

《结构启动及第二语言语法构式学习》

图书基本信息

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内容概要

This book aims to investigate structural priming in L2 learners with a focus on Chinese College-level EFL (English as a Foreign Language) learners' production of English dative constructions. Specifically, it is intended to address three issues: 1) whether structural priming occurs in L2 production; 2) whether L2 structural priming has a long-term effect and consequently affects the pattern of subsequent production of syntactic constructions; and 3) whether and to what extent the short-term and the long-term effect of L2 structural priming are mediated by linguistic and psycholinguistic factors. The overarching goal of the present study is to explore whether and under what conditions structural priming has a role to play in L2 learning of grammar constructions, thereby enriching our understanding of the psycholinguistic process involved in L2 learning. For this purpose, four empirical studies were conducted.

Experiments 1 and 2 were designed to probe the short-term effect of structural priming, that is, whether structural priming occurs when the prime sentence immediately precedes the target sentence. One hundred and thirty-two Chinese EFL learners who represented two English proficiency levels (intermediate vs. advanced) participated in the experiments, 72 for Experiment 1 and 60 for Experiment 2. Experiment 1 employed a written sentence completion task whereas Experiment 2 a spoken picture description task. The results show that structural priming did occur with both the prepositional dative (PD) and the double object dative (DO) constructions, and that the L2 learners, regardless of their language proficiency, were more likely to reuse a particular construction (PD/DO) in the target responses if it had been previously produced in the prime sentences. Moreover, the magnitude of structural priming was found to be modulated by L2 proficiency. The advanced learners exhibited stronger priming effects for the DO construction than their intermediate counterparts. However, no evidence was obtained for the proficiency effect on the priming of the PD construction. Furthermore, the priming effects gave rise to between-verb variations. That is, verbs which are more strongly associated with a construction were more likely to be primed into the construction and resist the priming of the alternative construction. In addition, the results derived from Experiment 1 were basically consistent with those from Experiment 2, in spite of the employment of different tasks in the two experiments. This suggests that syntactic priming in L2 production is robust and reliable rather than task-specific. Of interest is that, compared with the sentence completion task, the priming effects in the picture description task were stronger.

Experiments 3 and 4 investigated the long-term effect of structural priming in L2 production by means of written sentence completion tasks. In the first part of each experiment, learners' experience of producing the PD and DO constructions was manipulated in ways that enabled them to produce a particular proportion of PD and DO constructions. Then the learners were given the opportunity to produce either the PD or DO construction without being provided with further primes. The experiments yielded four major findings. Firstly, syntactic priming in L2 production has produced a long-term effect. The L2 learners' experience of producing the DO construction earlier in the experiment increased the rates at which the construction was produced later in the experiment compared with the baseline condition. Nevertheless, there is a lack of evidence for the long-term priming effect on the production of the PD construction. Secondly, the long-term priming effect is modulated by the relative frequency with which each construction is produced earlier in the experiment. It turned out that the experience strongly skewed towards the DO construction significantly increased the likelihood of producing the construction and at the same time suppressed the production of the competing PD construction. Thirdly, the frequency effect on the subsequent production of the dative constructions persists even across the changing tasks. Finally, the long-term effect is insusceptible to the temporary distribution of the tokens of each construction within the experiment.

The findings of the present study have empirically verified the occurrence of structural priming in L2 production and confirmed its potentially beneficial role in L2 learning of grammar constructions. More generally, the findings suggest that the implicit learning from usage accentuated by the usage-based theories is also operative in L2 acquisition.

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