentence patterns. Of course, this is for the English and Chinese existential sentence patterns master the situation of the middle and advanced students. Students with poor command of sentence patterns or language sense can easily write Chinglish according to Chinese word order.

4.2. Structure Positive Transfer Phenomenon

According to the structural similarities between English and Chinese existential sentences, the following concrete structural positive transfer phenomena are analyzed:

- ④ There is a case in the paper.
- ⑤ Left is school.
- ⑥ Left there is a school.
- ⑦ There are many apples on the tree.

In the example above, the students put the noun after the be verb. We can found that the students have a good command of the position of the noun phrase when I collate the existential sentences. And of course prepositions, and the use of the there be structure. But obviously the students have a deep memory of the things that exist, disappear and appear after the verb be. This is also due to the presence of these things in Chinese is placed after the presence of the verb.

4.3. Function Positive Transfer Phenomenon

Based on the functional and structural similarities of existential sentences in English and Chinese, the following concrete structural positive transfer phenomena are analyzed:

- ⑧ There are many interesting books in my study.
- ⑨ There are so many people waiting for you here.

Since the concepts of existential sentences in English and Chinese are identical, the usages and functions of existential sentences in English and Chinese are also basically identical. When we see the features and structures or want to use existential sentences, there are locative + existential verbs (transitive or intransitive verbs) + NP in Chinese and there be in English, we will consider the translation and writing of existential sentences.

⑩ There is a beautiful girl named Susan in a small village called SunLou. She has big and cute eyes that seem to speak. She is so kind and beautiful that no one couldn't like her. There is a handsome man named Jack who grows up with Susan.

Through the above article we can see that Chinese and English existential sentences are mostly to introduce someone, something's location, time and so on. The function of these sentences in the text is similar.

5. A Phenomenon of Negative Transfer in Second Language Acquisition

5.1. Concept Negative Transfer Phenomenon

Although the definitions of existential sentences in English and Chinese are similar, people have different ways of thinking because of grammar, structure, social culture and language habits, this concept for people learning a second language is prone to ambiguity. Many people feel that Chinese is difficult to learn, Chinese grammar is not very clear, there is no special fixed grammar, often conventional wisdom. But isn't convention the condition of regularity? It's just a lack of integrated grammar. In fact, this just shows that the way people think in each country, language and culture and other aspects of the difference.

On the one hand, Chinese thinking. Because "There" means "There" in Chinese translation, the verb "Be" is often translated as "Yes" in Chinese translation. People often think that the there be pattern means "That is...". This is a common mistake made by beginners and students with poor foundation. . There is an apple on the table. It is easy for the students to understand that it is an apple on the table . Of course, this translation is not native, but can also understand the meaning But in reading comprehension, a great deal of this unauthentic translation is combined, and because of the illegibility of the word order, even the students who understand the meaning of the words will find the passage difficult to understand, even if they know the words.

Locative words can be used as nouns or prepositions in Chinese. It is difficult to find a suitable translation in English. Sometimes people use the verb of be.

There are two aspects involved here. On the one hand, how to translate those noun phrases. For example, the back is a big garden, which makes sense in our Chinese, but hides the place word, which can be added according to the previous context. But in the process of translating it, the students could easily translate it as behind is a big garden. Apparently, it's a Chinglish.

On the other hand, the word“在” can be used as both a verb and a noun in Chinese, which has the meaning of existence. Students often take it for granted that“在” sentence is a existential sentence, but according to the structure of existential sentence, it does not belong to. There is a coat and two caps in the wardrobe. A coat and two hats are in the closet. This sentence with the word“在” is obviously not a existential sentence. It is not that such translation is incorrect, but it is inaccurate. Existential sentences tend to emphasize what exists, not where it exists. Therefore, it is easy to have problems in translating concepts intuitively.

5.2. Structure Negative Transfer Phenomenon

There are great differences in the structures of existential sentences between English and Chinese.

⑪ There is a boy under the tree.

Obviously, in the existential sentence, there is not the actual subject and there is no“那”. But only the subject of the vacancy. So its actual subject is a boy, something that emphasizes existence. Since we don't have a logical subject in Chinese, we can easily translate it into a boy is under the tree. A boy is under the tree. But then, instead of a boy, it's under the tree. That is, to emphasize the location of existence. A boy is under the tree. A boy under a tree is not an existential sentence. Under the tree is a boy. May be more acceptable to Chinese students. However, in fact, there be is the most common existential sentence pattern in English.

5.3. Function Negative Transfer Phenomenon

Through the experiment, it is found that most students are not used to using existential sentences. Other sentence patterns may be misused in existential sentences. Most of the reasons are related to the fact that the logical subject and word order of English existential sentences do not conform to the Chinese way of thinking.

It is incorrectly translated as “The tree has three birds ” or “Three birds are on the tree”.It should be “here are three birds on the tree”.

