

The Influence of Morpheme Awareness on Junior Middle School English learners' Reading Comprehension

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Abstract: According to the understanding of English learning process and the surrounding educational environment, it is found that most English learners have not received the training of morpheme awareness, and English teachers have hardly cultivated their students' morpheme awareness. In English learning, it is found that English morpheme awareness plays a role in promoting English learning. It can be seen from the relevant literature that the identification of English morphemes is very important for English learners' language acquisition and development, and has attracted the attention of researchers at home and abroad. This paper mainly studies the influence of morpheme awareness on junior middle school English learners' reading comprehension.

Key words: Morpheme awareness; English learners; Reading comprehension; Influence

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1 Introduction

Morpheme awareness is defined as the ability to recognize, reflect and manipulate the internal morpheme structure of a word. This is a beneficial factor to strengthen vocabulary deep learning and contact more vocabulary groups, and has a positive effect on vocabulary development^[1]. Not only that, it also plays a very important role in students' reading skills. Although many researchers have confirmed that English morpheme awareness contributes to children's vocabulary

development, the research on the relationship between morpheme awareness and adult foreign language learners' reading ability is still in the exploratory stage. Therefore, it is necessary to pay more attention to this field in order to obtain more research results.

2 An overview of morpheme awareness

Morpheme awareness is an ability to recognize and manipulate the internal morphological structure of words. It recognizes words made up of two or more morphemes and distinguishes awareness of internal morpheme structures. According to Anderson, morpheme recognition is a kind of ability to recognize and manipulate language elements and apply word writing rules to specific languages^[2]. Therefore, the essence of morpheme recognition includes two aspects. On the one hand, it is the ability to recognize morpheme structure, and the other is the application of morpheme knowledge. Morpheme is the smallest unit of word meaning. It is combined in many ways to form a complex and meaningful word. In other words, the meaning of the smallest unit of consciousness is how to recognize the meaning of a word.

3 Problems in reading comprehension of junior high school students

3.1 Tradition of educational concept

The traditional education concept is the main factor affecting the improvement of reading education quality, and also the most fundamental education problem. This fundamentally limits the improvement of reading teaching quality and affects the improvement of students' reading level^[3]. In order to teach English

reading in middle schools, some teachers have adopted relatively old teaching methods under the influence of traditional teaching concepts. They have adopted the “blackboard” teaching method, which always displays the central idea of each article on the blackboard and writes on the blackboard. The reading steps of each article are described on the blackboard, but they do not reflect the reading methods and can not guide students to master reading skills. Students follow the steps explained by the teacher and check the content of the article introduced by the teacher on the blackboard. Students can only focus on the meaning of the new vocabulary and its related grammar, but can not constitute the overall concept of this paper. Lack of understanding of the whole article will seriously affect the integrity of students’ thinking, and limit their judgment and understanding of reading this article.

3.2 Small reading range

The content of junior high school English reading is relatively simple, there is no wide range of content, which limits the scope of classroom reading, ignores the actual situation of classroom teaching, but also ignores the protection of students’ learning. Students have not been exposed to a variety of reading content, coupled with their own reading interest is not strong. They just read the text in the textbook, and the learning content is only the knowledge points in the textbook. The improvement of their own ability is limited to the classroom, which greatly affects the efficiency of students’ reading and learning, and limits their better integration into the society.

3.3 Belittle the background of the article

Each article has a different cultural background, the author’s purpose is different, and the content displayed varies with age and environment. However, middle school English teachers only read this article. With the passage of time, the content of each sentence is analyzed, but the cultural background of this article cannot be introduced. Therefore, the content of student guidance is reduced, which is not conducive to the improvement of students’ reading ability. Students can not only read the content, can not skip the extracurricular content, can not ignore the cultural background of the article creation, can not despise the article and theory with cultural heritage. Unable to understand the content of the actual article will have a serious impact on improving students’ reading level, leading them to only understand the surface meaning

and limit their thinking development.

3.4 Single teaching method

Some teachers think that teaching a good reading method can meet the current students’ learning needs and adapt to the development of the new curriculum reform. This idea is wrong, which not only limits the improvement of teachers’ teaching ability, but also severely limits students’ reading ability. Students only learn the reading methods taught by the teacher, thus forming a more one-sided reading perspective and pursuing one-sided reading meaning, ignoring the detailed process of reading the whole article and the overall structure of the whole article, which is not conducive to students’ real understanding of reading.

