

Demonstrative NPs and Pronoun *it* in Chinese L2 Learners' Writing

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Demonstrative NPs and pronoun *it* can be used to maintain coherence and refer back to the ideas mentioned earlier. However, there is quite limited research on such phenomena in L2 writing. This study explores the anaphoric demonstrative NPs and pronoun *it*, with Chinese Learner English Corpus as the data source. Altogether 203 compositions from ST3 and ST4 have been selected and subjected to data analyses so as to answer three questions: whether language proficiency differentiates the level of recapitulation; whether the learners of lower proficiency prefer using pronouns because they are less marked; whether the frequency of pronoun *it*, on the whole, is much higher than that of the other anaphors. The results reveal that the learners' ability of recapitulation displays a spiral increase and that the selection of the anaphors is not affected by markedness but by cross-linguistic influence and the use of L2 chunks.

Key words: demonstrative NP, pronoun *it*, markedness, cross-linguistic influence, L2 writing

RESEARCH BACKGROUND

Anaphoric demonstrative NPs and pronoun *it*

Anaphora means coreference of one expression with another appearing earlier in the text (that is, antecedent). The expression referring back to the

antecedent called “anaphor”, can be linguistically realized by personal pronouns, definite noun phrases, demonstrative NPs (including single demonstratives and demonstrative noun phrases) and pronoun *it* which can refer back to a clausal entity other than a noun phrase. The antecedent may be a noun phrase, clause or sentence(s), as can be seen in the following examples.

- (1) *A man* in black suit came in. **He** seemed unhappy.
- (2) *Mary proved that the defendant was lying about the President's ignorance of the cover-up.* **This** shows that the cover-up is much larger than previously thought. (Asher, 1993, p. 245)
- (3) *John went to pick Mary up for the dance. But he had forgotten the corsage. That made him late. The food at the dance was terrible, the music mediocre. Then John spilled some punch on Mary's dress. She said she never wanted to see him again.* **This outing** was in short a disaster. (Asher, 1993, p. 41 revised)
- (4) John doesn't believe that *Mary is treating him fairly.* But Fred is certain of **it**.

In example (1), the pronoun *He* refers back to the noun phrase *A man*. However, example (2), (3) and (4) demonstrate a different situation. The referents of the anaphors are the propositions expressed by the antecedent instead of the linguistic form of the antecedent. Asher (1993) has termed this linguistic phenomenon as “abstract entity anaphora”. Hegarty, Gundel and Borthen (2001) called it “clausally introduced referent” and Francis (1994) used “retrospective label” to refer to such demonstrative NPs. In example (2), the first sentence serves as the antecedent of the anaphor *this*. In example (3), the definite noun phrase *this outing* is used as the anaphor to refer to the proposition expressed by the previous three sentences. Example (4) illustrates pronoun *it* as anaphor, and its antecedent is the clause *Mary is treating him fairly*.

In this paper we focus on the anaphoric phenomenon in the latter three examples with demonstrative NP and pronoun *it* as the anaphor referring back to the proposition. Since Chinese has no definite article and the Chinese

learners tend to omit English article *the*, it might result in a confusing situation to collect such data. So the anaphor *the NP* is excluded in this study. The discussion in this paper is limited to demonstrative NPs and pronoun *it* whose referents are propositions.

According to Cornish (1986), anaphors are semantically attenuated expressions of their antecedents in addition to the property of being shorter in spelling and simpler in pronunciation. Demonstrative NPs and pronoun *it*, when they are used to refer to propositions, are more capable of recapitulating semantically. No matter how long and how complicated the antecedent is linguistically structured, its meaning can be condensed by the anaphor. Pronoun *it*, and single demonstratives *this* and *that* in English are the most resumptive and vague in meaning (Francis, 1994) since they have shorter forms and wider scope for interpretation than demonstrative noun phrases.

