

A COMPARATIVE STUDY ON ENGLISH CLASSROOM CODE-SWITCHING

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ABSTRACT: *The international communication deepened. Countries in abroad or at home need bilingual talents and the English classroom need bilingual education. In that process, the code-switching is necessary. However, the code-switching theory ever suffered debates in its advantages and disadvantages. By reading literatures, the author tends to introduce the positive functions. In this paper, chapter one mainly introduces necessities of the code-switching; chapter two give explanations of definitions of the code-switching and adaptation theory.; chapter three introduces the research methodology; chapter four is a comparison between graduates and postgraduates in application of the CS, and the author give relevant suggestions; chapter five analyzes disadvantages of the whole paper and designs the future study. The meaning of this paper is to find out differences of the CS application between undergraduates and postgraduates. Besides, the author also suggests teachers and students to teach and study better. The author hopes that this paper will be more complete.*

KEY WORDS: code-switching, graduates and postgraduates, comparison analysis

INTRODUCTION

Code-switching (CS) is a debated issue in many research fields. It can also be used in the pragmatics and teaching methods. Because the code-switching can be combined with many subjects, I mainly give my explanations from the perspective of pragmatics. Besides, the theory could be used in the English teaching classroom in China. In this paper, I firstly collect materials about peculiarities in English classroom in the college school. Furthermore, information collection about postgraduate English classroom is the other job. By comparison, the code-switching plays a different role in two teaching circumstances. From the above analysis, theoretically, we know about the code-switching from the perspective of teaching practice. Practically, first, the education institution can revise requirements for teachers serviced for college school students. Second, teachers use the code-switching to achieve social or other goals. Third, students study English more efficiently and absorb knowledge effectively. Zhao Yinong (2013)

claimed that one of the argumentative points of foreign language teaching is whether teachers make use of the mother tongue to teach foreign languages. Therefore, we could combine the language teaching with the code-switching.

Necessaries for language code-switching

In the 1980s, the code-switching began to be a debated issue in the foreign countries. Most of scholars object the use of mother tongue because of that will decrease amounts of language input and output (Lu Cuicui, 2016). Until to 1990s, the code-switching in the foreign language classroom has been accepted by some scholars who thought that the code-switching improves teaching efficiency to some extent. Nation (1990) claimed that learners do not use the mother tongue will increase their psychological broaden. Cook (2001) suggested teachers use the target language extensively while use the mother tongue explaining the English grammar and read classroom rules.

In the domestic English classroom, there are several reasons for bilingual teaching in China. As Ou Weihong (2012) says, the first one is to make the best use of the research achievement made abroad: firstly, bilingual programs safeguard both the knowledge and literacy in learning; secondly, good bilingual programs promote English proficiency; thirdly, a common argument against bilingual education is the observation that many people have succeeded without it. The second one is to make up the deficiency of English teaching.

In 2001, the Ministry of Education in China stipulated that five to ten percent of the total courses the higher education should be taught in English. Besides the above mentioned advantages, the fact that primary bilingual education functions as the essential basis for higher bilingual education in China can't be emphasized too much. (Ou Weihong, 2012).

In conclusion, the bilingual teaching is beneficial for teachers and students, therefore, in that process, the code-switching is necessary and can make the bilingual classroom more efficient.

Definitions

Code-switching

Code-switching emphasizes change or movement from one language or language variety to the other. Longman Dictionary defines it as a person may start speaking one language and then change to another one in the middle of a sentence. Code-switching in foreign language classrooms is about the choice of target or native language made by teachers and students sharing the same mother tongue (Duan Yuanbin, 2017)

Code-switching in foreign language classrooms is about the choice of target or native language made by teachers and students sharing the same mother tongue (Duan Yuanbin, 2017). As far as Chinese-English bilingual teaching of china is concerned, the code may be either Chinese Putonghua (PTH) or English, and CS refers to the change or movement from PTH to English and the vice versa (Ou Weihong, 2012)

Adaptation

Firstly, we should know about the content of adaptation. Verschuren claimed that language is a selective process consciously or unconsciously; language users could do kinds of correct choices because of language peculiarities including variability, adaptability and negotiability. The term “adaptability” refers to language users could make flexible choices from different language items and so as to cater for the communicative needs. (Huang Chengfu, 2006). Based on that theory, Yu Guodong proposes that the adaptation could be explained from the linguistic reality, social conventions and mental motivation. His adaptation model better answers why communicators use the code-switching and their objectives. Yu Guodong in his paper firstly generalized the existing literature on the study of code-switching into four basic approaches including grammatics, social-linguistics, psycho-linguistics, and pragmatics. He proposes that a study from the pragmatic perspective is a must so as to reveal the full complexity of code-switching.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

My research materials are mainly from Zhi Wang. There are forty seven items about the English classroom teaching code-switching. Scholars choose different research targets, and most of them tend to regard the age as one research point. Nine of these papers explain the English classroom code-switching phenomenon in the university where students are not in English majors. There is only one paper talking about the code-switching for postgraduates. Because the teaching requirements in these two periods are different, the functions of code-switching are different for teachers and students.

