УДК 811.1/.8

Жиганов В. А.

THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE ENGLISH AND CHINESE LANGUAGES

Vinnytsia National Technical University

Анотація
У даній доповіді описуються відмінності та подібності англійської та китайської мови з точки зору граматики, фонетики, семантики та вокабуляру.
Ключові слова : лінгвістика, англійська мова, китайська мова, культура.

Abstract
The following article describes the differences and similarities between the English and Chinese languages in terms of grammar, phonetics, semantics and vocabulary.
Keywords: linguistics, English, Chinese, culture.

Introduction

Language is the main tool of communication among people. Every country formed in a long cultural evolution has its own language that reflects the history of the nation. Comparing languages by their grammar, vocabulary, phonetics and semantics help to learn them more efficiently and understand the cultural diversity of the world.

Research

In the modern world, English takes a dominant position in terms of communication. In fact, there are about 1.5 billion people who speak English - that's 20 per cent of the population of our planet. There is another language that is becoming more and more appealing nowadays - Mandarin Chinese. There are about 1 billion people speaking this language. As these two languages are so popular, it is interesting to find out the differences between them.

From the historical point of view, the Modern Chinese language was formed during the Han dynasty (206 BC – 220 AD) when Modern English as we know it was formed in XVIII cent. Thus, of the two languages Chinese is considered the older one.

In English, words consist of letters from an alphabet and it's easy to dispense a misunderstanding of a word to a person by spelling it while in Chinese there is no alphabet and words are represented with characters or 汉字(hanzi). Consequently, it is difficult to communicate with people if one doesn't know characters and their proper pronunciation.

Chinese is a tonal language which implies that different tones give a different meaning to the same syllables. There are four tones – the flat tone (the first), the rising tone (the second), the falling rising tone (the third) and the falling tone (the fourth). For example:

Lion - 狮(shi) – third tone
Ten - 十(shi) – second tone
To be - 是(shi) – fourth tone

In Modern Chinese to simplify the learning of new words such system as pinyin was created. It is a representation of the characters that use letters from the Latin alphabet, somewhat similar to transcription in English.

Both English and Chinese are the Subject-Verb-Object languages i.e. the most dominant sequence of parts of a sentence is when the subject is followed by a verb which in turn is followed by the object. [1] For example:

I eat apples.
我吃苹果。
(Wo chi ping guo)

The English words change is based on the grammatical categories of the case and tense, whereas Chinese is not. It describes one of the primary distinction that English emphasizes the structure of a sentence, while Chinese focuses on its meaning. For example:

I ate apples yesterday.
昨天我吃苹果。
(zuo tian wo chi ping guo)
I will eat apples tomorrow.
明天我吃苹果。
(ming tian wo chi ping guo)

Speaking of tenses, English has 12 sentence structures to describe the time period or the moment when an action occurs. In Chinese, however, there are only 5 such structures. Using English tenses analogy, there are Present Simple, Future Simple, Present Continuous, Past Simple and Present Perfect. In order to show tenses, so-called signalling characters are used. Sometimes when the context implies the tense of a verb these characters can be omitted. The previous sentences are the examples of Present Simple, Past Simple and Future Simple respectively. Consider the following examples:

He will eat apples.   *He ate apples.*
他会吃苹果 。   *他吃了苹果。*
(ta hui chi ping guo)   *(ta chi le ping guo)*
He is eating apples.   *He has eaten apples.*
他正在吃苹果。   *他吃过苹果。*
(ta zheng zai chi ping guo)   *(ta chi guo ping guo)*

The signaling characters in current examples are 会 (hui), 正在 (zheng zai), 了 (le), 过 (guo).

In contrast to English, the Chinese language does not have articles. Instead, there are many measure words that function similarly to English articles. There are more than a hundred measure words and unfortunately, the only way to learn them is by memorizing them. The most common one is 个（ge）that is used before most nouns. There are also measure words for animals, flat objects, cups and bottles as a measure of the volume of liquids, cars, objects that go in pairs and so on. [2] Examples:

One cat   *三张桌子。*
一只猫。   *(san zhang zhuozi)*
(yi zhi mao)   *Four pairs of shoes*
Two cups of water   *四双鞋子。*
两杯水。   *(si shuang xiezi)*
(liang bei shui)
Three tables

However, not every Chinese person is capable of using the measure words properly as not every English speaker speaks literate English.

As difficult a language as Chinese seems to be, the way of counting numbers is simpler than in English in terms of the number of words being used. The Chinese language reincorporates the same words used for counting from 1 to 10 to cover all the numbers from 11 to 99. In English, on the other hand, counting from 11 to 20 requires the knowledge of 10 additional words - eleven, twelve, thirteen etc. and counting from 21 to 99 requires 7 more - twenty, thirty, forty etc. Such difference influences the way people operate with numbers and how they learn. Some studies speculate that the reason of the excellence of Asian cultures in the field of mathematics at an early age is integrated into their language which they learn to speak from the time they are born [3]. Consider the examples in table 1.

Table 1

One	一(yi)
Two	二 (er)
Nine	九 (jiu)
Ten	十(shi)
Twelve	十二(shi er)
Twenty-one	二十一(er shi yi)
Ninety-nine	九十九(jiu shi jiu)

Conclusion

As we can see, the completely two different languages at the first sight have common features. When these similarities are exposed it becomes easier to learn a new language through the one that is already learnt. The ways of word representation differ in these languages which is reflected in the way speakers think while conveying messages. Additionally, language can assist in the performance of mental activity such as mathematical calculations, visual arts and poetry.

REFERENCES

1. English Language Sentence Structure [Електронний ресурс] / ThoughtCo. - Режим доступу: https://www.thoughtco.com/sentence-structure-english-grammar-1691891
2. Measure Words in Mandarin Chinese [Електронний ресурс] / ThoughtCo - Режим доступу: https://www.thoughtco.com/mandarin-measure-words-2279415
3. Modern Mandarin Chinese grammar: a practical guide / Claudia Ross and Jing-heng Sheng Ma - Taylor & Francis e-Library, 2006.

Автор доповіді: Жиганов Володимир Андрійович — студент факультету комп'ютерних систем та автоматики, група 1АКІТ-18б, Вінницький національний технічний університет, м. Вінниця, e-mail: vova020301@gmail.com
Науковий керівник: Медведєва Світлана Олександрівна – викладач кафедри іноземних мов, Вінницький національний технічний університет, м.Вінниця, e-mail Svetlana.med79@gmail.com

Author: Zhyganov V. – student of 1AKIT-18b, Faculty of Computer Systems and Automation, Vinnytsia National Technical University. Vinnitsa, e-mail: vova020301@gmail.com
Scientific supervisor: Medvedieva Svitlana Oleksandrivna – the teacher of English, Department of the Foreign Languages, Vinnytsia National Technical University, Vinnytsia, e-mail Svetlana.med79@gmail.com