

The mechanism of the role of language learning strategies in cultivating students' autonomous learning ability

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ABSTRACT

With the transformation of educational goals from knowledge teaching to ability cultivation, autonomous learning ability has become the key task of language education. However, in the current practice, students are generally faced with the problems of "Knowing but not using strategies" and "Learning depends on external supervision", and their autonomous learning ability can not be effectively improved. Therefore, this paper discusses how language learning strategies promote the development of autonomous learning ability, aiming to put forward feasible, practical paths and provide a reference for language educators to promote the cultivation of autonomous learning ability from experience-driven to scientific and accurate.

KEYWORDS

Language learning strategies; Autonomous learning ability; Dynamic assessment; Metacognitive regulation

In the wave of global education reform, cultivating talents with lifelong learning abilities has become the consensus goal of the education system in various countries. Because of its cross-cultural communicative nature and cognitive complexity, language learning has become an important field to test the effectiveness of the cultivation of autonomous learning ability. In recent years, the classification system of language learning strategies has been increasingly refined, from early memory and cognitive strategies to multi-dimensional strategies such as emotional and social strategies. The strategy application mostly stays at the level of explicit knowledge indoctrination, which can not be effectively transformed into students' self-regulation ability. Even if students master the theoretical knowledge of strategy, they will still fall into the dilemma of "Know but cannot use" in real tasks. In this context, it is of great significance to explore the mechanism and practice path of language learning strategies on autonomous learning ability, which can provide a scientific basis for teachers to design hierarchical and situational strategy training programs; it can also help students gradually construct personalized learning management plans in strategy iteration. Therefore, this paper will analyze in depth how language learning strategies trigger students' metacognitive awareness and how to accelerate the transformation from strategy mastery to ability construction. It aims to provide new ideas for breaking through the bottleneck of the current cultivation of language autonomous learning ability.

1 The theoretical basis of language learning strategies and autonomous learning ability

1.1 Definition and classification of language learning strategies

Language strategies refer to the methods and techniques used to achieve the best language learning and communication results. According to research by different scholars, language strategies can be divided into three categories: metacognitive, cognitive, and social/affective. Metacognitive strategies require learners to step out of specific learning tasks and examine their learning behaviors from a global perspective. By setting short-term and long-term goals, clarifying learning directions, identifying weaknesses, and actively adjusting plans, the essence is cultivating learners' ability to design their learning paths independently. Cognitive strategies play a direct role in acquiring, storing, and applying language knowledge. They advocate the deep processing of information using technology and help learners shift from passively receiving information to actively constructing knowledge networks to improve the speed and accuracy of information processing ^[1]. Social/affective strategies focus on interpersonal interaction and adjustment of mental state in language learning. Social strategies indicate that language is a social communication tool, and learners should test their language competence in social situations. Affective strategies include the maintenance of learning motivation and the alleviation of anxiety. They emphasize the need to create a supportive learning environment for learners to reduce the interference of emotional factors in their learning process so that cognitive resources are more focused on knowledge absorption.

1.2 The connotation of autonomous learning

Self-regulated learning means that students are the main body of learning; they make their own decisions and are not

dominated by others. Through reading, listening, studying, observing, practicing, and other means, the individual can continuously change behavior without external interference, which has three basic characteristics: self-reliance, self-initiative, and self-discipline. Self-reliance is embodied in learners' independence in cognition and action; that is, learners set goals in line with the actual level based on the sober cognition of their own needs and abilities and self-select suitable learning resources. Self-reliance is also manifested as the germination of critical thinking. Through analysis, comparison, and verification, learners form personalized knowledge judgment standards, thus laying the foundation for lifelong learning. Self-initiative emphasizes constructing learners' knowledge systems through positive actions, which requires learners to transform abstract goals into concrete actions and transform learning intentions into operational practical frameworks. The core value of autonomy is cultivating problem-solving ability, so learning behavior always revolves around real needs^[2]. Self-discipline is a regulatory mechanism to maintain the continuous operation of autonomous learning. It requires learners to regulate their learning behavior through self-management without external constraints. Self-discipline includes two important contents: strict implementation of the learning plan, including time allocation, task priority setting, interference elimination, etc. The other is the active regulation of emotion and motivation, making learning behavior and personal development goals always consistent.

2 The mechanism of language learning strategies on learner autonomy

2.1 Cognitive strategies for active planning of the learning process

Cognitive strategies promote students' active planning of the learning process in two ways: to help learners break down complex goals into operational steps and to establish a continuous improvement learning cycle. Cognitive strategies first teach students to decompose learning objectives, determine the logical relationship between knowledge, and form a ladder-like improvement path. Students must judge which abilities must be broken through and which must be accumulated for a long time. According to this, the specific learning tasks of each week are determined. Through the continuous practice of management by objectives, students gradually master distinguishing between core and secondary tasks and learn to adjust the learning intensity according to their level. This ability allows learning plans to remain challenging and relevant, thus laying a solid foundation for proactive planning. The cognitive strategy also emphasizes the real-time tracking of the learning process. Students need to regularly check the matching degree between the learning effect and the predetermined goal when executing the plan. Suppose you find it difficult to remember some English words. In that case, you should analyze the reason, whether due to improper memorization methods, insufficient review frequency, or difficult words, to quickly locate the source of the problem; after determining the reason, adjust the original plan accordingly. This continuous monitoring and revision process allows students to recognize the need for flexibility in their learning plans, allowing them to change their learning methods and pace according to the situation. Finally, students can optimize their strategies according to their learning progress.