In my dissertation, I firstly do the comparison about the application of the code-switching between students learning in the college and graduate school. Secondly, I analyze differences between these two stages. Lastly, I conclude the whole paper and give my advice and suggestions. Certainly, my paper exists many disadvantages needed to improve. For example, there is only one paper related to the postgraduates. Therefore, in the future study, I could collect more research points in this stage, and the more

information I could find out, then the value of this paper will be higher.

Main Analysis

Functions of the code-switching

Xing Liping did research on college students who make use of the textbook named New Horizon College English (Volume one). He concluded that teachers use the code-switching mainly because of three reasons. The first one is the explanations of specialized items and complex nouns, such as “paraphrase”, “Renaissance” and some difficult words needed to explain in a simple way. The second one is explanations for the grammar phenomenon and the last one is the descriptions of the background knowledge. Wu Yanping analyzes the code-switching from the perspective of adaptation. She claims that teachers will cater for students’ needs, for example, they don’t know the English of the complex words, like “Ren, Dao, Wu wei, Qi Gong, Yin yang”. Teachers also should obey the traditional rules and explain some awkward words like “sex”. Furthermore, teachers should take students’ psychology into consideration, for example, students are easy to feel anxious and nervous. Lastly, English teaching revolution needs teachers using the code-switching. Hui Caixia sent out 493 questionnaires to college students. According to her data collection, teachers make use of the code-switching in reading and writing more frequently. She concludes seven reasons for using code-switching method to teach, including the better understanding, teaching efficiency, important knowledge points study, blank words limitation, attention attraction and limitation to teachers’ teaching ability. Shi Junhua concludes three functions of the code-switching including information function, classroom management function and communicative function. Yang Na, Cui Yaping and Ren Haitang concluded their questionnaires that teachers and students use code-switching in the intensive reading class more frequently than students in the listening classroom. Therefore, types of lessons are also essential to the classroom code-switching.

From above information, we know about many reasons why teachers would use the code-switching in the classroom. The following part is the functions of code-switching from the perspective of the adaptation. And we will find that almost all the functions and reasons of the use of code-switching could be explained from the point of adaptation. One scholar named Zhong Xiao (2007) has done a more comprehensive research on functions of code-switching from the perspective of the adaptation theory. The first one is the adaptation of the authentic environment. In the English classroom, teachers need to explain new concepts, unfamiliar vocabularies and phrases and new grammar items. For example, “Procrastination may be a kind of subliminal way of sorting the important from the trivial. 这是一个心理学家的观点, right? “subliminal” means “unconscious”, 无意识中获得, 也就是潜意识。我们在第一节课提到奥地

利精神病学家 Sigmund Freud, 也说到这个方面, 对吧? Now, Fagan believes that ...” (Zhong Xiao, 2007).

The second one is the adaptation of the teachers' role. In English classroom, teacher is a prompter, facilitator, motivator, administrator and designer. For example, as a prompter, teachers will adjust their words or sentences in order to decrease the difficulties of their lessons. As a motivator, they can share their own experience with students in Chinese so as to relieve students' anxiety. The following part is one example:

Teacher: I have found dull routine compatible with an active mind. “be compatible with” means “coexist with”. For example: His actions are compatible with his words. What does this sentence mean?

Students: ... [The students have no interaction]

Teacher: 言行一致, 对吗?

Students: Yes!

Teacher: I can still...

The third point is the adaptation of the psychology, which includes the establishment of the learning environment, encouragement and psychological support. Zhong Xiao (2007) found out that teachers prefer to speak Chinese to express their happiness.

Teacher: “And he held out his arms to all of us young sinners there on the mourners' bench,” Here “held out” is a gesture. So, what kind of a gesture? What does the gesture mean?

Student: That's a gesture of welcoming somebody.

Teacher: 答得非常好! 我们伸出手, 这样一个动作, 就是欢迎某人, 是吧? 所以, ‘伸出一个人的手臂’, 是一种动作。欢迎什么? 欢迎的是那些小孩, 到耶稣上帝那里, 也就是说成为他们的教徒。懂了吗? 欢迎他们成为耶稣的教徒。

Comparison

Teachers in the university pay more attention to students' fundamental English ability and knowledge. To some extent, teachers try to cater for requirements of the education government. The ministry of education says in Teaching Requirements for College English Courses published in 2007, aiming for English goals, it says, “the goal of college English is to cultivate students' comprehensive ability in English, especially in listening and speaking, and to help them speak fluently and effectively in their study, work, and social activities. At the same time, college English should strengthen students' independent learning ability, improve comprehensive cultural literacy in order to adapt

to the social development and international communication.”(Liu Guohui, 2012). The above requirements also can be used in the postgraduate students. However, postgraduate English, as one compulsory course in one’s postgraduate study, differs from college English in the aspects of teaching subject, teaching content and teaching objective and so on. (Liu Miao, 2018). For English major postgraduates, the fundamental function of English major postgraduates is to convey information, communication and improve lessons efficiency. (Liu Ruonan, 2010). In the other words, English major postgraduates pay more attention to the specialized knowledge but not the basic grammar points. Taking English majors in Lanzhou University as an example, for English majors, their course contents include intensive reading class, grammar course, listening, speaking and writing. For English major postgraduates, their courses are more specialized, and students just study the contents in the scope of their majors, for example, the linguistics and its branches like second language acquisition, pragmatics, and lexicology.

