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Investigating the Learning of Classifier in the Learners of Chinese as a Second Language

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Abstract

In this research, English and Korean students were divided into 2 groups to find out how one's semantic structure of native tongue affects the performance of learning Chinese classifier. The experiment was designed to present participants the word pairings consisted of sortal/mensural classifiers and Chinese/English/Korean nouns as the priming stimuli. The participants were asked to decide if the nouns and the classifier are correctly paired for common use. The results showed that only English speakers judgment of the correct rate for sortal classifiers is higher than the mensural classifiers pairs. However, both Korean and English students have longer response time for the mensural classifiers. In addition, the priming effect of nouns appeared in affecting participants performance for judging the correctness of pairing in native Chinese speakers and the English/Korean learners. The findings indicated that a cross-language semantic activation occurred despite the competition processing between L1/L2 while learning Chinese classifiers.