Text production involves coherence which requires repeated reference to the same discourse entity by anaphoric expressions. Such abstract entity anaphora plays an important role in maintaining coherence. The proper use of such anaphora reveals the writers' ability in coherence maintaining and idea summarizing, which is also one of the communicative skills required of L2 learners when they develop writing proficiency.

Related Research

Currently the research on anaphora acquisition in second language is mainly concerned with cross-linguistic influence and markedness. Belletti, Bennati and Sorace (2005) found that compared to the Italian native speakers, the near-native speakers whose first language was English, tended to use more redundant overt pronouns and to take the subjects of the main clauses as the antecedents of the pronominal anaphors. But no differences were observed with respect to the use and interpretation of null pronoun. Tao and Healy (2005) compared native Chinese with native English in comprehending modified English passages from a standardized reading test with nominals

deleted that would be absent in Chinese. In three experiments, Chinese speakers showed superior comprehension of the passages with such nominal deletion, but not when no words were deleted or when nominals were deleted that would not be absent in Chinese. The authors contended that native Chinese speakers developed reference tracking strategies that they transferred to comprehending English. The above research reveals that L1 exerts more influence on adult L2 learners. Roberts, Gullberg and Indefrey (2008) investigated whether advanced second language learners of a nonnull subject language (Dutch) were influenced by their null subject L1 (Turkish) in their offline and online resolution of subject pronouns in L2 discourse. The Turkish L2 learners exhibited a L1 influence in the offline interpretations of subject pronouns.

However, the cross-linguistic influence in anaphora acquisition has been questioned. Tomlin (1990) studied the referential choice of the L2 learners of English whose first languages were Japanese, Arabic, Spanish, Mandarin and Korean. He found that the L2 learners did not select NPs according to the degree of accessibility as the native speakers did and that they consistently chose longer, nominal forms although their first languages were typologically different. Polio (1995) researched the zero anaphora produced by English and Japanese L2 learners of Chinese. They tended to avoid NP ellipsis and select extended referential forms rather than shorter ones although zero anaphor is more tolerated in Japanese but more syntactically restricted in English. Munoz (1995) also explored the zero anaphora production of the Spanish learners of English and found that the learners used zero anaphora significantly less than native English speakers and inappropriately used more full NPs and personal pronouns although zero anaphora is quite common in Spanish. Recently Zaller, Lawrence and Daigle (2007) examined the patterns of discourse anaphora in the writings of Spanish learners of English. The result showed that the L2 learners violated accessibility expectations and tended to use more full NPs. Therefore, some researchers (Sorace, 2005; Sorace & Filiaci, 2006) aver that overt pronoun may be a default form to compensate for poorly-automatized morphological knowledge and the use of

overt pronouns may be a more general default strategy at all proficiency levels. And the difference between L1 and L2 is of minor importance. Even the native speakers resort to overt pronouns in a situation of processing overload. Overt pronouns are unmarked while null pronouns might be marked. So, not all of the short forms are less marked than longer ones.

Although demonstrative NPs (Ariel, 1990; Fillmore, 1997; Halliday & Hasan, 1985; Kehler & Ward, 2004; Marmaridou, 2000) and pronoun *it* are considerably explored, yet to the best of our knowledge, only a few studies pertain to the propositional referents and discuss the underlying factors affecting the usage of those anaphors. For example, Strauss's (2002) study of demonstratives reveals that the "physically near speaker/ far from speaker" distinction fails to capture the majority of phenomena in everyday spoken English and that the factors underlying speaker choice of demonstrative are related to the concept of FOCUS which means the attention the hearer should pay to the referent. Francis (1994) used another term "retrospective label" and analyzed its lexical range and functions. But those studies never touch upon L2 learners. As for pronoun *it*, many studies have discussed its usage in deep anaphora (i.e. the anaphor has no linguistic antecedent but the context contains enough information for the determination of the referent), for example, Bresnan (1971), Hankamer and Sag (1976), Murphy (1985), Sag (1979), Sag and Hankamer (1984); but few have focused on L2 acquisition. For that reason, we attempt to do such research.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

As is mentioned above, demonstrative NPs and pronoun *it* display more efficiency in recapitulating when referring back to previous texts than when referring back to concrete individuals. These anaphors can encapsulate their propositional antecedents which are usually linguistically longer and syntactically complicated than noun phrases referring to concrete individuals. Thus, the use of such anaphors may largely imply the ability of abstraction

and recapitulation. Accordingly, we raise the first question:

- (1) Do the learners at different language proficiency levels show any difference in the use of demonstrative NPs and pronoun *it*? If they do, what are the differences?

