

A Case Study on Learning Strategies of an English Normal Student in Applied Universities under the Background of Professional Certification

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Abstract: This study takes an English normal major student as the research object, adopting the methods of questionnaire survey, interview and learning diary to investigate the students' learning strategies from three aspects: metacognitive strategy, cognitive strategy and resource management strategy. Through the research, the problems existing in the process of using learning strategies are found and suggestions are put forward.

Keywords: English normal student, Learning strategies, English learning.

1. Introduction

In 2017, the Ministry of Education officially issued *the Measures for the Implementation of Teacher Professional Certification in Ordinary Colleges and Universities (Interim)*, aiming to strengthen moral education and cultivate more good teachers for our country, the core of which is to ensure that graduates' knowledge, ability and quality can meet the standard requirements. In addition, the report of the 19th National Congress pointed out that building China into a strong educational country is a fundamental project for the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. A high priority to education must be given, so as to speed up the modernization of education, and do a good job in providing education that the people are satisfied with. [1] In order to run education well, strengthening teacher training and their professional spirit and ability should come first. In order to implement the spirit of the 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, standardize and guide the construction of teacher education, establish and improve the quality assurance system of teacher education, and continuously improve the quality of teacher training, the Ministry of Education has decided to carry out the normal professional certification of colleges and universities from 2017. [2] With the concept of "student-centered, output-oriented and continuous improvement", teachers' certification has exerted a great influence on the teaching and reform of various teachers' major courses. [3] In recent years, foreign language teaching has gradually shifted from the study of "how to teach" to the study of "how to learn" and from the study of "teachers" to the study of "students". In other words, language teaching pays more attention to the needs of individuals, which coincides with the requirements of teacher certification. A lot of studies pay attention to the individual differences of language learners, so learning motivation and learning strategies have become the focus of research in foreign language teaching. This study will use the method of case study to explore the effective learning strategies of English normal students in application-oriented undergraduate universities under the background of professional certification.

2. The Classification of Learning Strategies

As for the classification of learning strategies, McKeachie et al. said that learning strategies are divided into three categories, which mainly include metacognitive strategies, cognitive strategies and resource management strategies. Metacognitive strategies include planning strategies, monitoring strategies and regulating strategies. Cognitive strategies are divided into retelling strategies, fine processing strategies and organizational strategies. Resource management strategies include time management strategies, learning environment management strategies, effort management strategies, support seeking strategies, etc. [4]. This study agrees with the classification of learning strategies by McKeachie et al. According to the learning situation of English normal students, a survey scale of Effective Learning Strategies for English Normal Students in Applied Undergraduate Universities under the Background of Professional Certification is compiled by taking metacognitive strategies, cognitive strategies and resource management strategies as dimensions and indicators.

Among them, metacognitive strategy refers to students' knowledge of their own cognitive processes and their ability to regulate these processes, as well as their cognition and control of knowledge of thinking and learning activities. Metacognitive strategy includes two dimensions: planning strategy and monitoring strategy. Planning strategy refers to various plans before cognitive activities, anticipating results, choosing strategies, and coming up with various methods to solve problems. Monitoring strategy refers to timely feedback and evaluation of the results and deficiencies of one's own cognitive activities in the actual cognitive process.

Cognitive strategies are some methods or techniques for processing information, including retelling strategies and processing organizational strategies. Retelling strategy refers to the strategy of using internal language to reproduce learning materials and stimuli in the brain in order to maintain information in working memory, so as to maintain attention on learning materials. The strategy of processing organization refers to the strategy of integrating the internal relations between the new knowledge and the old knowledge to form a

new knowledge structure. Resource management strategy is to assist students to manage available resources and environment. This strategy includes time management strategy, material resource utilization strategy and human resource utilization strategy. Time management strategy refers to the strategy of making overall arrangement and efficient use of learning time; Resource utilization strategy refers to the strategy that students use various ways to search for information and promote learning. Human resource utilization strategy refers to the strategy that students seek help from others when they encounter difficulties in learning. [5]

3. Research Methods

This study is a case study. The object of this study is a 19-year-old female freshman majoring in English (Normal) at the School of Foreign Languages of Yibin University. The English score in the college entrance examination is 102, with a full score of 150. In the final examination of her freshman

year, she ranked 18th out of 35 students in her class, making her an average student. The case study of the student began in the second semester of her freshman year.

The tools used in this research include: 1) Learning journal. The testee records the weekly learning situation in detail; 2) Interview. The author conducted in-depth face-to-face interviews with the subjects every two weeks and recorded the interview records. 3) A Modified scale. In order to investigate students' learning strategies, this study uses a survey scale of Effective Learning Strategies for English Normal University Students in Applied Undergraduate Universities under the Background of Professional Certification, which is adapted from the Oxford's English Learning Strategies Scale. Considering that too many questions in the questionnaire may easily make students bored, the result of which is the collected data is not accurate. Based on the Oxford scale, this study reduced some questions. So the modified scale contains 20 questions and 3 items, see Table 1.

