The Impact of Negative Transfer of Mother Tongue On College ESL Learners: Zhejiang Yuexiu University as a Case Study

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Abstract

Negative transfer of mother tongue is a major difficulty that every second language learner has to overcome, especially for those students whose target language is quite different from their mother tongue. With the in-depth development of pluralism in the world, people pay more and more attention to the learning of various languages, especially English. In this situation, the concerns of language researchers on the negative transfer of mother tongue are inevitably boosting. Given this, based on the pertinent theories of the negative language transfer, this study aims to explore the impact of negative language transfer on Chinese college students' English learning through a questionnaire poll with some students of Zhejiang Yuexiu University as the research objects. The results of the study are mainly shown in two aspects: the impact of the negative transfer of mother tongue on college students' oral learning and college students' writing learning. At the end of the article, the author puts forward the cultural differences between China and the Western countries that lead to the negative transfer of mother tongue, and some effective methods to help Chinese college English learners reduce the negative transfer of mother tongue in their process of English learning.

Keywords: College English, English Speech, English Writing, Mother Tongue

1. Introduction

1.1. Research Content and Significance
1.1.1. Research Content
   Focusing on the negative transfer of mother tongue on English Second Language (ESL) learners in China, this study will be presented in an all-around, empirical way by studying students of Zhejiang Yuexiu University. This paper consists of six chapters as follows. The first chapter introduces domestic and foreign researches on the negative transfer of mother tongue, as well as the research content and significance of this paper. The second chapter gives the definition and classification of language transfer, focusing on the expression of the negative transfer in Chinese students from the aspects of morphology,

meaning, grammar and pragmatics. The third chapter describes the research tools and research process. Chapters four and five are the main parts of the paper. Chapter four tells the results of the questionnaire, providing part of the questionnaire data, and analyze the influences on English speaking and writing of the negative transfer of mother tongue according to the data and other research methods, then focuses on the cultural differences and thinking mode difference which causes the negative transfer of mother tongue. Chapter five puts forward effective solutions for both teachers and students in order to help students acquire English faster by reducing interference. Chapter six is the conclusion of the thesis.

1.1.2. Research Significance

Starting from the research object chosen by the author, this paper explores the negative transfer of Chinese to college students in their English learning process. The core part of this paper makes in-depth analysis based on a questionnaire survey, and it aims to deal with the following content. At the very beginning, it assist college students ti reduce errors in speaking. Whether English major students or non-English major students, the primary purpose of learning English is to communicate, so oral English should be the most crucial learning task for English learners. However, for college students in current China, it is still difficult to master fluent and correct spoken English. Strange accents, false grammar, and the fear of making errors are problems that students need to conquer. Based on the analysis of research and from the angle of negative transfer of mother tongue, this paper will explore the root causes of some oral errors and try to solve the problem of Chinese English.

Second, it may improve students' English writing ability. In addition to oral expression, writing is an important way for humans to express ideas and thoughts. Therefore, the second point of this paper mainly points out the truth that college students are seriously affected by Chinese thinking in the process of English writing and provides reasonable teaching programs and learning strategies to avoid stiff and non-standard English writing habits.

In the end, it is designed to help students to deal with cultural and thinking differences and between Chinese and English rationally. In the process of learning English, it is impossible to avoid the English culture and talk about English directly. Moreover, to better master the target language, students even need to absorb the excellent culture of the western and imitate their thinking patterns. But at the same time, students should take an equal and just attitude towards the different cultures of the two countries, and it is responsible for this thesis to remind students that their fundamental task is to inherit and promote the excellent culture and recognition of their own countries.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Related Studies Abroad

