Language choice tendency in second language academic writing

-- Based on the perspective of explicit and implicit expression of information

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Abstract. From the perspective of explicit and implicit information expression, this paper explores the language choice tendency of second language academic writing. The dynamic balance between the two is the core of the clarity and conciseness of academic terms, and also the key to cross-cultural academic communication. Combing second language acquisition and academic discourse research, it is found that learners show obvious level differences: the middle and low levels are often over manifested (such as the abuse of connectives and semantic repetition), and the middle and high levels are prone to improper concealment (such as fuzzy logic and unclear reference). Such tendencies tend to lead to discourse redundancy or logic fracture, affecting the efficiency of academic information transmission and the recognition of papers. The research shows that the main influencing factors are mother tongue transfer, insufficient cognition of academic norms, and the limitation of second language level. The purpose of this paper is to provide practical reference for the teaching of second language academic writing, help learners balance explicit and implicit expression according to the characteristics of science and engineering, humanities and Social Sciences, and improve the logicality and standardization of academic discourse.

Keywords: Second language academic writing, language choice tendency, explicit information, implicit expression, second language acquisition.

1. Introduction

Cross cultural academic exchanges are increasingly frequent. From international journal submissions to academic conference reports, L2 academic writing has become the core ability of learners to participate in international academic dialogue. Its language choice directly affects the accurate understanding of research results - readers judge the rigor of research through logical cohesion and information presentation, which is directly related to "information transmission efficiency" and "academic recognition".

There are two key ways of information transmission in academic discourse: the explicit use of "howerver", "as shown in Figure 1" and other clear logic and reference can reduce the cost of understanding when scholars from different disciplines collaborate; Implicit expressions rely on context or subject consensus to omit redundancy. For example, use "interviewee" to refer to "University Teachers" in the previous article, and social science papers default to "representative samples". The two should be adjusted flexibly according to academic norms, and the imbalance is easy to lead to misunderstanding [1].

However, second language learners often fail to grasp the boundaries: some overuse connectives, such as "in addition" "moreover" after "results support hypothesis"; In part, the key logic is not clear and the pronoun reference is vague, which not only leads to readers' difficulty in understanding, but also misreads the research conclusion. The study points out that this language choice bias will directly affect the fluency of the text, and thus underestimate the academic value of the study.

At present, the teaching of second language writing focuses on grammar error correction and standardized reference format, and the targeted guidance of "explicit implicit expression balance" is obviously insufficient. From the perspective of explicit and implicit expression of information, this paper combs the language choice tendency of second language learners in academic writing, provides reference for teaching practice, helps learners find the balance between explicit and implicit, and writes texts that meet international academic norms.

2. The core connotation of explicit and implicit expression of information in second language academic writing

Explicit and implicit expression of information are two basic ways of information transmission in academic discourse. Their definition needs to be combined with the particularity of academic writing. Academic writing should not only ensure the accurate transmission of research information, but also conform to the discourse conventions of different disciplines. The boundary division of the two ways cannot be separated from the specific academic scene. From the perspective of definition, information explicitation refers to the explicit presentation of textual logic, semantic relations and referential information through linguistic forms, such as the use of logical connectors such as "forever", "herefore" and "as shown in Table 1" to mark the data source, or the use of appositions, parentheses to supplement research methods, sample characteristics and other key information (swales, 2004). This method can reduce the cost of understanding to the greatest extent, and is especially suitable for cross-cultural academic exchanges. For example, in international cooperative papers, researchers from different mother tongue backgrounds can avoid logical misreading caused by cultural differences through explicit expression [2].

Implicit expression depends on context, academic community consensus or text logic to omit redundant information. For example, in the same chapter, the previous article has made it clear that "the research object is college students", and the later article can directly refer to "subject" without repeating the full name; Or based on the general knowledge of the subject, omit the default premise recognized by researchers in various fields such as "data analysis should meet the statistical significance standard ($p<0.05$)" (Biber et al., 2011). Implicit expression is not "lack of information", but to improve the brevity of the text by simplifying the language. Academic writing needs to focus on the core research conclusions. Redundant information will distract readers' attention from the key content. Therefore, reasonable implicit expression is an important embodiment of the professionalism of academic discourse, which is often ignored by second language learners.

It should be noted that the relationship between explicitness and implicitness is not antagonistic, but dynamically adjusted according to the text type and subject field: for example, social science papers emphasize logical explicitness because they involve complex variable relationships; Humanities papers rely on text context analysis, allowing moderate reliance on contextual implication [3]. Many second language learners either do not understand the different requirements of different disciplines for the degree of saliency and implicitness, or it is difficult to switch the two ways flexibly according to the context in actual writing. This "balance" is the core difficulty of their language choice.

3. The current situation of language choice tendency of second language learners' academic writing

Combined with empirical studies at home and abroad, the language choice tendency of second language learners in academic writing can be summarized as "overt" and "implicit inappropriate", and there are differences in the performance of learners with different second language levels.

