

A Survey of English Learning Strategies of Senior High School Students in Minority Areas

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Abstract: This paper takes the students who have just graduated from high school in minority areas in 2022 as subjects, and uses quantitative research methods to conduct a questionnaire survey. The results show that most minority senior high school students fail to master or fully master English learning strategies. Therefore, teachers in minority areas should cultivate students' English learning strategies to improve their independent learning ability.

Keywords: Minority High School Students; English; Learning Strategies

1. The background of research

According to the New Curriculum Standard of Senior High School, learning strategies are meta-cognitive, cognitive, communicative and affective strategies. In general, there are two main problems in previous studies on the English learning strategies of minority students: First, the research scope is narrow: many scholars focus on the English learning strategies of minority students in a certain school or class, and the results are not universal. Second, the research object is single. Most scholars focus on the English learning strategies of a certain minority student, but do not mention the English learning strategies of other minority students. In order to know the use of learning strategies of minority high school students, this paper conducts a questionnaire survey on those who've graduated in 2022 on the basis of careful reading of the New Curriculum Standards for High School students and relevant research literature.

2. The significance of research

Since the eighth curriculum reform of basic education in China at the beginning of this century, English learning strategies have become one of the important contents of basic foreign language education. Minority high school students who have just graduated are a group of special students who have experienced a complete training of English learning strategies in primary and secondary schools, but have not been trained in college English learning strategies. Their current mastery and application of English learning strategies is what they have mastered and applied in high school. It is of great theoretical and practical significance to conduct large-scale survey on this kind of student group.

3. Survey of English learning strategies of minority senior high school students

3.1 Survey respondents

The questionnaire was randomly distributed to minority students who've just completed the college entrance examination in 2022. These students came from all over the country and studied English as a foreign language in senior high school.

3.2 Research tools

The survey tool of this study is a scale, which is used to investigate the learning strategies of students in the four dimensions: meta-cognitive strategies (15), cognitive (28) strategies, communicative strategies (8) and emotional strategies (8). Each item has 5 options: 1= Never Apply; 2= Seldom Apply; 3= Sometimes Apply; 4= Mostly Apply; 5= Always Apply. According to the scale design, the average score (M) of 1.00-1.49 means never used; 1.50-2.49 means not used. 2.50-3.49 means sometimes used. 3.50-4.49 means frequently used. 4.50-5.00 means always used. The reliability of this scale is 0.8863, which has good consistency and high reliability (Qin Zhiqiang, 2005).

3.3 Data processing

A total of 227 questionnaires were collected in this survey, of which 20 were submitted by Han students, so a total of 207 valid questionnaires were collected. Statistical software SPSS11.0 was used to conduct descriptive statistics and analysis of the obtained survey data.

3.4 Analysis of research results

The survey results show that overall average score is 3.35, and various data are shown in Table 1:

Table 1: Descriptive statistics of the four strategies sub-scales

Item	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Meta-cognitive strategies	207	3.38	0.85
Cognitive strategies	207	3.33	0.84
Communicative strategies	207	3.29	0.92
Emotional strategies	207	3.45	0.89
Overall average score		3.35	0.86

According to the analysis in the above table, the score values are interpreted based on Oxford(1990)'s interpretation of the average score. This shows that most senior high school students in minority areas have not mastered or fully mastered English learning strategies, and the overall level of strategy application is low.

Among the four types of strategies, the highest standard deviation is the communicative strategy, indicating the greatest difference in the use of communicative strategies; The lowest standard deviation is cognitive strategies, indicating the least difference in subjects' use of cognitive strategies. From the point of view of the average score of sub-items, emotional strategy scored the highest (M=3.45) and communicative strategy scored the lowest (M=3.29). The use of specific strategies, reasons and countermeasures are as follows:

3.4.1 Analysis of meta-cognitive strategy

The average score of this strategy ranks second, indicating that this strategy is commonly used strategy among students. As can be seen from the data (the average is more than 3.4), most students can have a clear learning goal and have a certain cognition of the progress and effect of English learning. However, according to the data (the average is less than 3.3), most students have a single learning method: they cannot flexibly use a variety of learning strategies, but over-rely on a single learning method. For example, some students may only rely on rote memorization to memorize words and grammar, and neglect to consolidate and improve their English through practical applications such as reading and listening. Moreover, self-monitoring is insufficient: in the learning process, they can not effectively monitor their learning status or adjust the learning strategy in time. Finally, some students basically have a certain ability to reflect on learning. However, some may not realize the importance of reflection to improve learning strategies and learning outcomes, and therefore fail to learn from past experiences and prepare for future learning.