As a much-talked-about topic in linguistics research, the definition of language transfer has always been controversial, and many linguists at home and abroad have tried to define it. Foreign frontier researchers primarily gave the following definitions: Lado (1957) proposed the contrastive analysis hypothesis in his book *Linguistics Across Cultures*. Lado believes that in second language acquisition, learners rely extensively on the mother tongue they have mastered and often transfer the language form, meaning, and culture related to their mother tongue to their second language acquisition. James (1980) defined it as "a hypothesis that the first language influences the second language". In the book *Language Transfer* published in 1989, Odlin put forward his attitude in defining language transfer: "Transfer is not just the formation of a habit, the transfer is not just interference, the transfer is not just the influence of mother tongue" and gave a concise but accurate definition of language transfer: "Language transfer is the effect of similarities and differences between a target language and any other language that one has been or is not fully acquired." However, Oldlin himself was not satisfied with this definition, arguing that "it merely pointed out the causes of transfer but did not describe them". This definition eventually became widely accepted, and it is by far the most comprehensive and effective. In recent years, there have been more and more experiments and researches on mother tongue transfer abroad. According to a study by Tran-Chi-Chau (1975), 51% of Adult English learners in China made language errors by the interference of their mother tongue Chinese. Freeman (1976) found that the absence of articles in Japanese made it more difficult for Japanese students to learn articles than students who already had acquired articles in their mother tongue. Lott (1983) found in his research on Italian college students' English learners that almost half of the errors made by learners were influenced by the transfer of mother tongue.

The biggest characteristic of the above foreign literature is that with time, scholars have conducted more and more in-depth studies on the negative transfer of mother tongue, and these phenomena of negative impacts have been proved in their research and investigation of language learners in various countries. However, relatively speaking, their researches is too extensive, and they have not made a corresponding assessment and specific solutions for a certain group of foreign language learners in the long run.

2.2. Related Studies at Home

In recent years, with the popularization of higher education in China and the high degree emphasis on learning a foreign language, domestic language researchers have had many deeper and more specialized works on the negative transfer of mother tongue. Different from foreign researchers, relevant researchers in China mainly focus on the influence of Chinese on the learning of other languages and are committed to applying it to solve language teaching problems.

Some domestic scholars believe that it is very common to rely on native language intellection to study a foreign language, and even experienced foreign language learners cannot completely get rid of the influence of their native language. The degree of learners' dependence on their mother tongue is positively correlated with the difficulty of completing foreign

language tasks (Dai & Shu, 1994). Xu (2002) made a contrastive analysis of some typical sentence patterns in English and Chinese and found that the differences in thinking patterns between Chinese and English cultures resulted in the differences in syntax between Chinese and English languages. Yu (2004) pointed out that comparing the similarities and differences between a foreign language and a mother tongue to avoid errors is an effective method of foreign language learning. In recent years, there are many young learners have done a lot of research in this field. Gao (2020) made a short research on non-English major students and found that they are not proficient on using English preposition, passive voice and "there be" sentences. According to Wang (2021), the negative transfer of Chinese is reflected in many aspects of college students' learning process, mainly at the lexical level, syntactic level and pragmatic level.

For learning linguistics, this literature has given great help to language researchers in China. However, in terms of solving the problem of negative transfer of mother tongue, some relevant approaches proposed by them are not well adapted to the real learning environment, nor do they fundamentally solve the problem of that. All in all, the discussion on this topic is still going on both at home and abroad.

3. The Concept of Negative Transfer of Mother Tongue

Language transfer refers to the phenomenon that learners express their thoughts in the second language with the help of pronunciation, word meaning, structural rules, or linguistic habits of their mother tongue. There are two types of language transfer: positive transfer and negative transfer. For second language learners, if the rules of their mother tongue are the same as those of the foreign language, the rule of mother tongue will have a positive effect on the target language, and this is called positive transfer. Given this, scholars generally pay more attention to the negative transfer of mother tongue that causes students to make errors than to the positive transfer.

For language learners, if the language rules of their mother tongue do not conform to the foreign language habits, the rule of mother tongue will hurt foreign language learning, and this is called negative transfer, also known as interference. So far, the existing experiments and data analysis have shown that negative transfer of mother tongue is a major cause of errors in second language acquisition. Similarly, for Chinese native speaker in China, this interference plays a significant role on almost the whole process. Negative transfer of mother tongue can be seen everywhere in our college students' English expressions. It can be reflected at the following language levels through learners' two main language output modes of oral expression and writing:

First of all, from the morphological point of view they are completely different. Secondly, from the perspective of meaning, the meanings of Chinese and English corresponding words are not completely the same. For example, a college student says that "他父亲没有文化。" in English as "His father has no culture." This is obviously a misnomer caused by the negative transfer of mother tongue. The word "文化" he wants to express means "to receive education or to acquire general knowledge". Here he should say that "His father is illiterate."

In addition to lexical cognition, students' mother tongue interferes with their target language acquisition in grammar. For instance, in English, there are 16 tense expressions, each of which has a clear boundary. In Chinese, there are no formal grammatical rules about tense expression. This difference is a problem that Chinese college students have to overcome throughout the whole process of their English learning.