To date cross-linguistic influence in second language acquisition is still a controversial topic. Some researchers think that the selection of anaphors is affected by L1. Others aver that it is not L1 influence but markedness that plays a leading role in the selection of anaphors and just because of the unmarkedness of overt pronoun the L2 learners prefer to use them more frequently. However, as for demonstrative NPs and pronoun *it*, it is still unclear whether the frequency is influenced by unmarkedness or by cross-linguistic influence. Pronoun *it* functions as “unmarked reference item and refers to current entities or foci of attention” (McCarthy, 1994, p. 273) and the word *zhe* in Chinese corresponding to *this* occurs far more frequently than *na* (*that*) and *ta* (*it*) (Liu, 2009; Wang, 1999) and unmarkedness is signaled by high frequency. According to Ellis (1985, p. 206), “no transfer will take place from native to target language when the L1 has a marked setting” and the most obvious case of transfer is “where the native language shows an unmarked setting and the target language a marked one.”

TABLE 1
Markedness and Cross-linguistic Influence

	L1	L2	Interlanguage
(1)	<i>zhe</i> (<i>this</i>) / unmarked	<i>this</i> / marked	unmarked
(2)	<i>ta</i> (<i>it</i>) / marked	<i>it</i> / unmarked	unmarked

As is shown in Table 1, (1) is the most obvious case of cross-linguistic influence and (2) is the case of the effect of L2 unmarkedness. To put it in another way, a form more marked in L2 than in L1 will lead to difficulty, whereas a form less marked in L2 than L1 will present no particular challenge (Ortega, 2009) and the L2 learners prefer using such a form,

especially when they have processing difficulty. Thus, the comparison between the frequencies of *this* and *it* may reveal whether cross-linguistic influence or L2 unmarkedness plays a role. Since L2 learners of lower proficiency are more likely to encounter processing overload when writing in L2, theoretically they are more likely to resort to unmarked items in L1 or in L2. Thus, the research question is:

- (2) Do the learners of lower proficiency prefer falling back on the unmarked pronoun *it* to transferring *this* from L1? On the whole, is the frequency of pronoun *it* the highest of all the anaphors (i.e. *this NP*, *that NP*, *this*, *that* and *it*)?

Research Methods

The data source is *Chinese Learner English Corpus* by Gui and Yang (2003). In this corpus the lowest proficiency level is ST2 consisting of the compositions of high school students. The highest level is ST6, those of third and fourth year English majors. ST3 and ST4 are composed respectively of the compositions of non-English majors who have passed College English Band 3 and Band 4 tests. The compositions of these learners at different developmental stages may represent different proficiency levels. There are 19 argumentative writings in ST2, and the other compositions are narrative writings. Here we use the “argumentative writing” in a loose sense, which “involves supporting general claims with specific evidence” (Liu, 2005, p. 9). But in the corpus of other levels, argumentative writings predominate in number. In order to get the data from the same genre and make a reliable comparison, we have selected the argumentative writings. The other reason for making such a choice is that the frequency of abstract entity anaphora in argumentative writings is higher than other genres (Liu, 2009).

Considering the limited number of argumentative writings in ST2, we have excluded ST2. Apart from that, the compositions from ST6 are free writings while those from ST3 and ST4 are the controlled writings in a test situation.