Table 1. Structure of the Sale

Research content	Total numbers
metacognitive strategy	6
cognitive strategy	6
resource management strategies	8

As shown in Table 1, there are 6 questions about metacognitive strategies. There are 6 questions about cognitive strategies: and 8 questions about resource management strategies and 6 questions about reflection and evaluation in the learning process. The questionnaire adopts Likert 5-point scoring method, ranging from completely disagreeing to completely agreeing to 1-5 points. All questions are scored in a positive way, that is, the higher the score, the more inclined students are to use a certain strategy.

Before the study, the author used Cronbach alpha coefficient to test the reliability of the questionnaire. According to the test, the reliability coefficient of the three sections of the questionnaire and the overall coefficient are above 0.7, indicating that the scale has good reliability.

Subsequently, the author conducted the first in-depth face-to-face interview with the student. Through the interview, it is found that the student studied hard, but the learning effect was not satisfactory. Through in-depth communication, the student was willing to improve her learning strategies and negotiated an 8-week improvement agreement. The student recorded her learning details and submitted her learning weekly on Friday. Through the analysis of learning weekly notes, the author refines learning strategies, summarize the deficiencies, put forward relevant feedback, and send to the student in the form of email. The student adjusted or refined her learning strategies in the next week according to the feedback.

Then, under the guidance of the author, the student completed all the questions in the scale. The student is required to record her English learning (study diary) once a week, a total of 8 times. According to the analysis of the study record, the author conducted regular interviews on the learning situation of the subjects by means of electronic recording, each interview lasted 20 minutes, and the interviews were conducted three times in total.

4. Data Analysis

This part analyzes the results obtained in the research, including the scale data, the study diary and the interview records of the student.

According to the method proposed by Oxford(1990), the average value of each strategy represents the frequency of using the strategy, and the corresponding relationship is as follows: the average value between 1.0-1.4 means "never using the strategy"; The average value between 1.5 and 2.4 indicates that the strategy is rarely used. The average value between 2.5 and 3.4 indicates "Use this strategy sometimes". The average value between 3.5 and 4.4 indicates that the strategy is frequently used. The average value between 4.5 and 5.0 indicates that this strategy is always used.

The data showed that the overall mean value of the scale was 4.07. The average value of metacognitive strategies is 4.33, the average value of cognitive strategies is 4, and the average value of resource management strategies is 3.875. According to the evaluation method of Oxford(1990), the strategies mentioned in the scale are frequently used by the student From the perspective of frequency of use, metacognitive strategy, cognitive strategy and resource management strategy are in turn from high to low.

4.1. Metacognitive strategies

Metacognitive strategy refers to using the knowledge acquired in the cognitive process to regulate language learning by determining learning goals and plans, monitoring learning processes and evaluating learning results. The metacognitive strategies in this study mainly include planning, monitoring and regulating strategies.

Through the study diary combing, it was found that the student used metacognitive strategies in listening, speaking, reading, writing and translating, the specific strategies are shown below, see in Table 2.

Table 2. The Usage of Strategies in Language skills

Language skill	The usage of the strategies	Diary number
Listening	Listen to a wide range of listening materials with different speeds, accents and subjects to meet the needs of different tests.	1
	Listening is the weakness, so the choice of listening materials will be from easy to difficult.	3
	When I listen to something I don't understand, I will listen to it several times and summarize the reasons.	6
Reading	I keep reading every morning	1
	I stick to English original reading before going to bed.	2
	I practice a set of CET-6 reading comprehension every week.	4
	I adjust my reading plan according to the difficulty of the reading materials.	7
Speaking	I take part in the English corner every week.	3
Writing	I make a task plan for writing on different topics.	2
	I keep a diary in English every day.	4
Translation	I have a plan to practice translation.	1
	I can summarize the problems in translation, and timely check and fill in the gaps.	8

4.2. Cognitive strategies

According to the study diary and interview records, cognitive strategies were mentioned more frequently in the 8 weekly notes submitted by the student. They are: "I make notes in the class (diary No. 1)". "I recite the classic definitions of relevant nouns (diary No. 2) ", "I summarize the beautiful sentences in the text, read and memorize them repeatedly, so as to apply them in writing (diary No. 4)". "I can draw a mind map to refine the knowledge from previous chapters (Diary number 6)". "For some knowledge points, I can edit some formulas to facilitate memory (Diary number 7)". Through the review of the learning diary, it can be seen that the student has used the retelling strategy, organization and coding strategy and fine processing strategy. However, it is found through the interview that although the interviewees have been using the strategies of retelling, organizing, encoding and fine processing, her understanding of the memory strategy is mechanical recitation. Through interviews with students, it is found that some of the cognitive strategies used by students are taught by teachers, such as fine processing strategies and organizational strategies, and some are summarized by their own learning experience, such as retelling strategies. Through the interview and communication, the author can further understand the shortcomings of students' language knowledge, that is, the difficulty in memorizing vocabulary. Then the author analyzed and explained the fine processing strategies such as abbreviations, homophonic association and visual imagination.