In pragmatics, it is also reflected: in china, people pay attention to respect seniors and leaders when communicating with them. So Chinese people tend to speak more politely to people who are older and more experienced. However, such a situation less happens in western countries. For them, everyone needs to hold an equal attitude when communicating with others and be not willing to deliberately exaggerate others and to degrade themselves. When Chinese students talk with the elders in English, therefore, they often make pragmatic errors. For the preceding aspects, the errors may be produced through speaking and writing, which will be shown specifically in the posterior part.

Generally speaking, as for the causes of the negative transfer of mother tongue, there are several main reasons: differences in the cultural background and thinking patterns between China and the western countries. Whether learners can correct errors caused by such reasons depends on their ability and the teacher's apposite teaching methods. Therefore, it is necessary to pay more attention to the negative transfer of mother tongue whether from the perspective of teachers or students. On the one hand, it improves our English teaching methods; on the other hand, it can help individuals avoid making linguistic errors in the way of finding differences between languages.

4. Research Methodology

4.1. Research Objects

This study takes the students of Zhejiang Yuexiu University as the research objects (the questionnaire was open to all current students from freshmen to senior year at this university). Most of the students in this university major in foreign languages, including English, Japanese, French, Italian, Russian, and so on. They all have English as a compulsory course in their courses, and their English level is not very different (except for students in English college). Therefore, the survey results of such students are representative.

4.2. Research Tools

4.2.1. Questionnaire Method

This study mainly adopted an online questionnaire survey, which consisted of 9 multiple-choice questions. To keep the reliability of the thesis, the author has distributed the questions for two days and screened 88 questionnaires at last. All questions reflect the problems that students have encountered in their English learning, and provide more information the author needs to compose this paper.

4.2.2. Case Analysis

After the questionnaire survey, to better explain the students' choices in the questionnaire, the author collected several argumentative essays written by freshmen to seniors at random and made a specific analysis to serve as an additional basis for this paper. Some sentences of their essays will be presented on the following chapter if needed.

4.2.3. Interviewing Method

Some students who have filled in the questionnaire were interviewed and asked to explain their choices in the questionnaire, to carry out a deep-seated analysis. All interviews will be showed in the next part.

4.3. Investigation Process

This empirical survey is divided into four main steps: the first is the question set. To make sure all methods can be highly targeted, the author has read large amounts of questionnaire related to the topic and found some regularities. In the light of the main directions the paper would like to study, ultimate questions in the questionnaire were formulated. Secondly, the questionnaire was sent out on the social platform and only the students of Zhejiang Yuexiu University can fill in the questionnaire. In order to ensure the validity of the questionnaire, the author randomly distributed the questionnaire to six students of Zhejiang Yuexiu University before it was issued, and asked them to make a feedback. After modification according to their opinions, the questionnaire was automatically sent out for two days and collected after the deadline. The third is to organize the data. The questionnaire was compiled into tables, and the writing materials that have been collected were checked (all essays are argumentative). Some of them would be presented in the paper to assist the content. The last, some students who have filled in the questionnaire were interviewed and asked to explain their choices in the questionnaire, to carry out a deep-seated analysis. All survey done before have made a solid foundation for the main part of the paper.

5. Results and Discussion

This chapter mainly analyzes the impact of the negative transfer of mother tongue on learners' oral English and English writing based on completed questionnaires. This chapter will be divided into two sections.

5.1. Results of Questionnaire Survey

Before the study, the author sent a questionnaire about the negative transfer of mother tongue to all students in Zhejiang Yuexiu University. A total of 88 questionnaires were received, and the number of questionnaires reaches the requirements of the study. The next part will analyze the two aspects of speaking and writing and the corresponding results and data of the survey are shown in table 1 and 2.

Table 1. Results of questionnaire on English speaking

Question	Answer			
	Yes, always	Yes, often	Yes, sometimes	Never
Did you mark English letters or words with Chinese pinyin or Chinese characters at the initial stage of learning English pronunciation?	27.27%	27.27%	27.27%	18.18%
Do you think your English pronunciation and intonation were affected by Chinese pronunciation rules and habits?	27.27%	36.36%	36.36%	0
Will you conceive in Chinese when you express yourself in English?	18.18%	63.64%	18.18%	0

The survey above shows that students' oral expression is greatly affected by the negative transfer of mother tongue, and this influence is not suddenly generated in a certain stage, but generated from contact with English. The effect does not decrease with the length of time one studies and even never go away.

