Research on English Autonomous Learning Based on WeChat Public Accounts—A Case Study of Hunan Institute of Technology

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Abstract: *This article takes the translation major students from the School of Foreign Languages at Hunan Institute of Technology as examples to study the English autonomous learning model based on WeChat public accounts. The article first introduces the definition and characteristics of WeChat and its public accounts, emphasizing the application of WeChat in the field of education. It defines autonomous learning and points out its drawbacks. The article provides a detailed analysis of the advantages of English autonomous learning based on WeChat public accounts, including abundant learning resources, convenient self-management, enhanced learning interest, and interactive feedback. The article believes that this learning model can effectively improve the quality and efficiency of English autonomous learning, but learners still need to maintain self-discipline.*

Keywords: WeChat; Public Accounts; English Autonomous Learning.

1. DEFINITION AND CHARACTERISTICS OF WECHAT AND ITS PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

1.1 Definition and Characteristics of WeChat

WeChat (WeChat) is a multifunctional instant messaging application launched by Tencent, integrating chat, payment, social networking, and other features. Since its launch, WeChat has quickly become a popular social platform in China and even globally. The main features of WeChat include: instant messaging, Moments sharing, mobile payment, mini-program applications, etc., providing users with a more convenient experience in life and social interactions. WeChat "has gradually become a favorite in the field of higher education, leveraging its real-time updates and diverse content" [2]. An increasing number of universities have created their own WeChat public accounts, breaking the limitations of learning within the classroom. This is "conducive to developing new models of autonomous English learning" [2] and diversifies students' learning pathways.

1.2 Definition and Characteristics of WeChat Public Accounts

WeChat public accounts are a form of social media service provided on the WeChat platform, designed to help businesses, institutions, individuals, etc., attract followers and disseminate information through content publishing. Public platform accounts are divided into "service accounts, subscription accounts, and mini-programs, each performing corresponding self-media activities" [3]. Among them, subscription accounts are suitable for content publishing and information dissemination, while service accounts focus more on providing services. "The WeChat public account platform enables comprehensive communication and interaction for specific groups through text, images, voice, video, etc" [4]. In the context of the new era, the number of mobile learners relying on the WeChat public account platform has been on a steady rise. Public accounts possess functions such as content publishing, user interaction, and information push, featuring fast dissemination, convenient information classification management, and high user stickiness. Especially in terms of the push of learning resources and systematic presentation of content, WeChat public accounts demonstrate strong advantages.

2. DEFINITION AND DISADVANTAGES OF AUTONOMOUS LEARNING

2.1 Definition of Autonomous Learning

Autonomous learning refers to a learning model where learners proactively choose learning content, formulate learning plans, and conduct self-monitoring and evaluation based on their own needs and goals. It "enables

students to take primary responsibility for their learning and control the learning process, including goal selection, resource review, strategy determination, and result evaluation" [5]. Autonomous learning benefits learners by enabling them to take control of their learning, develop critical thinking, problem-solving abilities, and self-regulation skills. However, the effectiveness of autonomous learning is often influenced by factors such as the learner's motivation, methodology, and self-management ability.

2.2 Disadvantages of Autonomous Learning

Despite its advantages, autonomous learning also has some significant drawbacks. This study selected students from the translation major of the School of Foreign Languages at the university, collecting and organizing issues related to autonomous learning through interviews and questionnaires. The summarized issues are as follows:

(1) Difficulty in selecting learning resources: Self directed learning requires learners to choose resources on their own, and some learners may not be able to obtain suitable learning materials due to a lack of effective resources or blind selection.

(2) Lack of supervision: Learners may relax their demands on themselves due to the absence of external supervision during autonomous learning, leading to unstable learning outcomes or even interruption of learning.

(3) Ambiguous goals: Some learners do not have clear learning goals and plans during autonomous learning, resulting in ineffective or inefficient learning.

(4) Lack of feedback: In autonomous learning, learners struggle to receive timely feedback in autonomous learning, unable to understand their learning progress and mastery, which may reduce motivation.

3. ADVANTAGES OF ENGLISH AUTONOMOUS LEARNING BASED ON WECHAT PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

3.1 Abundant and Targeted Learning Resources

There are numerous English learning-related accounts on WeChat public platforms, which regularly and targetedly push various English learning resources such as vocabulary, grammar, listening, and reading materials. These resources come in various forms, including text content and audio-video materials, meeting the needs of different learners. Compared to traditional book or classroom learning, WeChat public accounts allow learners to access English resources anytime and anywhere, greatly enriching the material for autonomous learning.

3.2 Convenient Self-Management and Planning to Fully Utilizing Fragmented Time

The push function of WeChat official account allows learners to choose to follow relevant official account according to their own learning needs, and reasonably arrange their learning time according to their push content. For example, they can read "Daily English Vocabulary" in the morning and listen to "Oral English Practice" audio in the evening. This timed push helps learners plan their study time reasonably, enhance their self-management ability, and thus improve learning efficiency. In modern fast-paced life, learners' time is often fragmented into short periods. The short-form pushed content of WeChat public accounts exactly meets this need, allowing learners to use their phones for brief learning during leisure time, such as reading articles on the subway and listening to English audio during lunch breaks, accumulating knowledge in fragmented time.

3.3 Strong Purposefulness to Significantly Enhancing Learning Interest

The content of WeChat public accounts is planned and purposeful, often lively and interesting with a rich variety of article formats and diverse content, such as recommendations of English films and TV shows, bilingual reading, and interesting explanations of English idioms. These interesting contents can enhance learners' interest in learning, strengthen their learning motivation, and make autonomous English learning no longer boring.

3.4 Providing Learning Interaction and Feedback to Facilitate Self-Assessment

Some English learning official account will organize interactive activities such as online discussion, learning clocking, and even set up WeChat communities to allow learners to exchange and share experiences with each

other. This approach not only enhances learners' interest and enthusiasm for learning, but also provides opportunities for communication and feedback, making up for the lack of communication and feedback in traditional self-directed learning. Many English learning WeChat official account also provide small tests, simulation questions and other tools to help learners self test. For example, after learning some grammar knowledge, learners can consolidate and verify it through the quiz on the official account. This detection method can help learners understand their learning progress, identify weak areas, and adjust their learning plans in a timely manner to improve learning effectiveness.

4. CONCLUSION

The English autonomous learning model based on WeChat public accounts has significant advantages. It not only provides abundant learning resources but also creates a flexible and efficient learning environment for learners. Through the scheduled pushes, interactive feedback, interesting content, and self-testing functions of public accounts, learners can better manage themselves and control learning progress. At the same time, utilizing the WeChat public platform allows learners to efficiently utilize fragmented time and enhance their English proficiency. However, this model still requires learners to maintain self-discipline and independently adjust their learning process to achieve ideal learning results. Therefore, the rational use of WeChat official account resources, combined with their own learning habits and needs, can effectively improve the quality and efficiency of English autonomous learning. Of course, this study only selected students majoring in translation as the research subjects, so the sample has certain limitations. If the research scope is expanded, better results can be expected.

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