

Research on the Cultivation of English Learning Strategies for Senior High School Students in Minority Areas

Yuxia Huang*, Ling Huang

Leshan Normal University, Leshan 614000, Sichuan Province, China

*Corresponding author: Yuxia Huang, Hillaryxia@163.com

Copyright: © 2024 Author(s). This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License (CC BY 4.0), permitting distribution and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is cited.

Abstract: This paper brings up some suggestions and methods for cultivating English learning strategies for senior high school students in minority areas by summarizing the relevant English learning strategies by domestic and foreign scholars, and analyzing the survey of English learning strategies of senior high school students in minority areas.

Keywords: Minorities; High school students; English; Learning strategy

Online publication: July 16, 2024

1. Basic knowledge of English learning strategies

Oxford RL (1992) pointed out that learning strategies refer to some actions, behaviors, steps and means that learners take (often intentionally) to develop foreign language skills^[1]. In China, Wen Q (1995) believed that learning strategies include concepts and methods^[2]. Wang L (1998) proposed that learning strategies refer to intentional or unintentional behaviors in the process of learning languages^[3].

According to the different standards of learning strategies, the classification is also different. For example, according to Oxford RL (1990) and Cohen AD (2014), they are direct and indirect strategies, language learning and language application strategies, respectively^[4,5]. Wen Q (1996), however, thought that they are management strategies and language learning strategies^[6]. In order to find a classification suitable for Chinese students' learning strategies, China's Ministry of Education combined the needs and characteristics of Chinese students' foreign language learning, summarized relevant research and pointed out in Curriculum Standards and New Curriculum Standards or Senior High School that learning strategies are cognitive, regulatory, communicative and resource strategies and then meta-cognitive, communicative and emotional strategies, based on linguistics, sociology and cognitive psychology theories^{[7][8]}.

2. Research on English learning strategies at home and abroad in minority areas

2.1. Research on English learning strategies abroad

Foreign scholars mainly focus on the following four aspects:

- (1) The learning strategies that are used by successful language learners and the differences among different kinds of learners. For example, Naiman NM and Stern HH (1978) summarized some common characteristics of successful learners and described and classified the learning strategies ^[9].
- (2) Ellis R (1994) identified five major differences between good and weak learners as well as the relationship between grades and strategies ^[10]. For example, Rubin J (1987) pointed out that the use of learning strategies has a great relationship with grades, and put forward some learning strategies that are conducive to improving grades ^[11].
- (3) Factors that affect the use of learning strategies. For example, Wenden A (1991) put forward that ideas will greatly affect the use of strategies ^[12].
- (4) The training methods and effectiveness of strategies. For example, Oxford RL (1990), Wenden A (1991), O'Malley JM and Chamot AU, (1990), all explained the research methods of learning strategies and the influence of training and teaching on language learning ^[4,12,13].

2.2. Research on English learning strategies at home

In general, domestic researcher mainly focus on the following aspects: first is about English learning methods and strategies. Wen Q (1996) conducted a case study on the English learning methods of good learners and weak learners ^[6]. Deng D and Ren B (2007) pointed out that less successful foreign language learners can learn from excellent learners to improve the foreign language teaching effect ^[14]. What's more, the relationship between grades and strategies. For example, Wen Q (1995) believed that the use of learning strategies is related to grades ^[2]. Besides, the main factors that influence the strategies are also studied. For example, Wen Q and Wang L (2004) proposed that English learning strategies are not only influenced by internal factors such as emotion and management but also influenced by other factors ^[15].

2.3. Research on English learning strategies in minority areas

In recent years, nearly no scholars have studied the English learning strategies of minority students. Only a few scholars studied those of minority primary school students, junior school or college students, which are quite insufficient. As we all know, students in minority areas are a special group of students, who need to learn their native language first, master Chinese, and finally learn foreign languages. Therefore, to improve their learning ability, it is vital to learn these strategies and ways to apply them to their daily study.

3. The analysis of the investigation results and an exploration of cultivation strategies

3.1. The analysis of the investigation results

This paper analyzes the questionnaires randomly distributed among minority students who just completed the college entrance examination in 2022, and draws the conclusion that the English learning strategies of the questionnaire participant are sometimes using learning strategies, and their level is weak. Specific data and detailed analysis are reported by Oxford RL (1990) ^[4]. This shows that most senior high school students in minority areas do not master these strategies, and they also can't apply them to their studies, which are far from the requirements of curriculum standards. Therefore, it is particularly important to train their strategies.