Table 2. Results of questionnaire on English writing

Question	Answer			
	Yes, always	Yes, often	Yes, sometimes	Never
Did you organize English sentences in Chinese word order when writing?	18.18%	54.55%	18.18%	9.09%
Do you feel that some sentences are Chinglish when checking your English composition?	13.64%	63.64%	22.73%	0

The survey above shows that many students have realized their shortcoming on producing long or short English sentences in compositions, they judge that they think in Chinese when writing and their English writing is not authentic enough. But there is no appropriate ways to cope with the problem in their mind. Therefore, for these students, the results of this paper have a strong significance of reference and learning.

5.2 Analysis of Research Results

5.2.1 The Impact of the Negative Transfer of Mother Tongue on Oral English Learning

According to Liu (2006) in his book *Linguistics: A new coursebook* , the main difficulties in learning a new language are caused by interference from the first language, and these difficulties can be predicted by contrastive analysis. Through contrastive analysis, it can be seen that there are tremendous differences between Chinese and English pronunciation systems, and the negative transfer of mother tongue caused by such differences will continue to exist in English learners, and even lead to fossilization. This is why many senior teachers or university professors in China who have been studying English for many years still cannot speak standard English well. Therefore, the impact of the negative transfer of mother tongue on oral English and its solutions have become one of the hottest topics in linguistics in recent years.

In the questionnaire survey, 81.81% of the students said that they marked English letters or words with Chinese pinyin or Chinese characters at the initial stage of learning English pronunciation. This phenomenon is not unique to their generation of students. Teachers find that some children today still recite English words using the pronunciation of Chinese characters. In terms of the phonetic structure of the two languages, Chinese usually has open syllables ending with vowels, while English has both open syllables ending with vowels and closed syllables ending with consonants. Consequently, the phonetic learning method of marking English words with Chinese pronunciation will not only make students cut the connection between the spelling and pronunciation of English words, but also make them acquire Chinese accent in their oral English expression, which is difficult to correct. For example, many students pronounce "worker" when they say "work" or "tester" when they say "test". The survey results precisely confirm the above views: 27.27% of students answered the question "Do you think your English pronunciation and intonation were affected by Chinese pronunciation rules and habits?" and chose "yes, always", while 36.36% chose "Yes, often". It is easily seen that college students in China have a relatively negative grasp of English pronunciation.

In addition to the wrong learning methods at their little age, during the critical period of language cultivation in junior high school and senior high school, they have little chance to get in touch with a pure English learning environment, especially for students in remote areas. The purpose of Chinese students to learn English is generally to cope with some entrance exams based on written tests, while the oral English expression is not required. Most students believe that the importance of spoken English is normally in their college years, at this stage students can access to a large number of foreign ideas, books and scientific research achievements. In such atmosphere, students will naturally develop a sense of social internationalization, so college students pay more attention to their oral English ability by degrees. However, due to the neglect of oral training in the early stage, and the lack of a complete English environment around them, the later period of quick success and instant benefit learning is not badly significant for their oral improvement. In a long run, when trying their best to express themselves in English, they often tend to think in Chinese. As the results of the questionnaire show, 100% of the students believe that they think in Chinese when they express themselves in English. Although the data shows that a large number of students start from Chinese thinking when using English, it is overt that their English expressions are not always wrong. This is because Chinese and Western cognition or thinking pattern are not completely different, the similarities between the two make Chinese students' expressions close to native English. On the contrary, the discrepancies make it sound awkward. After the questionnaire, the author randomly selected several respondents and asked them the question"How do you greet foreign friends in daily life?" One of the respondents answered, "Have you eaten yet?", which further proves that the negative transfer of Chinese in thinking has a great impact on oral English expression.

Except negative transfer caused by thinking, differences in grammar, vocabulary, and pragmatics between Chinese and English will also lead to mistakes in oral English expression. For example, Chinese students will casually say "There is how many books in your bag?" and other wrong interrogative sentences, which are caused by the lack of language rule that the interrogative words should be put at the beginning of the sentence if one expresses a question. Making lots of such silly errors would easily make some students have a sense of inferiority when they speak English. In serious cases, they are even

unwilling to take the initiative to speak English. To sum up, there are many obstacles for Chinese college students to tackle in their oral English learning that are influenced by negative transfer of mother tongue, which is a key problem that both students themselves and university teachers must face and get rid of. The solutions to the above problems will be discussed in chapter six.