3.5 Pay too much attention to words and sentences

In the current reading process, some students pay too much attention to every word and sentence in the article. They think that no word should be missed. They think that every word is of great significance and begin to read word by word. This way of reading will slow down the reading speed and make it difficult to understand^[4]. Some students pay too much attention to the details of the article and think that all verbs and adjectives may play an important role. They need to analyze the appearance of each word and understand the evolution and change of each plot. In this way, they can’t really understand the ideas the author wants to express and lead to wrong answers.

4 The relationship between morpheme awareness and junior middle school English learners’ Reading Comprehension

This paper takes junior high school students in a certain area as the research object, including 46 boys and 44 girls, a total of 90 students. They were tested for English reading comprehension.

It is found that vocabulary reserve is closely related to reading comprehension and is the most powerful predictor of reading comprehension. In other words, the higher one’s vocabulary knowledge, the better their reading comprehension ability. In the study of English as a language vocabulary and reading comprehension, the correlation coefficient between them ranges from 0.67 to 0.79. In the case of English as a second language, the findings are similar. For example, in our study, the correlation coefficient between the two is

0.69.

The results of this study confirm the close relationship between syntactic awareness and reading comprehension. Even with vocabulary knowledge, grammar recognition can still predict 16% difference in reading comprehension. In other words, the better the learners' grammatical awareness, the better their reading comprehension ability. The study of children with dyslexia also shows the importance of grammar recognition in reading comprehension. For example, Ryan compared dyslexic children with normal children of the same age and found that dyslexic children scored significantly lower in syntactic recognition. Grammar recognition has a greater impact on reading comprehension. On the one hand, it helps readers identify words by deciphering unfamiliar words according to the syntactic constraints of sentences, while readers can use their syntactic knowledge to understand words and analyze sentences and texts above this level to improve their reading comprehension.

Correlation analysis shows that morphemes are significantly correlated with reading comprehension, but regression analysis shows that morphemes have a low predictive ability for reading comprehension. After adjusting vocabulary knowledge and syntactic awareness, students can only make 3% difference in reading comprehension. However, this study shows that there is a close relationship between morphemes and reading comprehension, and the results are consistent with previous studies. Kieffer made a comparative study of English first language learners with Spanish, Filipino and Vietnamese learners and found that morphemes have a direct impact on the reading comprehension of these four groups. Morpheme awareness plays an indirect role in vocabulary reading comprehension. We found that only derivative morphemes can predict reading comprehension. This may be due to the fact that there are so many derivatives in English itself and that students are more likely to encounter derivatives in their study.

Compared with derivative morphemes, inflected morphemes showed a stronger correlation with reading comprehension ($r = 0.62$), but failed to enter the regression model. This may be due to differences in research topics. Most of the researches that use inflectional morphemes to study morpheme awareness and reading comprehension are based on primary school students whose mother tongue is English. As far as the middle school students in this study are

concerned, refraction change refers to the early and more basic grammatical rules encountered by students in the process of English learning, which make them relatively easy to understand. On the other hand, the syntactic test in this study overlaps with refraction change and refraction morpheme recognition test. Since the influence of refraction syntactic recognition is separated by grammatical recognition, it does not show predictive ability.

We also found that students scored the highest in complex morpheme recognition tasks ($M = 14.02$), while the variance was the lowest ($SD = 1.97$). That is to say, Chinese students performed well in complex morpheme recognition. This is because fusion is the main method to form Chinese words, and students have more complex knowledge than Chinese derived words. The number of compound words in English is far less than that of derivative words, which is one of the reasons for the low correlation coefficient between complex morpheme recognition and reading comprehension.

From the perspective of the development of the level of vocabulary, the relationship between the level of reading and the level of students' reading weakens. Although the influence of phonological awareness on reading differences decreases with the improvement of grade level, the influence of morpheme awareness becomes more and more important.

4 Conclusion

In the context of English as a foreign language, morpheme awareness can affect the developmental characteristics of reading comprehension and provide effective guidance. In reading education, we should not only pay attention to advanced reading skills such as text structure, background knowledge and reading strategies, but also basic reading skills such as morpheme awareness. Only when junior high school students form a morpheme awareness and understand the text structure of the article, combined with the corresponding reading and answering skills, students' reading comprehension ability will be greatly improved, and it will also help students improve their English quality.

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