Research on the Influence Factors of College Students’ Second Language Acquisition Adherence Behavior Based on the Theory of Psychological Commitment

JIE XIAO, ZHONG CAO and WEI-MIN QI

ABSTRACT

Through the stages of “theoretical exploration→theoretical hypothesis→empirical investigation”, this research explores the process and causes of students' persistence in foreign language learning, analyzes the influence factors and mechanism of the second language acquisition commitment, and is tested by empirical study. The results of this research can provide a way for teachers to promote students to adhere their motivation of foreign language learning and thus help to establish learners’ lifelong consciousness in foreign language learning.

INTRODUCTION

At present, almost all college students are participating in the English learning, but only a few can keep learning. On one hand, students lack of continuing professional guidance from teachers; on the other hand, some students have strong utilitarian in learning but poor adherence. After passing grade examination, the phenomenon that students give up English learning has become increasingly prominent. To explore the causes and mechanism of the continuing or exit behavior of the second language acquisition will not only be more targeted for teachers to work out the foreign language learning motivation strategies to ensure students to adhere to foreign language learning, but also be of great importance to establish learners' lifelong consciousness in foreign language learning.

Psychological commitment theory mainly comes from the Commitment Investment Model in social psychology and organizational psychology, which is concerned with the individual’s act of perseverance in the face of adversity due to the dedication of a certain event and attachment.

Psychological commitment behavior in second language acquisition means that an individual is attached to the second language acquisition and produces a coherent foreign language learning behavior.

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College Students' second language acquisition means college students’ continuing foreign language learning behavior outside the classroom.

**RELATIVE STUDIES ABROAD AND AT HOME**

Commitment refers to the adherence to one's inner motivation, which is the attachment of a person's inner mind and will to a certain activity or relationship. Commitment can make the promise better regulate their own behavior. Commitment not only means constraint to individuals but also inspires people to overcome difficulties to achieve goals. In difficulties, commitment can remind and warn people the serious consequence and the responsibilities to bear as a result of the denying commitment.[1]

The theory of psychological commitment has been widely studied in the field of social psychology and organizational psychology. Its core idea is: Psychological commitment is the guarantee of one’s behavior when the he is in the face of adversity, an effective way to improve the result of behavior and to improve the degree of satisfaction, and also a reliable way to measure the fidelity of behavior.


**DESIGN METHODS FOR THE INFLUENCE FACTORS OF COLLEGE STUDENTS' SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION ADHERENCE BEHAVIOR BASED ON THE THEORY OF PSYCHOLOGICAL COMMITMENT**

This study intends to take 6 classes of students majoring in science, engineering, and art at a comprehensive university as the research object. The study is carried out in the following steps:

1. Through literature tracing, it explores the influence factors of the second language acquisition based on the theory of commitment to construct the theoretical prototype of the study of the second language acquisition commitment.

Through literature tracking, this research applies the theory of psychological commitment put forward by Allen & Meyer(1990) [3], Blao & Gary(2001) [4], Ling Wenquan (2001) to the practice of second language acquisition. In the previous literature tracking, this study has constructed six variables that affect the behavior of the second language acquisition, including psychological commitment, personal investment, opportunity cost, learning interest, environmental constraints and development need.

Psychological commitment refers to the coherent and non negligent foreign language learning behavior produced by the students' attachment to the second language acquisition. Personal investment refers to the energy, time, cost and other factors in the acquisition of the second language acquisition, and the resources cannot be recovered with the termination of the acquisition. Opportunity cost refers to the maximum loss of second language learning and the loss of other opportunities. Learning interest refers to the interest and passion of the learners in the language learning process. Environmental constraint refers to the impact of society, family, school and other external environmental factors on the second language acquisition.
Development need refers to the positive impact of the results of second language acquisition on further studies, employment and personal development.

2. The study conducts a questionnaire survey and interviews to examine and verify the impact factors in the literature tracking. At the same time, through the statistical data this study sums up new variables in order to make up the deficiency of the early prediction variables.