5.2.2. The Impact of the Negative Transfer of Mother Tongue on English Composition Output

Negative transfer of mother tongue also has a great negative impact on Chinese students' writing learning and output. For Chinese students, apart from the oral English test, their poor performance is the English writing test. Every IELTS hold in China can show this point directly. In 2019, the average scores of Chinese students in all subjects were 5.9 in listening, 6.2 in reading, 5.5 in writing, and 5.4 in speaking. Chinese students have the worst command of oral English, followed by writing. Therefore, this section plays an important role in analyzing negative mother tongue.

In the previous questionnaire, the author collected relevant answers from students of Zhejiang Yuexiu University. In response to the question "Did you organize English sentences in Chinese word order when writing?", 89.91% of the students answered "yes", and 54.55% of them thought that the frequency of using Chinese word order to organize English sentences was "often". Through comparative analysis, it can be found that there are great differences between Chinese and English word order. The characteristic of English word order is that the emphasized part is usually placed at the front place of the sentence, that is to way, the most important information that the author thinks should be expressed in advance, while other modifiers are put at the end of the sentence. This is often not the case with the Chinese. In addition to this major difference, attributive position and adverbial position in English are the most discussed topics for Chinese learners. Attributive placement in English and Chinese is not exactly the same. For example, "She is the most clever girl alive." In this sentence, both "alive" and "the most clever girl" are the attributive of the noun girl. But "alive" should come after the modified word "girl". When phrases and clauses act as attributive in English, the attributive is usually placed after the core word being modified. This makes it more difficult for Chinese students whose mother tongue often puts attributive before modified words to learn English composition.

Moreover, due to the complete lack of the use of attributive clauses in Chinese, they are acknowledged to be inescapable for Chinese students to learn English writing. That is to say, for Chinese students, the difficulty in acquiring English lies not only in distinguishing the differences between Chinese and English sentence patterns, but also in accepting the grammar that does do not exist in their mother tongue, including the attributive clauses mentioned above, inflection, intransitive verb, special sentence patterns including emphasis, subjunctive, and inversion, etc. Here is an example of how Chinese students learn attributive clauses. Attributive clauses are generally the key and difficult learning content of Chinese high school English. In the initial stage, students are mainly tested on their mastery of various antecedents through multiple choice questions or fill-in-the-blank questions, and there is no requirement on the correct use of attributive clauses in writing. As a result, it is difficult for college freshmen to produce complete and correct attributive clauses, and some students even confuse them with adverbial clauses and nominal clauses. The author found that one freshman at Zhejiang Yuexiu University made an error in his composition: I still remember the day when we spent together. This student misused relative adverbs into relative pronouns.

Along with such difficulties caused by the lack of corresponding grammar concepts in the mother tongue, many negative transfer factors lead to obvious Chinglish. For example, improper vocabulary choice and collocation are one of the main factors. In several argumentative essays collected after the questionnaire, the above problems commonly occur: Some students wrote "learn knowledge", "crowed traffic", "catch up the opportunity" and other wrong lexical collocation. Some students confuse the word "desk" with the word "table", and write the word "organization" instead of "tissue". In addition to errors in vocabulary use and collocation, the author found that some English expressions of their writings were too simple. For example, they commonly used "overcome difficulties" while rarely used "remove difficulties" and "surmount difficulties". Similarly, the phrase "solve problems" is used more often than not, but few people chose "tackle the problem" or "unlock the problem". In addition, students most use "should" and "can" when using modal verbs, while other modal verbs are seldom written. These phenomena are derived from the subtle influence of learners' mother tongue. This also fully explains why 100% of the students in the questionnaire filled "yes" in the question "Do you feel that some sentences are Chinglish when checking your English compositions?". To sum up, mother tongue has a great influence on college students' English composition output, and this influence needs to be solved by better teaching methods than the present one. This paper puts relevant methods in chapter six.

5.3. Main Causes of the Negative Transfer of Mother Tongue

This part mainly analyzes the principal factors of negative transfer of Chinese language in Chinese college students' English learning -- the difference of cultural background and thinking patterns between Chinese and English.