3.2. The exploration of cultivating the English learning strategies

3.2.1. Cultivation of meta-cognitive strategies

Meta-cognitive strategies refer to students' monitoring and regulation of their learning process. For minority high school students, specific cultivation methods are as follows:

- (1) Help the students to establish their understanding of meta-cognitive strategies. Through explanation and examples, besides stimulating their learning interest, students can realize the importance of the meta-cognitive strategies and apply these strategies to their study.
- (2) Cultivate students' self-monitoring ability. Students observe and record their learning process so that problems can be identified and adjusted. For example, students can set learning goals and plans, and then regularly check their progress and results to ensure that they are on track.
- (3) Improve students' self-regulation ability. When students encounter difficulties or problems in the learning process, they should be encouraged to actively seek solutions and adjust their learning strategies to adapt to different learning needs.
- (4) Cultivate students' self-assessment ability. By guiding students to assess their learning results objectively and comprehensively, they can find their advantages and disadvantages, and then change their learning strategies accordingly.
- (5) Design syllabus-related activities. In order to strengthen the cultivation effect, teachers can design targeted meta-cognitive strategies. For example, activities such as group discussion, role play and case study can be organized so that students can learn and apply them in their daily life.

3.2.2. Cultivation of cognitive strategies

Cognitive strategies involve how students process and remember learning material. For minority high school students, specific cultivation methods are as follows:

- (1) Help students know the concept and importance of cognitive strategies. At the same time, introduces the methods used by learners in the process of information processing, aiming at effectively extracting information from memory, processing information, and solving problems.
- (2) Memory training strategies. Memory is the foundation of English learning, so it is important to help students master effective memory strategies. For example, students can be taught to memorize English words and grammar rules according to associative memorization, graphical memorization, and so on. At the same time, students are encouraged to review what they have learned regularly to consolidate their memory.
- (3) Develop understanding and reasoning strategies. In the process of English learning, students need to understand and apply the language knowledge learned. Therefore, students can be taught to use context to infer the meaning of a word, use grammatical structure to understand the sentence and so on. In addition, it helps students better understand and apply their knowledge by guiding them to reason logically.
- (4) Strengthen the training of application and creation strategies. For example, some English tasks can be designed in practical situations, so that students can apply what they have learned in the process of completing the tasks and cultivate their practical application ability. In addition, it's also helpful to encourage students to carry out creative learning, such as writing English stories, giving English speeches, etc., to cultivate their creativity as well as interest.
- (5) Regularly evaluate and adjust training strategies. Through regular assessment of students' learning effects, teachers can understand students' progress and shortcomings in the process of application and change strategies based on the assessment results. At the same time, students are encouraged to conduct self-assessments to adjust their progress.

3.2.3. Cultivation of communicative strategies

In order to solve the language barrier in the communication process, students can adopt communicative strategies. For minority high school students, the specific cultivation methods are as follows:

- (1) Establish a positive atmosphere for communication. In class, teachers should encourage students to speak English boldly and don't correct them too much on the spot even if they make mistakes, so as not to discourage them. At the same time, teachers should adopt relaxed and interesting teaching methods, such as role-playing and group discussion to stimulate students' desire for communication.
- (2) Provide enough practical opportunities. Teachers should design a variety of real or simulated communication scenes. For example, English corner activities can be organized to invite foreign teachers or native English speakers to participate and provide opportunities for students to communicate with foreigners. In addition, Internet resources such as English chat rooms and online forums can be used to enable students to communicate in English on a broader platform.
- (3) Teach students effective communication skills and methods. For example, teachers can teach students how to start a conversation, how to maintain a conversation, how to change the topic and other related skills. In addition, students can be guided to learn and use some common communication expressions, such as greetings, thanks, apologies, etc., to improve their communication effect.
- (4) Cultivate students' cross-cultural awareness. In the process of communication, students need to understand and respect the communication habits and etiquette of different cultural backgrounds. Therefore, teachers should introduce the cultural customs of different countries to students and guide them to understand and adapt to these cultural differences to avoid misunderstandings or conflicts in communication.
- (5) Evaluate and provide feedback regularly. Teachers should regularly assess students' English communicative competence, follow up on their progress and shortcomings, and provide targeted feedback and suggestions. At the same time, students are encouraged to conduct self-assessment and reflection to adjust their study.