In view of the different natures, the data from ST6 are also excluded. The full score of the compositions in College English Band Test is 15. The first rank is around 14 (including 13 and 15), the second rank is around 11 (including 10 and 12) and the third is around 8 (including 7 and 9). Only a few students can get 14 points and most of the compositions are around 9. Table 1 shows the information of the data source. We have selected from ST3, according to the natural sequence, 53 compositions scored below 7, and altogether 10182 words, categorized as “low-score group”. The compositions of “high-score group” consist of those scored above 12. Since few compositions in the first-rank are scored 14 or 15, the criterion for “high-score group” has been lowered to 12. So, 49 compositions in this group, altogether 10157 words, have been collected. The score of “middle group” is 2 points higher or lower than the other two groups, that is, 9 to 10. In order to do a finer investigation, “middle group” is classified into two sub-groups. “Middle group 1” consists of 52 compositions from ST3, 10169 words while “Middle group 2” is composed of 49 compositions from ST4, 10089 words. All of the compositions have been selected according to the natural sequence in the corpus.

TABLE 2
Description of Data Source

Groups	Proficiency Level	Score	Number of Compositions	Total Words
Low-score Group	ST3	Below 7 (included)	53	10182
High-score Group	ST4	Above 12 (included)	49	10157
Middle Group 1	ST3	9 and 10	52	10169
Middle Group 2	ST4	9 and 10	49	10089

In data collection, neither spelling mistakes nor minor grammatical mistakes (e.g., plural/singular forms of nouns, tense, agreement, etc.) are considered. We put weight on the appropriate use of the anaphor in a given context. Therefore, only if the use of anaphoric demonstrative NPs or pronoun *it* is correct, the case of anaphora can be included in our data. For example, in example (5) the anaphor *that* refers back to the previous clause;

pronoun *it* in (6) refers back to the previous subordinate clause *people don't take the same job all the while*; and the demonstrative noun phrase *this phenomenon* in (7) has coreference with the previous sentence. However, example (8) is not counted in because the anaphor *that* has no referent.

- (5) ST 4: *Some people like to do only one kind of job in all his lifetime*, because **that** can make him concentrate in the thing he do and have rapid progress.
- (6) ST 4: I think *people don't take the same job all the while* but **it** doesn't mean that we can change our jobs now and then.
- (7) ST4: *Nowadays, with the social reform and more opportunity, more and more people have been changing their jobs frequently...* And **this phenomenon** in particular to newly graduated college students for they are so ambitious and not easily satisfied.
- (8) ST4: ...The two example I list both illustrate the principle. So it could be concluded **that**.

The data statistics include the following aspects:

- (1) the total frequency of demonstrative NPs and pronoun *it*,
- (2) the frequencies of such anaphors as *this*, *that*, *this NP*, *that NP*, *it*.
- (3) the frequencies of chunks.

As chunks are frequently used in the data source, the data collection also includes their frequencies. The NP-type chunks include *in this way/ case/ sense*; this-type chunks are mainly *because of this* and *this is*; that-type chunks, *that's why*. The reason for treating *this is* and *that's* as chunks lies in the fact that Chinese learners of English learn the two sentence patterns and practice them repeatedly at the early stage of English learning. This is also called "usage-based syntactic operations" by Tomasello (2003, p. 310) since the learners consider these words and morphemes as glued together with arbitrary rules. That may form a stereotype in their mind. Therefore, besides collecting the frequencies of chunks, we also figure out the percentage of chunks against the total number of the anaphors.

Results

Table 3 presents the frequencies of the demonstrative NPs and pronoun *it* used by the four groups. The frequency of low-score group is 36 but those of middle groups fall to 18 and 19. And then the frequency rises up to 37 in the high-score group. The result of Chi square test is 11.82, with the significance level below 0.01. So these frequencies of the four groups have statistically significant difference. Generally speaking, the learners at the four levels display the developmental feature of “U-shape” in the anaphora production, as is shown in Figure 1.