The first mistranslation is a typical Chinglish, as students with poor foundation often write. This has an inseparable relationship with the influence of Chinese sentence patterns. In Chinese sentences, The sentence with have/has occupies a large share, which means both belonging and existence. In English, have/has only means belonging to things, so here, we use has is wrong, this is the meaning of the Chinese“you” to carry out a functional transfer. The second error in translation is a common error made by the students with average degree.

“Three birds are on the tree” is not a existential sentence. There are differences in emphasis. The Chinese translation focuses on the presence of birds in trees, while the translation focuses on the location of birds. This is due to the use of English existential sentence function is not familiar with and unclear definition caused.

6. Implications for the Study of Existential Sentences

6.1. Use Positive Migration

According to the author's investigation, even if the students themselves are very poor, as long as the similarities and differences between English and Chinese existential sentences are clearly

analyzed in addition to the teaching of basic concepts and structural grammar, let the students understand. In particular, the mistakes in the there be pattern, such as tense errors, spelling errors, use of be verbs, and fixed collocations of prepositions, are rarely repeated.

In fact, through the above analysis of English and Chinese existential sentences, the positive transfer of Chinese students learning English existential sentences is real, and the rational use of these positive transfer is essential for teachers and learners.

On the one hand, it reduces the difficulty of learners learning English existential sentences. Learning is a process from the shallow to the deep, constantly familiar with. First of all, in the beginning, from the similarities between English and Chinese existential sentences, proceed with the study of concept, structure and grammar. Enable learners to make sentences with correct structure. After familiar with the sentence structure of the key points and easy to make mistakes in the integration of explanation and practice. Under the condition of making no mistakes in details, this paper makes a comparison between English and Chinese existential sentences so that learners can understand under what circumstances and how they use them. I believe this paper will give some enlightenment to learners and teachers.

On the other hand, to increase the self-confidence of learners and learning motivation. From shallow to deep, gradually advance. In this kind of learning mode, students' learning effect can be improved, and to a certain extent, it can also increase learners' learning achievement and thus increase learners' self-confidence. Of course, learning motivation can not only reflect in the performance, so that learners can understand, can really feel their learning effect is crucial. It is better than anything to develop good study habits.

6.2. Reduce Negative Migration

Due to the differences between English and Chinese existential sentences, students should pay close attention to the structure and form of there be sentence patterns, and pay attention to the differences in the details of be verb and prepositional phrase. There are many aspects of negative transfer. The author has done some research on the difference between English and Chinese existential sentences, mistake-prone points and emphasis, and negative transfer phenomenon. This is the basic concepts, structures and grammar teaching, the need to focus on learning. The intensive lecture analysis and the concrete exercise are indispensable.

On this basis, the construction of existential sentences based on positive transfer is only a system, with negative transfer as the key content to fill in the gaps, after a certain amount of practice and training, learners will be able to achieve the desired results. The similarities and differences between English and Chinese existential sentences are summarized. Keep in mind the following points: the proximity principle in the there be sentence, no matter how many things there are in the object, as long as the noun next to the be verb is singular, the be verb should also be singular. For example, There is a banana and two apples on the desk.

The use of prepositional phrases. Prepositional phrases are placed at the beginning of Chinese existential sentences and at the end of English existential sentences. For example, There is a lion and two tigers in the wild.

We need to train students to develop English language thinking, especially need to tell students which aspects of English word order and Chinese similar, and which aspects of word order and thinking are different from Chinese. To develop this ability, students need to have a good sense of language, which is mostly produced by the use of words and sentences. Therefore, sometimes blindly practicing words and grammar can not be long-term results. Many students can only do the problem, can not say, can not use is the lack of practice. On the other hand, the second language learners need to learn the culture of the second language countries involved. More understanding of the people of this country, more understanding of the country's customs, will help us form a good learning thinking and language sense.

7. Conclusion

In a word, second language learners will be influenced by language transfer to some extent in the process of learning existential sentences. According to the investigation and experiment, concept transfer, structure transfer and function transfer all have different degrees of influence on second language learners' learning of existential sentences. Through the analysis of the concept, structure and function of English and Chinese existential sentences, we should pay attention to the negative transfer brought by transfer in the teaching process, avoid and interfere with negative transfer in time, so as to better avoid the errors brought by learning. Positive transfer is actively used to improve the learning efficiency of second language learners, so that second language learners can understand and use existential sentences more accurately, which will have a positive effect on teachers' teaching and learners' learning.

References

- [1] Odlin,T. Language Transfer: Cross-linguistic influence in language learning [J]. Shanghai: Shanghai Foreign Language Education Press,2001.
- [2] Palmberg,R. On lexical inferencing and the young foreign language learner[J]. System 15, 69-76.
- [3] Liming Yu.Language Transfer and second language acquisition [M]. Shanghai: Shanghai Foreign Language Education Press.2013. 143-154.
- [4] Liansheng Pi. Educational Psychology. Shanghai Education Press.2011.
- [5] Cecilia L G .Conceptual transfer, (re)conceptualisation and other cognitive aspects of crosslinguistic influence in L2acquisition[J].Language, Interaction and Acquisition,2023,14(1):1-6.