5.3.1. Causes of Different Culture

When it comes to culture, the first thing that comes to mind is words. Character is the product of the development of human language. It is the image or symbol that records thoughts and carries language. There are more than 5,000 kinds of characters in the world, and the Chinese character is one of the oldest in the world. It is a kind of hieroglyphics. In contrast to Chinese characters, English words are combined by alphabets, which borrows from Latin letters. In the word-formation process, the meaningful word must be made of one letter or more letters.

The two countries' cultures are very different seen from their writings: the emphasis on symmetry and uniformity in the writing of Chinese characters highlights the Chinese spirit of harmony, solidarity, and the golden mean. However, western

culture attaches importance to individualism independence, and freedom. For example, the English word "I", only this word can be capitalized as one word in English, which notably reflects their self-valued trait. Furthermore, this difference is not only in the construction of words but also in the different daily lives of the two countries. For example, the Chinese prefer gregarious life and love a sense of intimacy no matter where they live. So they may call out "Grandpa" or "Aunt" even when meeting someone they don't know on the street. In their view, this not only brings people closer but also makes the whole society more united and harmonious. But in The Context of English, this situation appears very strange and awkward, and even causes excessive misunderstanding. For western people, they prefer to mention themselves, so that many English words can be prefixed with "self-", such as "self-conscious", "self-image", and "self-cultivation". In addition, this difference is also can be found in many proverbs both in Chinese and Western. For example, there is an old Chinese saying which goes "A man depends upon his parents at home, and upon his friends abroad". However, in western concepts, people usually try to get what they want through their efforts, so. There is a saying that goes "God helps those that help themselves." For the negative transfer of mother tongue caused by such differences, it is difficult for learners to find, and it is likewise not easy to correct. Therefore, both teachers and learners should pay great attention to it.

Aside from these, there is a further difference in culture--religious discrepancy. Christianity has a graven influence on English, among which the Bible has the most profound influence on English. It not only lays the foundation of modern English but also injects continuous fresh blood into English expression. It can be represented by a large number of idioms, maxims, and allusions directly derived from or deeply influenced by Christianity like "God bless you.", "The apple of one's eye", "Forbidden fruit" and "Garden of Eden". Comparatively speaking, the biggest religious impact that Chinese culture experienced in ancient times was the Buddhist culture from ancient India. In the long feudal society of China, it kept its enormous influence among various ethnic groups. Hence there are a large number of Chinese idioms that come from Buddhist scriptures, such as "heart-to-heart", and common sayings such as "Saving a life is better than building a seven-story pagoda" and "a clay Buddha fording the river--hardly able to save oneself". Such religious-cultural discrepancies caused by different ethical concepts are a more challenging problem in our English learning. To some extent, a deep understanding and absorption of English culture are generally required for students whose major is English. On the one hand, it helps them to learn more common knowledge about the foreign culture. On the other hand, it provides students with a comprehensive and infallible concept which both two countries have possessed, and which can lead them to produce works that can fit both cultures. In this way, students can develop into a vital medium for the dissemination and exchange of ideas between the two countries.

5.3.2. Causes of Different Thinking Patterns

In addition to differences in culture, another cause that makes a profound impact on students' foreign language learning is called thinking patterns. Linguists who hold that "thought determines language" deem that language is conventional symbols which created by human, and its generation and development completely come from the creativity of human thinking. Although this hypothesis is too absolute, it proves to some extent that human thinking affects language learning and production. According to scientific studies that Robert Kaplan (1966) proposed, it has shown that Chinese students show spiral thinking in language expression, while English native speakers show linear thinking. This just proves that there is a huge difference in thinking mode between Chinese and Native English speakers, and this difference also plays an important role in Chinese college students' English learning. It will be some particular examples in the next part to demonstrate it again.