2.2 Metacognitive strategies enhance self-regulation of learning goals

Metacognitive strategies require students to regularly examine the relationship between learning status and goals, that is, to analyze whether the current learning progress meets expectations as an observer and judge the proper level of their knowledge mastery. Students should examine the quality of learning in-depth, set clear evaluation criteria, judge the gap between expected and current abilities, and distinguish superficial learning from deep understanding to actively adjust the focus of the investment. For obstacles in the learning process, students should identify whether the inefficiency is due to poor methods, lack of concentration, or goal-setting bias to develop self-awareness in complex learning situations. Metacognitive strategies can also help students to optimize their learning plans according to the evaluation results. After completing the phased learning tasks, students can review the gap between the original learning objectives and the actual results and then analyze the reasons for the gap. Then, according to the evaluation results, the study plan was adjusted, the daily time of reciting vocabulary was prolonged, and the frequency of review was increased^[3]. In this process, students need to continuously record their learning performance after the strategy adjustment and verify the effectiveness of the improvement measures through comparative data. Two weeks after adjusting the plan, if the vocabulary test accuracy is improved, it shows that the optimization scheme is successful; if the progress is not apparent, it is necessary to re-analyze the reasons and try other strategies. In the long run, students can not only optimize the scheme for specific learning tasks, but also form the general ability to adjust learning strategies independently, and finally realize the transformation from passive acceptance of teachers' arrangement to active design of individual learning paths.

2.3 Social/ affective strategies optimize learning motivation and emotional management

The application of social strategies in students' autonomous learning is to stimulate continuous motivation by

establishing a learning community and promote individual progress by creating a benign competitive atmosphere in exchanging knowledge with others. Because group feedback and role division in cooperative learning can make students take specific responsibilities, and this social commitment can be transformed into a psychological contract to adhere to learning. In this process, the essential attribute of language as a communication tool is strengthened in social practice, and students can experience the value of language ability through real dialogue. At the same time, the sense of belonging provided by social networks effectively weakens students' sense of loneliness in learning. The application of emotional strategies can cultivate students' fine management ability of psychological state, record the emotional fluctuation curve in the learning process, and students can gradually grasp the early warning signals of negative emotions such as anxiety and burnout. Different coping strategies are adopted for different types of emotions. Emotional strategies can also guide students to establish positive psychological suggestions: to presuppose success scenarios before complex tasks and replace fixed thinking with growth-oriented thinking; in stress management, big goals are decomposed into micro-tasks with immediate feedback, through frequent positive incentives to maintain action, the emotional energy into problem-solving concrete action^[4]. By strengthening learning motivation and emotion management, social/ affective strategies enable learners to gain learning motivation through external connections and maintain emotional homeostasis. This is of great significance for the long-term development of language ability.

3 The practical path of language learning strategies in the cultivation of autonomous learning ability

3.1 Strengthening the integration of strategy teaching and curriculum design

In developing students' autonomous learning ability, language learning strategies should be divided into operational steps in the curriculum design stage. The specific types of strategies to be trained in each unit should be made clear, which can be divided into three stages: the initial stage, the course focuses on memory strategies, teachers should design word association games for students to strengthen the memory of vocabulary; In the mid-term stage, reasoning strategies should be integrated into the course teaching to enhance students' reading comprehension skills through contextual clue analysis activities.; In the later stage, social strategies are applied, where students strengthen their language learning through role-playing and viewpoint debate tasks. Classroom activities need to simulate real language use scenarios and provide strategic choices, allowing students to select appropriate strategies based on their habits. At the same time, mark the recommended strategy types at the beginning of the textbook chapters; the strategy lead-in is embedded in the exercise stem, which encourages students to use different language learning strategies actively and finally internalizes the strategies into autonomous learning instinct. During this period, teachers need to observe the effect of strategy use in real-time and adjust the weight setting of follow-up course content according to the common problems of students' feedback to promote the continuous improvement of students' language ability.

3.2 Establish a dynamic assessment and feedback mechanism

Teachers should observe students' specific behaviors in different tasks, recording how they select and adjust learning strategies, with a focus on three aspects: first, whether the strategies match the task requirements, that is, whether students actively predict content while reading, and whether their time allocation is reasonable. Teachers should observe students' specific behaviors in different tasks, recording how they select and adjust learning strategies, with a focus on three aspects: first, whether the strategies match the task requirements, that is, whether students actively predict content while reading, and whether their time allocation is reasonable. Thirdly, based on the assessment results, specific directions for improving the application of language learning strategies are determined to help students optimize their strategy use and enhance their motivation for autonomous learning. Establishing a feedback mechanism is crucial. When teachers notice that students rigidly apply templates in their writing, they can demonstrate how to adjust the structure according to the topic flexibly. They also allow students to explain the reasons for their strategy choices. Teachers can then adjust their guidance focus accordingly and collaboratively analyze with students which strategies helped solve practical problems and which need to be optimized or replaced, gradually forming a personalized strategy application system^[5]. Teachers should provide timely feedback to students, ensuring that each adjustment corresponds to specific learning obstacles, addresses practical issues, and enhances students' ability to learn independently.

4 Conclusion

In summary, the deep integration of language learning strategy teaching and curriculum content can effectively enhance learners' awareness of self-planning and regulation, and constructing a dynamic assessment system can help students identify strategic blind spots. Two-way interactive feedback strengthens the flexibility of strategy adjustment.

Educators need to pay attention to adapting strategies to individual cognitive styles to avoid the suppression of learners' strategic innovation space by standardized teaching. Follow-up studies can explore new ways of innovative technology enabling strategy training, and strengthen the study of strategy selection differences among learners from different cultural backgrounds and age groups, thus promoting the continuous development of language learning strategy theory in the direction of precision.

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