TABLE 3
Frequencies of the Anaphors Used by Four Groups

Groups	Low-score Group	Middle Group 1	Middle Group 2	High-score Group	X ² Value
Frequencies	36	18	19	37	11.82**

** p < 0.01

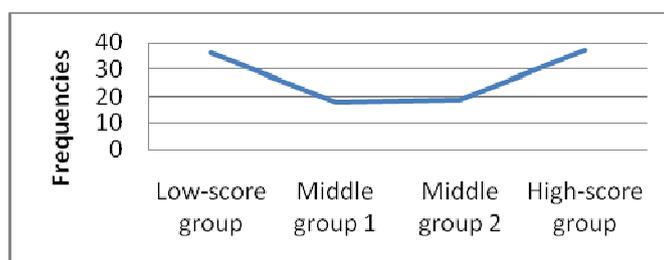


FIGURE 1
U-shape of the Frequencies of the Anaphors

The question is why the developmental feature displays “U-shape”. In order to investigate it, the frequencies of chunks are collected and compared. As is shown in Table 4, the data consist of three aspects: the frequencies, the percentage and the types of chunk. The reason for figuring out the percentage of chunks against the total number of the anaphors lies in the following consideration: the learners' tendency of using chunks might contribute to the

increase in the total number of the anaphors, but it cannot be followed that the quantities of the other anaphors are lower than the number of the chunks, since the frequencies of chunks here are only absolute quantities. So the relative quantities should also be considered. As can be seen from Figure 2, the frequencies of chunks are also in “U-shape”—the low-score and the high-score groups use more chunks while the middle ones use fewer. But when we check the percentage of chunks against the total number of the anaphors, the descending trend is clearly shown to us (see Figure 3), that is, the higher the proficiency level is, the fewer chunks are employed and the more other types of anaphors are used. Therefore, it is only a superficial phenomenon that the total frequency of anaphoric demonstrative NPs and pronoun *it* of low-score group is higher than that of high-score group. It can be attributed to the large quantity of chunks used by the low-score group. Furthermore, as for the variety of chunks, the low-score group uses fewer types (see Table 4), only two forms; but more and more types of chunks are used from the middle groups to the high-score group.

TABLE 4
Frequencies of Chunks Used by the Four Groups

Groups	Low-score Group	Middle Group 1	Middle Group 2	High-score Group
Frequencies	14	6	5	10
Percentage in the Anaphors	38.89%	33.33%	27.78%	27 %
Types of Chunk	that('s) is, this is	that('s) is, this is	that('s) is, this is, for this reason, in this way/ case	that('s) is, this is, because of this, in this way/ case

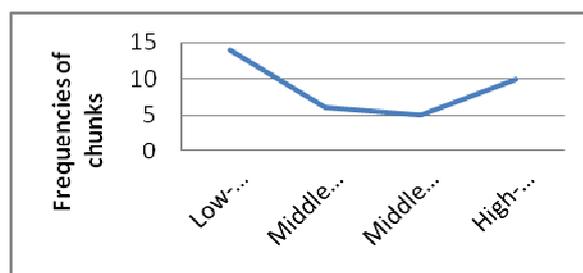


FIGURE 2
Frequencies of Chunks Used by the Four Groups

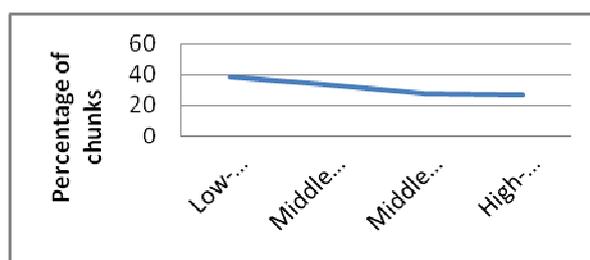


FIGURE 3
Percentage of Chunks

The frequencies of demonstrative NPs and pronoun *it* are shown in Table 5. The intragroup comparisons reveal that the frequency of *this* is the highest in the low-score group, *that* occurs second most frequently and the least frequently used is *this NP*. The value of Chi square test shows the significant difference among these frequencies (X^2 value=19.33, $p<0.001$). The frequency sequence is “*this* > *that* > *it* > *this NP*”. In the middle group 1, *this* also predominates in number but the other three anaphors have similar frequencies. Since the Chi square value has statistical significance (X^2 value=9.11, $p<0.05$), we may get the frequency sequence “*this* > *that* / *it* > *this NP*”. However, seen from the Chi square value, the middle group 2 bear no significant difference in the frequencies of anaphors, nor does the high score group. By intergroup comparison, only *this* shows significant difference in frequency (X^2 value=9.49, $p<0.05$), with a descending trend