"Over manifesting" is a typical tendency of low - and middle-level learners, which is manifested in three aspects: first, the abuse of logical connectors. For example, in "the result shows that a is significant, so B is true", redundant connectors such as "in addition" and "moreover" are added, resulting in logical redundancy; Second, semantic repetition, such as unnecessary synonymous superposition of "the research study" and "final conclusion", violates the principle of "conciseness" in academic terminology; The third is that the reference is too clear. For example, "the sample size of 500" has been mentioned earlier, but "the sample size of 500" is still used repeatedly later, rather than being simplified to "the sample". This kind of tendency stems from learners' one-sided cognition of "explicitness=clarity", and attempts to reduce the risk of expression by strengthening the language form.

"Improper implication" is more common in middle and high-level learners, which is mainly reflected in two aspects: first, the key logic is excessively implied, such as omitting the core relational words such as "cause result" and "contrast turn", and relying only on sentence order to convey logic, resulting in the need for readers to repeatedly deduce; Second, the reference is vague. For example, when pronouns such as "this" and "it" are used, they do not clearly refer to the object (for example, "data" and "method" are mentioned at the same time, and "this" in "this proves..." is not clear). Such problems stem from learners' inadequate grasp of the "implicit consensus" of the target language academic community - mistakenly transferring the implicit habits of their mother tongue to second language writing, or their unclear understanding of the implicit norms in the subject field [4].

In addition, interdisciplinary differences also affect the tendency: because of the emphasis on "logical rigor" in science and engineering, the proportion of learners' over representation is significantly higher than that in humanities; However, due to the fact that humanities learners rely more on "context consensus", the problem of implicit inappropriateness is more prominent [5].

The choice tendency of explicit and implicit expression of the above-mentioned second language learners is not random, but is driven by three key factors: mother tongue transfer, academic norm cognition and second language level. The interaction mechanism of these three factors will be analyzed in Chapter 4.

4. The key factors affecting the language choice tendency of second language academic writing

The language choice tendency of second language learners is not random, but is influenced by three factors: the transfer of mother tongue, the cognition of academic norms, and the level of second language, and there are interactions among these factors.

Mother tongue transfer is the basic factor. According to the hypothesis of comparative analysis, learners will transfer their native language discourse habits to second language writing: if their native language is a "paratactic" language (such as Chinese), learners are prone to rely too much on contextual implication (for example, Chinese often uses "because a, so B", but omitting "so" can still be understood), resulting in the loss of logical connectors in second language writing; If the mother tongue is a "hypotactic" language (such as French), it may be due to the mother tongue's emphasis on explicitation, resulting in excessive second language explicitation. For example, in Chinese learners' English academic writing, the coexistence of "improper concealment" (such as the omission of the adverbial word "but") and "excessive explicitation" (such as the repeated use of "because") is the result of the transfer of the differences between Chinese "parataxis" and English "hypotaxis".

Insufficient cognition of academic norms is the core factor. Second language learners often misjudge the "explicit and implicit boundaries" due to the lack of input into the target discourse terms: some learners' academic models contacted through textbooks are mostly "simplified versions" (such as deliberately strengthening connectives), leading them to believe that "the more explicit, the more standardized"; The other part did not systematically study the journal papers of the target discipline and did not understand the implicit habits unique to the discipline (for example, economics papers often implied "assuming that other conditions remain unchanged", while sociology needs to be clearly explained) (swales&peak 2004). This cognitive bias directly leads to the disconnection between language choice and target norms [6].

Second language proficiency is the limiting factor. Low level learners are unable to use implicit expressions flexibly due to insufficient vocabulary and grammar reserves (for example, they cannot use the attribute clause guided by "which" to simplify the reference accurately), and can only rely on explicit means (such as repeated nouns) [7]; Although middle - and high-level learners have language ability, they are still prone to improper concealment due to the lack of deliberate training of "explicit implicit balance" (such as ignoring referential clarity when using complex sentence patterns). For example, after learners master the conjunctions such as "thus" and "hence", they may omit the necessary connection due to the excessive pursuit of "conciseness", which may lead to logical fracture.

5. The specific impact of language choice tendency on the quality of second language academic writing

Language choice tendencies directly affect the readability, standardization and academic recognition of second language academic writing. The negative effects of different tendencies should be analyzed in combination with the evaluation criteria of academic writing.

"Overexpression" mainly reduces the readability and conciseness of the text. In academic writing evaluation, "redundant expression" is a common point of deduction: excessive use of connectives will split the fluency of the text (for example, continuous use of "first, second, finally" will lead to paragraph machinery) [8]; Semantic repetition will increase the cost of reader information screening (for example, in "the study was conducted to investigate", the semantics of "conducted" and "investigate" overlap). In addition, overexpression may be regarded as "lack of academic ability" - readers will think that learners cannot grasp the priority of information and can only cover up their weak logic through redundant expression, thus affecting the recognition of the paper. For example, some studies have pointed out that the misuse of connectives is one of the most common reasons for the revision of second language learners' papers. Such problems are often clearly marked by reviewers as "affecting the professionalism of the text", which indirectly reflects the weakening effect of excessive explicitness on academic recognition.