3.2.4. Cultivation of emotional strategies

Emotional strategies involve how students manage their emotions and attitudes. For minority high school students, the specific cultivation methods are as follows:

- (1) Establish a good learning attitude. Students are encouraged to build up self-confidence in their ability to learn English well. At the same time, it is necessary to guide students to correctly view the difficulties and challenges in learning, and encourage them to face them bravely and actively seek solutions.
- (2) Create a relaxed and pleasant learning atmosphere. Various relevant activities can be organized, such as role-play, singing, story-telling, etc., so that students can learn English in a relaxed and pleasant atmosphere.
- (3) Cultivate students' spirit of cooperation and team spirit. Through group activities and cooperative learning, teachers can encourage students to participate in English contests, speech contests and other activities to improve their courage and expression skills and enhance their sense of learning achievement.
- (4) Teach students effective emotional regulation methods. Teachers can guide students to learn how to correctly view failures and setbacks in learning, how to learn from failures and adjust learning strategies. At the same time, students can also be taught some specific emotional regulation skills, such as deep breathing, relaxation training, etc.
- (5) Pay regular attention to students' emotional changes and provide personalized emotional support. By paying attention to students' emotional changes, teachers can identify problems in time and take measures to help students solve difficulties, ensuring a positive and healthy emotional state of the

students can be maintained along the process of learning English.

4. Conclusion

Based on the investigation results of minority high school students' English learning strategies, this paper brings up a series of methods on cultivating the learning strategies for them, which can help teachers of minority high schools to improve the English teaching quality. Through the effective use of various learning strategies, students can improve their English learning efficiency and independent English learning ability.

Funding

Project of 2022 Research Center for Basic Foreign Language Education Development of Leshan Normal University "Research on An Investigation and Research on English Learning Strategies of Senior High School Students in Minority Areas" (Project No.: LSJW2022-A02)

Disclosure statement

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

References

- [1] Oxford RL, 1992, Language Learning Strategies in a Nutshell: Update and ESL Suggestions. *TESOL Journal*, 1992(2): 18–22.
- [2] Wen Q, 1995, Differences in Methods Between Successful and Unsuccessful English Learners. *Foreign Language Teaching and Research*, 1995(3): 61–66.
- [3] Wang L, 1998, Learning Strategies and Foreign Language Teaching. *Foreign Language Studies*, 1998(4): 3–14.
- [4] Oxford RL, 1990, *Language Learning Strategies: What Every Teacher Should Know*, Heinle & Heinle Publishers, Boston, 1–342.
- [5] Cohen AD, 1998., *Strategies in Learning and Using a Second Language*, Routledge, London, 1–379.
- [6] Wen Q, 1996, *On English Learning Strategies*, Shanghai Education Publishing, Shanghai.
- [7] Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China, 2003, *Curriculum Standards for Ordinary High School English (Experimental)*, People's Education Press, Beijing.
- [8] Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China, 2017, *The Curriculum Standards for Ordinary High School English (2017 Edition, 2020 Revision)*, People's Education Press, Beijing.
- [9] Naiman NM, Stern HH, 1978, *The Good Language Learner*, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, Ontario, 1–256.
- [10] Ellis R, 1994, *The Study of Second Language Acquisition*, Oxford University Press, London.
- [11] Rubin J, 1987, *Learner Strategies: Theoretical Assumptions, Research History and Typology*, Englewood Cliffs, 15–30.
- [12] Wenden A, 1991, *Learner Strategies for Learner Autonomy: Planning and Implementing Learner Training for Language Learners*, Prentice Hall, London, 1–172.
- [13] O'Malley JM, Chamot AU, 1990, *Learning Strategies in Second Language Acquisition*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1–260.
- [14] Deng D, Ren B, 2007, The Guidance and Training of English Learning Strategies Under the New Curriculum Background. *New curriculum research*, 2007(1): 17–20.

- [15] Wen Q, Wang L, 2004, A Review of Various Factors Affecting the Operation of Foreign Language Learning Strategy System. *Foreign Languages and Foreign Language Teaching*, 2004(9): 28–32.

Publisher's note

Bio-Byword Scientific Publishing remains neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.