Chinese people tend to beat about the bush, they usually talk from a wide range of space and time, while westerners tend to treat things dialectically, putting focus at the beginning of the content. For instance, people in China and the West view things in a very different order and they describe directions oppositely: in Chinese, the directions are sorted in the order of east, west, south, and north. While in English, the directions are expressed in the order in which prayers cross as north, south, east, and west. This difference needs students to follow the western culture when translating "东南" or "西北" into "southeast" and "northwest". Similar differences also appear in the description of dates and addresses. In Chinese, dates are generally recorded in the sequence of year, month, and day. While in English, they are usually recorded in reverse order. In Chinese, the address often is written from a large scale to a small one in the following model: country, province, city, street, etc. On the contrary, the sequence of describing the address in the West is generally from small address to large range. Apart from these, Traditional Chinese thinking, including Taoism and Confucianism, holds that subject itself is the center of the universe and man is the measure of all things, they deem that "Heaven, Earth and I come into being together, and all things and I are one." However, in western thinking, man and nature are opposite. This difference is also reflected in both languages. In the situation that Chinese uses living matter and people as subjects, English often uses nonhuman subjects, such as abstract nouns. This also explains the fact that they have a formal subject "it" in their grammar. For example, the Chinese nation produces a sentence like "I never thought that she was older than me.", but as a matter of fact, English people would say that in the same meaning like "It never occurs to me that she would be older than me."

All these differences in thinking patterns require students to studiously change their Chinese thinking into English in writing, especially in writing letters, to place themselves in the English context, and to ensure the accuracy of authentic English expression.

6. Approaches to Help Chinese College Students to Cope with the Negative Transfer of Mother Tongue in English Learning

Through the above analysis on the impact of the negative transfer of mother tongue on college students' speaking and writing and the analysis of its cultural factors, this chapter mainly puts forward learning strategies to reduce the negative transfer of college students' mother tongue from two aspects: the first is for college teachers, and the second is for college learners.

6.1. Approaches to Reducing Students' Negative Transfer of Mother Tongue--for College Teachers

At present, there are many English teaching methods suitable for students in China, such as situational teaching method, grammar-translation method, communicative teaching method, audio-lingual teaching method, and so on. However, to weaken the impact of the negative transfer of mother tongue on college students' English learning, practical teaching should not only rely on the rigid use of one existing teaching method but flexibly combine various teaching methods and develop new teaching models. Here, to mitigate the impact of the negative transfer of mother tongue among Chinese college students, the author puts forward the following solutions for college teachers:

It seems reasonable to assume that colleges and universities were encouraged to recruit high-level foreign teachers, ensuring that every college student spends at least one semester talking with native English speakers. Through face-to-face communication, foreign teachers can realize the deficiencies of students and teach purposefully in class. Daily dialogues can not only help students and teachers get to know each other, but also cultivate learners' confidence and courage to speak English. Due to the pandemic in recent years, many foreign teachers have no chance to continue to teach in China. However, it is noteworthy that with the continuous development of high-technology, online courses become an important way for face-to-face communication and teaching. This method thereby is still worth practicing.

Apart from that, it is necessary to suggest all English teachers teach in English in the classroom. The English language environment limited to foreign teach cannot promote the learning atmosphere to the greatest extent, and it requires teachers to teach and communicate with students in English according to their grade or the English level. For example, for new college students, teachers can use common words as far as possible to be understood. Later, as students acquire more and more vocabulary and idiomatic expressions, teachers can improve the standardization and accuracy of the language used in class. This not only provides students with more opportunities to adapt to the English language environment but also ensures the quality of English teaching.

Then, basic courses of Western culture should be added to the compulsory courses. Based on the content of chapter five, it can be concluded that the cultural differences between China and the Western are the biggest obstacle for learners to acquire English. Hence, to take the edge off the impact of negative transfer, the different thinking patterns brought about by different cultures must be weakened beforehand. The best way to do this is to immerse oneself in English culture and experience the charm of it. However, such an approach often requires a strong economic base. And for students, apart from learning advanced Western culture, the biggest task is to protect traditional Chinese culture, so such methods are not worth advocating. What Chinese students need to do is to understand the basic western culture, such as their beliefs, their brief history, their social structure, and so on. All these cultural courses are designed to lay a foundation for learners to master the target language background so that they can acquire English more naturally and more quickly.

At last, it appears to be very essential for teachers to organize various kinds of campus activities or contests to encourage students to apply English. The ultimate goal of learning English is to be able to utilize it accurately, which is also a big test for learners. There are many ways to apply English, but the main means are the two discussed in this paper: the first is "to say", and another is "to write". Given these two, college teachers can plan many meaningful activities to attract students, and the scale and themes of activities can be determined in the light of the personality of students and their English scores. For example, for coy students or students with weak grades, teachers can recommend them to participate in activities of small scope. With their confidence and English knowledge gradually enhanced, they can be encouraged to show themselves on a larger platform. As for the types of activities, taking into account the school's activity funds, teachers should endeavor to select interesting competitions. The best way is to combine other subjects to hold subject-themed activities so that English learning is no longer limited to learn a foreign language but to use language as a tool to apply it in real life.