4.3. Resource management strategies

In the section of time management strategy, it can be seen from the study diary that time management has not attracted her attention. Through the interview and communication, it is found that, on the one hand, it is too early for the preparation of final exam and the CET-4 and CET-6. Therefore, although the student has a plan to study, she has no urgency and do not make full use of time. On the other hand,

the temptation of short video on mobile phones leads she occasionally indulging on the Internet and wasting time. Through communication guidance and analysis, the student understands the importance of time management strategies, which appear in the later study diary, such as "To complete the corresponding material reading within the specified time (diary No. 5)", "To complete the homework writing in strict accordance with the examination time requirements, (diary No. 5)". "To complete time planning nodes and complete corresponding tasks (diary No. 6)". In the last interview, students said that through the use of time management strategies, her study efficiency is higher, and she feels her life is more paced.

In terms of learning environment management strategies, the student can pay more attention to the management of learning environment. For example, she records in her study diary "I go to the library to read relevant literature (Diary No. 2) ", "I read aloud in the morning on the playground sometimes (Diary No. 4) ".

As for manage strategies, it is found from the study diary combing that the student in the early stage have weak awareness of strategy management in this aspect, and in her opinion, one's success is mainly attributed to talent and early learning basis. Through in-depth conversation and learning strategy guidance, she gradually began to encourage herself in the later stage. For example, "When I want to give up reading articles about science and technology that I am not interested in, I insist telling myself that I can do it and persist in reading it. (Diary No. 4) ", "After the simulation exercises, the score is not satisfactory, I will self-adjust the mood, and encourage myself (Diary No. 5) ". "If I am distracted in class, I will remind myself in time to keep working hard. (Diary number 8) ".

For searching for strategies part, through combing the study diary of the subjects, it is found that the student is more inclined to communicate with her peers than with teachers. The use of the search strategy by the student is shown below, see in Table 3.

Table 3. The Usage of Finding a Supporting Strategies

The usage of the strategies	Diary number
1. I am willing to communicate with my classmates and discuss the problems encountered in study.	1
2. I Regularly participate in English corner and English salon series activities.	1
3. I often communicate with my partner in English after class.	2
4. I often ask my classmates for reading skills.	3
5. Sharing beautiful English articles with classmates.	5
6. Participate in online English learning activities from time to time.	7
7. Discuss and evaluate translation assignments with classmates.	8

Through the interview, it is found that the main reason why the student prefers to communicate with her classmates rather than teachers is that she thinks she lack confidence, and when she communicates with teachers, she thought she may leave a bad impression on teachers. Therefore, she always deliberately keeps a distance from teachers and is not willing to communicate with teachers directly unless necessary. In addition, the student is willing to take advantage of the Internet to actively participate in online English activities, mainly because she can hide her real identity online and express herself more freely.

5. Research Conclusions and Suggestions

5.1. Research conclusions

According to the research results and analysis, the learning strategies of the student mainly has the following characteristics: First, the student is test oriented. Through interviews and study diary analysis, it can be found that many of the subject's learning strategies are formulated around exams. Secondly, the learning strategies of the student is diversified. Through the display of scale strategies and the analysis of interviews and learning diaries, it was found that the student used metacognitive strategies, cognitive strategies and resource management strategies. In particular, cognitive strategies are frequently used by the student. Third, metacognitive strategies, especially language skills, were used less frequently. For one thing, it wasn't in the test range. For another thing, the student is introverted, and is not willing to open her mouths and express herself. Fourth, in the cognitive strategy section, although the student can use cognitive strategies, the use of strategies is not considered to improve her own weak links. Fifth, in the resource management strategy version, although the time management strategy did not attract attention at the beginning, with the teacher's guidance, the student could quickly adjust the strategy and carry out active time management.

5.2. Suggestions

According to the case study during the period of 8 years,

the author is inclined to make the following suggestions to the student: 1). Attaching importance to the strengthening of the learning drive and providing correct guidance to the learning motivation of the student, and gradually changing from the low self-interested learning motivation to the noble learning motivation and making learning motivation is closely linked with the interests of the country and society. 2). Overcoming the negative impression of shyness and other negative emotions on study. First, fully recognizing the harm of negative emotions in cognition, and then gradually taking actions in daily study life. 3). Refining the learning plan and make learning goals which are more suitable for individual characteristics and promoting balanced development of language knowledge and language skills.

Acknowledgment

Fund Project: Yibin University Project in 2018--A survey on the learning strategies of English normal University students in applied universities under the background of professional certification(Project Number : 2018PY31)

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