By comparison, we could find differences for both of graduates and postgraduates. Therefore, the function of code-switching will be different. For college students, we can explain the code-switching from the perspective of adaptation. The most common reason of the CS for students is the adaptation of the language including the explanation of new concepts, new items or grammar items and difficult words. It helps students put their attention on grammar knowledge. For college teachers, CS helps teachers make communication process more fluent and convenient. Furthermore, CS can also establish suitable language environment for students to learn foreign languages better. For postgraduates, most of students should depend on themselves, CS phenomenon happens mostly in themselves not the English classroom, therefore, it will be more meaningful to do the analysis on English academic writing and do the interview on school teachers. For teachers teaching postgraduates, CS mainly helps teachers to teach the knowledge but not the language itself. They also needn’t to encourage students sharing their opinions because postgraduates enjoy more freedom and right to make their own decisions. The meanings of this comparison are follows: universities can recruit teachers and manage them in a more suitable way; teachers clear their teaching tasks in different stages and better allocate their energy; students know about the importance of CS; the education institution can adjust their language policy.

There is one important point needed to explain. Some scholars choose their research targets in the scope of all students majored in kinds of fields. From my analysis, I mainly do the comparison limited to English majors. On the one hand, I am an English major student so that I know about lessons I learned in the English classroom. On the other hand, choosing English majors will narrow the scope of my research and the results

would be more meaningful for a certain group.

Suggestion

Because I mainly analysis the function of CS from the perspective of adaptation, I prefer to give my advice by means of the adaptation theory.

Firstly, the adaptation to English language itself. For teachers: College teachers can make use of the CS to explain new concepts or difficult words and sentences. For example, teacher says: My aunt told me that when you saved you saw a light. “这里的 light 不是真实的，是圣光”.(Zhao Yinong, 2013). For undergraduate students and postgraduate students in English major, teachers need to do different tasks. English major teachers in colleges pay more attention to the fundamental knowledge while teachers for postgraduates mainly teach specialized knowledge. Besides, in colleges, English major teachers' roles differ from non-English teachers in English knowledge. The former need to cater for all of requirements of adaptation while the latter pays more attention to the basic English knowledge like English grammar, complicated sentences or difficult vocabularies. Differences exist because of the time limitation, targets difference, teaching objectives and so on. Therefore, we conclude that requirements are different for teachers in different stages. Teachers could adjust their teaching objectives according to students' needs. For students, they could use the CS to better understand the specialized knowledge while for postgraduates who can read papers more fluently and effectively.

Secondly, the adaptation to teachers' roles. English classroom needs the CS to achieve language communication goals. Therefore, the education institution or school management better recruits teachers possessing perfect bilingual abilities. That will improve teaching qualities to some extent.

Thirdly, the adaptation to psychological intention. That point suggests that teachers in universities better study some knowledge in psychology and education.

Conclusion

Disadvantages and Future Designs

According to my above analysis and thoughts, I find that there are some disadvantages and some important research points needed to analyze. Firstly, when I read the relevant papers and dissertations, many scholars will collect authentic data through questionnaires. Data can make the whole paper more authoritative. But in my paper, there are not my data and my methodology is too simple by reading other scholars' outputs. The reason is that my working environment is limited and I have not enough

targets to do the interview. Therefore, in my future study, I will make use of the quantification and qualification methods to complete my paper.

Secondly, research on postgraduates is less than that on college students. When I read relevant information, I find that the application of the code-switching in the stage of postgraduates is limited. In my opinion, postgraduates are less than undergraduates in amounts and their subject directions are definitized. They need to learn English by themselves except for some students who want to accept the bilingual education, hence the code-switching in postgraduates English classroom is not common. Furthermore, non-English major postgraduates learn by themselves at most of the time. They read literatures and write papers in English and needn't teachers. Meanwhile, their abilities in studying English can be practiced by their own methods, hence the code-switching phenomenon can't be analyzed easily. Therefore, it's better to do the comparison about English classroom code-switching between the English major students and postgraduates in English major. On the one hand, the research scope will be reduced; on the other hand, it's meaningful for scholars to know the differences about the functions of code-switching for different aging stages.

Thirdly, my reading scope is limited. I read some papers in Zhi Wang website and almost all of them are written in Chinese, so that my whole analysis may not complete and my opinions may not objective.

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