"Improper implication" mainly destroys the logic and accuracy of the text. Excessive implication of key logic will lead to the deviation of information transmission: for example, the omission of "causal connectives" may make readers mistakenly understand "correlation" as "causality"; Ambiguity is easily caused by ambiguous reference (for example, "it" in "the data supports it" may refer to "hypothesis 1" or "conclusion 2"). Such problems directly violate the "accuracy" principle of academic writing, and may even lead to the misreading of research conclusions. For example, a second language learner's paper was finally delayed because it "did not specify what 'this' refers to", and the reviewer pointed out that "the logic is not rigorous" [9].

It should be noted that reasonable explicitness and implicitness can improve the quality of writing: moderate explicitness (such as the reinforcement of key logic with connectives) can enhance readability, and moderate implicitness (such as the omission of redundant information based on consensus) can improve brevity. Therefore, the negative impact of "tendency bias" is essentially a "lack of balance", rather than an explicit or implicit problem.

6. The practice path of optimizing the language choice of second language academic writing

According to the language choice tendency of second language learners, it is necessary to build an optimization path from three aspects: teaching, learners' self-improvement and feedback mechanism. The core is to help learners grasp the "explicit implicit balance" and meet the academic norms of the target language.

The teaching level needs to strengthen the "explicit and implicit contrast training". Teachers can help learners perceive differences through "discourse comparative analysis": select slogans, academic models and exercises, compare logical connectors and referring ways (such as simplifying the model with "the latter" and repeating nouns in exercises), and clarify the boundary between "excessive" and "appropriate"; "Explicit implicit conversion exercise" can also be designed: simplify the "first, we collected data; second, we analyzed data" of "over explicit" to "data collection was followed by analysis", or supplement the "a increased, while B decreased" of "improper implicit" (swales&feak, 2004). In addition, it should be combined with subject teaching - Science and engineering focus on "logical explicit norms", humanities focus on "contextual implicit skills", not "one size fits all".

Learners' self-improvement needs to strengthen the "target text input". It is necessary to systematically read the international journal papers of the target discipline, focusing on the explicit and implicit habits: remember the common explicit words of logic such as cause and effect and

comparison, and summarize the implicit consensus of the discipline (such as whether the "number of experimental repetitions" needs to be stated); You can also "imitate writing": change your own paragraphs according to the explicit and implicit ways of Fan Wen, and gradually internalize the norms. At the same time, establish the "explicit and implicit self-examination list", and check after writing: is there redundancy of connectives? Is the pronoun clear? Is there a need for implicit information? Reduce deviation through deliberate self-examination.

The feedback mechanism needs to strengthen "targeted guidance". Teachers' feedback should not use general evaluation such as "unclear logic", but specifically refer to explicit and implicit problems (for example, if "hover" is used too much, the third sentence can be deleted, and the fifth sentence should be left to highlight the core turning point); "Peer feedback" can also be introduced to make learners refer to each other's explicit and implicit deviations, and they are more likely to find peer problems [10]. In addition, Grammarly's "redundancy detection" is used to assist the feedback to help learners quickly find the problem of over representation, but the tool can't judge whether the implication is appropriate, so it needs manual guidance.

Teaching direction, self-directed practice internalization specification, and feedback correction deviation form an "input practice correction" closed loop to help learners master the explicit implicit balance of different disciplines.

7. Conclusion

From the perspective of explicit and implicit information expression, this paper combs the language choice tendency and influence mechanism of second language academic writing. The study found that the language choice of second language learners showed obvious level differences: the middle and low levels were prone to overuse of connectives and semantic repetition, while the middle and high levels often faced the implicit dilemma of fuzzy logic and unclear reference. The core factors leading to this tendency were the transfer of mother tongue, the lack of awareness of academic norms and the limitation of second language level.

These tendencies will directly weaken the readability and logicality of the text, and even reduce the academic recognition of the research results. And through the teaching level of explicit implicit contrast training (such as text analysis, explicit implicit conversion exercises), learners' autonomous target text input and "explicit implicit self-examination", combined with the synergy of teachers' accurate feedback and peer evaluation, can effectively help learners grasp the balance scale of explicit implicit expression, and gradually conform to the academic norms of the target language.

This study still has limitations: it does not involve the differences in academic explicit and implicit expression norms between different second languages such as English and French, and cannot cover the particularity of multilingual second language writing. Subsequent studies can further compare the academic discourse characteristics of different target languages, and refine the optimization strategies by language and discipline.

In general, the dynamic balance between explicit and implicit information expression is the key for second language learners to improve their academic writing ability. This research not only provides an operable practical direction for the teaching of second language academic writing, but also builds a link between the theory of second language acquisition and teaching practice, and ultimately helps learners more effectively output academic texts that meet international norms and participate in cross-cultural academic dialogue.

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