Therefore, to correctly use meta-cognitive strategies, students should learn how to formulate clear learning goals, plan reasonable learning progress, adopt diversified learning methods, and strengthen self-monitoring and reflection.

3.4.2 Analysis of cognitive strategy

It can be seen from the obtained data (the average is more than 3.4) that most students have a certain understanding of the materials: when understanding English articles or listening materials, they can basically show a deep understanding and analysis of the structure, context and author's intention of the text, rather than just paying attention to the literal meaning of words and sentences. However, the data show (the average is less than 3.3) that firstly, students may not be able to apply the English knowledge they have learned to new situations. Second, students may rely too much on a particular learning strategy and be reluctant to try or adapt to new learning methods. Third, they may lack an accurate assessment of their learning status and be unable to identify problems in their learning and make improvements.

Therefore, teachers should provide targeted guidance to help students master effective learning strategies and encourage them to try new learning methods. At the same time, students should also keep an open and positive attitude to improve the English learning effect.

3.4.3 Analysis of communication strategy

The score of this strategy is the lowest, indicating that students use this strategy the worst. First, students may be afraid of making mistakes or nervous, resulting in stuttering and pausing in oral expression, unable to express their ideas smoothly. Second, some students may

be reluctant to take the initiative to participate in English communication activities because of inferiority or introversion. They may be silent in class, unwilling to take the initiative to answer questions or participate in discussions, and thus miss the opportunity to practice their oral English. Third, in the process of communication, students may only rely on a limited number of strategies, such as direct translation of mother tongue or the use of simple vocabulary and sentence patterns, and cannot flexibly adjust strategies according to specific communicative situations. Moreover, due to the lack of understanding of the culture of English-speaking countries, students may not be able to accurately understand and use cultural elements in English in communication, resulting in communication barriers or misunderstandings. They may not be able to adapt to different communication styles and habits, thus affecting the effect of communication.

Therefore, teachers should encourage students to participate in classroom discussions and role playing and improve their oral expression ability and self-confidence, enhance cultural awareness and cross-cultural communication ability, provide a variety of communicative tasks, give students' feedback on communication performance in time, and point out problems and give improvement suggestions to help students constantly improve their communication strategies.

3.4.4 Analysis of emotional strategy

This strategy had the highest average score, indicating that it was the most commonly used strategy by students. First, most students maintain a positive and optimistic attitude towards learning. When facing difficulties and challenges in English learning, they have certain confidence and do not give up easily. Secondly, they are good at adjusting their learning emotions, and can recover quickly when they encounter setbacks to avoid negative effects of emotions on learning. Thirdly, they are good at communicating and cooperating with classmates and teachers, willing to share their learning experiences and strategies, and able to listen to others' suggestions and solve problems together. Moreover, they can clearly recognize the importance of learning English and make efforts to achieve it. This strong motivation and goal orientation makes them more focused and engaged in their learning. Finally, when they encounter learning difficulties, they can adopt more effective ways, such as seeking help, making learning plans, etc., to overcome obstacles. They will also adjust the learning content and difficulty according to their own learning progress and level, so that the learning is more in line with their actual situation.

4. Conclusion

This paper analyzes the survey of English learning strategies of minority high school students, and gives some feedback results to senior high school teachers in minority areas, so that senior high school teachers can clearly understand the mastery and application of students' learning strategies, hoping to help senior high school English teachers to improve students' English learning efficiency and independent English learning ability.

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