from the low-score group to the high-score group. But the other anaphors show slight difference in frequency. It can be seen that the learners at four different levels have different preference in anaphor selection, but they choose *this* most frequently.

TABLE 5
Frequencies of all Types of Anaphors

Groups	this	this NP	that	it	X ² Value
Low-score Group	20	3	8	5	19.33***
Middle Group 1	10	2	3	3	9.11*
Middle Group 2	7	6	3	3	2.68
High-score Group	8	9	11	9	0.51
X ² Value	9.49*	6.00	7.48	4.80	

* p < 0.05 *** p < 0.001

Table 6 shows the frequencies of all kinds of anaphors. Of the highest frequency is *this* and of the lowest is *it*. And the difference among the frequencies of all the anaphors is statistically significant. The frequencies may be ranked as “this > that > this NP > it”.

TABLE 6
Comparison of the Frequencies of all Kinds of Anaphors

	this	this NP	that	it	X ² Value
Frequencies	45	20	25	20	15.46***

*** p < 0.001

Discussion

The Ability of Recapitulating and Coherence Maintaining

As is shown in Table 3, the total numbers of the anaphors used by the learners at different proficiency levels display a “U-shape” change. It is much similar to the “U-shaped behavior” proposed by Kellerman (1985). As he puts it, at the beginning stage, if there are some similar language features between L2 and L1, the learners usually use them correctly. After a time,

some developmental features which violate the grammatical and pragmatic rules of L2 may replace those language features in their production. It seems like a kind of “degeneracy”. But as time goes on, the learners will acquire the language features of L2 and use them correctly at the last stage. The early and the last stages in the “U-shape” development are not equal. According to McLaughlin's (1987) Information Processing Model, the process of knowledge acquisition consists of controlled and automatic stages. The former is the beginning stage where the nodes of knowledge are activated temporarily. The activation is under the control of the learners and the number of activation is limited. But the automatic process is different. Whenever there is appropriate input, many nodes are activated. The transition from controlled process to the automatic process entails restructuring knowledge representation, i.e. changing from exemplar-based representation to rule-based representation. In this sense, the knowledge at the beginning stage of the “U-shape” is controlled and that at the later stage becomes automatic. It is the same case in this study, chunks are exemplar-based representation and the other anaphors, especially demonstrative NPs, are rule-based representation.

Although both the low-score group and the high-score group use more demonstrative NPs and pronoun *it*, it cannot be followed that both of the groups are more capable of generalizing and abstracting ideas than middle groups. The low-score group uses more chunks and that makes the total number of the anaphors greater than that of the middle groups. The heavy reliance on chunks manifests that the learners are good at imitating mechanically rather than generalizing ideas and maintaining global coherence automatically. However, the chunks used by the high-score group are of a small percentage, only 27%. But the total number of the anaphors is much higher than that of the middle groups. The fact shows that these learners are more skillful and proficient at summarizing ideas and maintaining coherence. It is a change from mechanical imitation to automatic use.

The types of chunks provide a more clear illustration of this question. First, the low-score group mainly employ such chunks as *that's* and *this is to*

express their judgment and statement. The greater number of simple chunks leads to the higher frequency of the anaphors. Second, although the middle group 2 uses the same type of chunk as the low-score group, the number is smaller. We could make such speculation: the middle group 1 does not want to use the chunks such as *that's* and *this is* any more, however, at this stage the learners have not acquired new expressions or have not been able to use the new expressions freely; so they drop those chunks but seldom replace them with new expressions. That may result in the sharp decrease of such chunks in number and accordingly affect the total number of the anaphors. The high-score group has acquired more types of chunks and is more capable of employing a variety of lexical devices to maintain coherence, since there is no significant difference in the number of the anaphors (see Table 5).