6.2. Approaches to Reducing Students' Negative Transfer of Mother Tongue--for College Learners

No matter what subject one studies, it is not enough that only the teachers take efforts if he wants to get improvement, and the most significant is that he attaches importance to his performance. Therefore, at the end of this thesis, effective learning methods for students to overcome negative transfer of mother tongue should be emphasized:

It is all known that English learning can not only be understood as knowledge learning in class. Nowadays, many college students have an original intention to learn English well but they don't want to spend much time after class. It is known that, however, the most taboo for language learning is not willing to spend time, keeping knowledge on the superficial level, but not consolidating it. For Chinese college students, besides learning in class, the basic task of English learning after class is to memorize words. The average vocabulary of Chinese high school graduates is around 3,000-3,500 words. In the two tests, they have to take in college, students are required to master about 4,000-4,500 words in CET-4 and 5,500-6,000 words in CET-6. Therefore, remembering words is the basic construction for students' English learning. In addition, students can combine their interests and hobbies to participate in miscellaneous English learning activities and learn together with the group.

In some cases, studying English not means Studying in class. It would be very advanced to study the excellent culture of English-speaking countries, and receive excellent British and American films and books. This is a more relaxed and entertaining way of learning than the first point. In the teaching methods for college teachers mentioned before, the author puts forward the measure of adding English culture courses, which compulsively requires students to take in the essence of British and American culture. Using films and books of British and American countries, students can easily get the background knowledge of the story with the development of the plot, including the history of language, society, and other key information. In the long run, this cultural knowledge can be reflected in language thinking patterns. This has profound implications for students in producing authentic English rather than Chinglish.

Aside from practising and learning, Overcoming self-psychological barriers and outputting are the same crucial. The output here includes both verbal output and written output. For verbal output, the main obstacle that students need to get over is their inferiority complex. People growing up under different environmental conditions have different personalities. Some students love to show themselves from an early age, but on the contrary, many students seldom express themselves actively because of introversion. Especially for the output of the second language, this polarization tends to be more obvious. In this situation, students may not be able to change themselves in the short term but to make good use of English, students can try to get out of their comfort zone and start speaking simple sentences then gradually move on to using advanced vocabulary and complex sentences. As for the weird accent problem, it is hard to obliterate it since college students from different regions often hold different local accents. The feasible way to alleviate it is to imitate. In the first place, students can choose the standard English pronunciation as a prototype. listening to it is the first step, the second is to internalize it, and the last is to speak up. After repeated training, students' accents would be corrected to some degree. As for the output of writing, it has nothing to do with students' personalities, but more importantly, it requires them to output their views accurately. This also leads to a common way to evaluate college students' writing skills--argumentative writing. In the process of learning to write English compositions, the best way to improve writing skills is to read more. Reading can increase students' vocabulary and enrich their knowledge system, which distinctly is essential for writing. For college students, it is best to select some influential and valuable materials to read, such as bilingual newspapers and magazines. These readings have both English and Chinese sections, so each English report will have its corresponding Chinese expression. This is of great help to cultivate students' English thinking, and when students write, they can naturally write out the authentic expressions that frequently appear in their readings.

The preceding content is the effective way proposed by the author to reduce the negative transfer of mother tongue for all college teachers and students.

7. Conclusion

When taking the students of Zhejiang Yuexiu University as the empirical research object, the author successfully conducted a study on the impact of the negative transfer of mother tongue on college students' English learning. Combining with her own English learning experience, the author initiated a deep reflection on future English teaching. For today's Chinese college students, it is still their mission and responsibility to improve their comprehensive ability, go international and deliver Chinese culture to the world. Therefore, learning English has become a shortcut to reach that destination. It is the pursuit of all linguistic learners and teachers, including the author, to help each student to find appropriate ways to overcome the negative transfer of mother tongue and acquire English smoothly. There is no doubt that every thesis has its defects and room for improvement. The results of the paper is time-limited and cannot represent the future English situation of Chinese college students. In view of this, in the area of language research, the author will keep the original intention and insist on making better research.

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