The survey designs a questionnaire and uses it to interview 30 students. Through collecting the questionnaire data, the influencing factors in the literature tracking are tested and verified. At the same time, through the statistical data this study sums up new variables in order to make up the deficiency of the early prediction variables. The survey content involves the following: Learners consciously learning foreign language after class, the frequency of individual students’ autonomous learning English every week, duration of each learning, the percentage of students who never make English autonomous Learning etc. This investigation can systematically extract the factors that affect the behavior of the second language acquisition. This survey also lays a theoretical basis for the empirical investigation of the second language acquisition adherence behavior.

3. Taking the influence factors of the second language acquisition as the content, and taking the related theory as the guide, the research works out the questionnaire about the second language acquisition adherence behavior in college students and makes an empirical study among them.

In order to further explain the internal mechanism between the psychological commitment and the second language acquisition this study attempts to construct a framework model for the impact factors of foreign language learning, and carries out an empirical test by students.\(^5\)

This framework model mainly expresses the following ideas: ① Whether the behavior of the second language acquisition is influenced by the psychological commitment, learning motivation, experience and self efficacy of the learners; whether the psychological commitment has the most significant impact on the behavior of the second language acquisition. ② Whether learners’ motivation intensity, learning effect experience and learners’ self efficacy have a reverse effect on psychological commitment. ③ How do the influencing factors of the second language acquisition influence the adherence behavior of the second language acquisition directly or indirectly through the psychological commitment.

![Figure 1. Framework model of second language acquisition adherence behavior.](image-url)
Based on the above ideas, this research works out the “questionnaire about commitment behavior in college Students’ second language acquisition” and use this questionnaire to investigate the students.

4. According to the different levels the students belong to in the second language acquisition, the students will be divided into different stages. The research tests different levels of students with the questionnaire to verify whether the psychological commitment is positively related to the second language acquisition.[6]

Each stage of the second language acquisition behavior is defined as the following table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stages of Adherence</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre intention stage</td>
<td>Learners have no learning plan about second language acquisition, and no learning plan in the next six months.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intention stage</td>
<td>Learners have no learning plan about second language acquisition, but have learning plan in the next six months.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preparation stage</td>
<td>Learners have already started the second language acquisition behavior, but has not formed regular learning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action Stage</td>
<td>In the past 6 months, the learner has just started to adhere to the second language acquisition behavior.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintenance Stage</td>
<td>Learners keep on the second language acquisition behavior regularly for 6 months and above.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5. Based on the above quantitative research results, the student diary research method and observation method are used in the study to make a qualitative analysis of the relationship between the learner’s learning motivation, learning experience, learner's self efficacy, and the psychological commitment behavior in the second language acquisition, and how do these three factors play positive effect on the psychological commitment behavior of the second language acquisition.

Student diary is the honest and detailed records written by students about their reflected thinking in second language acquisition. The diary is not only a record of students' cognitive reconstruction process, but also a channel for teachers to understand the students’ learning motivation intensity, effect experience and self-efficacy. Therefore teachers can make more personalized counseling for students to discover, inspire and cultivate the students' intrinsic learning potential and enthusiasm. Even, student diary can become a bridge between teachers and students to exchange ideas and gain confidence in learning. Teachers should encourage, guide, observe and conduct the student's diary and make the diary a means of reflective learning.

Students' psychological changes will be reflected through the external learning behavior. Through classroom teaching and extracurricular activities teachers observe, guide and record students’ external learning behavior to make descriptive analysis of students’ learning motivation intensity, effect experience, self-efficacy and other changes, and analyze how these three factors play a positive effect on the psychological commitment of second language acquisition.

This is a process mainly based on descriptive analysis with no or little quantitative analysis.
CONCLUSION

In a conclusion, through the stages of “theoretical exploration → theoretical hypothesis → empirical investigation”, this research explores the process and causes of students' persistence in foreign language learning, analyzes the influence factors and mechanism of the second language acquisition commitment, and is tested by empirical study. The results of this research can provide a way for teachers to promote students to adhere their motivation of foreign language learning and thus help to establish learners' lifelong consciousness in foreign language learning.

REFERENCES