Therefore, we can answer the first question now: as for the use of demonstrative NPs and pronoun *it*, the learners of different language proficiency do show difference — “U-shape” change at first glance but in fact spiral increase.

L2 Unmarkedness or Cross-linguistic Influence

Table 6 shows that the number of the unmarked pronoun *it* is relatively small and that of demonstrative pronoun *this* the greatest. Table 5 corroborates the result—none of the groups of learners use pronoun *it* most frequently because of its unmarkedness, even the low-score group, the group most likely to encounter processing overload. It can be seen clearly that unmarkedness does not play a critical role in abstract entity anaphora. Can we accordingly conclude it is cross-linguistic influence that contributes to the high frequency of *this*? Things are complicated.

Table 5 shows the low-score group and the middle group 1 use *this* most. We speculate that there are two contributing factors: cross-linguistic influence and L2 chunks. Demonstrative *this* is quite common in Chinese discourse. It is highly resumptive and vague in meaning. Such features may satisfy the need of some L2 learners, especially those less proficient learners

since that can compensate their lack of appropriate vocabulary. Thus, many language learners tend to select the vague and general words when they have difficulty in expressing ideas clearly. Besides cross-linguistic influence, L2 chunks contribute much to the high frequency of the anaphora in low-score group, as is explained in 5.1. Just because of the simple construction and much familiarity, the learners rely heavily on them.

It merits our attention that the number of *this* is declining as the proficiency level increases, which reveals a dynamic change of cross-linguistic influence as well as L2 chunks. According to Ellis (1985, p. 206), "unmarked settings of parameters will occur in interlanguage before marked settings." L2 learners first apt to transfer unmarked L1 items and then gradually employ L2 marked items. After all, the two contributing factors exert decreasingly influence with the increase of the learners' proficiency.

The question whether unmarkedness or cross-linguistic influence determines the selection of anaphors is more complicated than has been mentioned in I.2. It is not dichotomous. Although it is confusing, one fact is clear that unmarked pronoun *it* is not the most frequently used and unmarkedness does not make a difference in anaphor selection. Moreover, it can be seen that the use of anaphoric demonstrative NPs and pronoun *it* is different from that of personal pronouns. The selection of anaphors may also be related to psychological and pragmatic factors such as focus of attention, psychological distance and pragmatic function. The joint work of these factors maybe partly affects the result of this study.

Conclusion

By analyzing the use of anaphoric demonstrative NPs and pronoun *it* in the corpus of Chinese learners, we may draw the following conclusions tentatively. The competence of generalizing ideas can differentiate L2 learners of different proficiency and the development of the competence is spirally ascending. But the improvement of the competence is not represented by the heavily use of pronoun *it*, but by the increasing number of *this NP*.

With the improvement of their competence, the learners are more capable of generalizing the previous text with all kinds of demonstrative NPs rather than the simple chunks monotonous in form and meaning. Moreover, pronoun *it*, the unmarked and the least difficult to produce, is not the first choice of the learners of lower proficiency, since it is only L2 unmarked item. The most frequently used anaphor is *this* which is unmarked in L1 but marked in L2. In view of that, we have speculated that cross-linguistic influence is not the only cause, but the use of L2 chunk is also a contributing factor.

The limitations can also be found in this study. First, the range of the corpus is not wide enough to include the compositions of the high school writers who are the least proficient learners, and the 3rd and the 4th year English majors, the most proficient learners. Consequently, the tendency is not strong enough for us to draw a definite conclusion. Second, since this study is centered on markedness and cross-linguistic influence, other factors such as pragmatic and psychological ones have not been investigated in detail. The two limitations constitute the suggestions for future research.

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