

# 个体近似数量系统与其数学能力之间的关系： 发展研究的证据\*

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**摘 要** 近似数量系统在个体数学能力的发展中起着重要的作用,二者之间的关系受到年龄因素的影响。主要表现为,随着年龄的增长,相关程度逐渐减弱,二者之间关系的作用机制可能由基数知识中介转变为多种中介变量的共同作用。未来可采用更严格的实验设计和多种研究方法考察各年龄段儿童近似数量系统与不同数学能力之间关系的发展趋势、因果方向、关键转折点和潜在机制,以更好地理解近似数量系统在个体数学能力发展中所起的作用。

**关键词** 近似数量系统, 数学能力, 基数知识中介假说, 视觉形状知觉假说, 发展

**分类号** B842; B844; G447

近似数量系统<sup>1</sup>(Approximate Number System, ANS)指个体在不依赖于逐个数数的情况下,对一组数量大于4的非符号数量进行近似评估的数量系统(Feigenson et al., 2004; Gallistel, 2011)。研究者通常用近似数量系统敏锐度(简称ANS敏锐度)表示个体加工非符号数量的能力。ANS的相关研究通常要求被试在两组数量不同的点阵或物体图片中选择数量更多的一组(ANS比较任务),并常使用正确率、韦伯系数( $w$ )和反应时作为其ANS敏锐度的测量指标(Inglis & Gilmore, 2014)。

研究者普遍认为近似数量系统对数量加工具有重要影响(Bethany et al., 2016; Mussolin et al., 2016),且相较于一般认知能力,它可能是决定个体数学能力差异的更重要因素(Chu et al., 2016; Halberda et al., 2008; Libertus et al., 2012)。近来研究发现,近似数量系统和数学能力之间的关系会

受到年龄因素的影响,且随着个体年龄的增长,二者之间的关系逐渐减弱(Fazio et al., 2014; Peng et al., 2017; Schneider et al., 2017)。因此,本研究从发展的视角,系统阐述了近似数量系统和数学能力之间的关系,以厘清二者之间关系的发展趋势和潜在机制。

## 1 学前儿童近似数量系统和数学能力的关系

大量横向研究(e.g., Bonny & Lourenco, 2013; Keller & Libertus, 2015)和纵向研究(e.g., Bethany et al., 2016; Chu et al., 2015)均表明,3~6岁儿童的近似数量系统与数学能力之间存在显著的正相关关系。如, Keller 和 Libertus (2015)采用大样本被试,发现在控制了一般认知能力之后,3~6岁儿童的ANS敏锐度和数学能力之间呈显著正相关。此外,学前儿童的ANS敏锐度也能预测其未来的数学能力。如, Libertus 等人(2013)发现在控制年龄、词汇能力和前测数学能力之后,4岁儿童的ANS敏锐度仍能预测其6个月后的数学能力。类似地,研究还发现,学前儿童的ANS敏锐度能够预测其1年(Chu et al., 2015)、14个月(Soto-Calvo et al., 2015)、2年(Mazzocco et al., 2011)、甚至是6年后

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<sup>1</sup> Feigenson 等人(2004)根据数量的多少,将非符号数量系统分为精确数量系统(小于4,迅速准确地估计)与近似数量系统(大于4,近似地估计)。

(Bethany et al., 2016)的数学能力。这表明近似数量系统是未来数学能力发展的重要预测因子(e.g., Chu et al., 2016)。

除了相关关系,研究者还考察了学前儿童近似数量系统和数学能力之间的因果关系。例如,在控制一般认知能力(执行功能、抑制能力、短时记忆等)的前提下,研究者们开展了针对近似数量系统的干预研究(e.g., Maertens et al., 2016; Szklare & Brannon, 2018)。他们发现,相比于直接干预符号数量系统的训练,针对近似数量系统的干预训练不仅更符合学前儿童的认知发展规律和学习特点,而且能更有效地提高学前儿童的非正式数学能力(Park et al., 2016)。学前儿童早期数学能力的近似数量系统干预研究可分为两类:ANS 比较训练<sup>2</sup>和ANS 计算训练<sup>3</sup>。研究表明,ANS 比较训练(Maertens et al., 2016; Sella et al., 2016)和ANS 计算训练(Park et al., 2016; Szklare & Brannon, 2018)均能显著提高学前儿童的早期数学能力。这表明学前儿童存在从近似数量系统到早期数学能力的正向因果关系。

近期研究表明,近似数量系统与早期数学能力之间可能存在双向(Elliott et al., 2019; Shusterman et al., 2016)或反向(Hutchison et al., 2020; Lyons et al., 2018; Mussolin et al., 2014)的因果关系。例如,Shusterman 等人(2016)的研究发现 3~4 岁学前儿童 ANS 敏锐度发生变化的时期,与其符号数学能力快速发展的时期相对应,为二者之间存在双向因果关系的推论提供了间接证据支持。Elliott 等人(2019)对 193 名 3~5 岁学前儿童的 ANS 敏锐度与早期数学能力进行交叉滞后相关分析,发现在控制了智力、抑制控制和注意力之后,儿童的 ANS 敏锐度仍可预测其未来的数学能力;其早期数学能力也能预测其未来的 ANS 敏锐度。然而,Lyons 等人(2018)发现 4~5 岁学前儿童的早期符号比较能力可以预测其 6 个月后的 ANS 敏锐度,而

其早期 ANS 敏锐度不能预测未来的符号比较能力。Mussolin 等人(2014)也在 3~4 岁的学前儿童中发现了类似的结果。

可见,尽管大多数研究表明学前儿童近似数量系统与数学能力之间存在显著的相关或因果关系,但仍有部分研究未发现二者的相关关系(Sasanguie et al., 2014; Soltész et al., 2010),或二者的正向因果关系(Hutchison et al., 2020; Lyons et al., 2018; Mussolin et al., 2014)。对此,一些研究者认为导致上述矛盾结果的可能原因是其 ANS 比较任务中的数量范围较小(1~9; e.g., Soltész et al., 2010; Hutchison et al., 2020),这使得 ANS 的测量混杂了精确数量系统(数量小于 4 的非符号数量系统)的加工过程。且略高于 4 的小数量比较任务也容易引起学龄儿童的数数行为,因此在 ANS 比较任务中应尽量避免使用 10 以内的点阵材料(Dietrich et al., 2015)。另一些研究者认为,不同的数学能力测验也会对结果产生重要的影响(Elliott et al., 2019)。例如, Elliott 等人(2019)采用完整的早期数学能力测验发现了双向的因果关系,而 Mussolin 等人(2014)仅采用三种子能力、Lyons 等人(2018)仅采用符号比较能力均未发现二者之间的正向因果关系。

除此之外,还有一些研究提出上述矛盾结果产生的原因可能在于,研究者未严格控制额外变量,如抑制控制能力(e.g., Fuhs & McNeil, 2013; Gilmore et al., 2013)和基数知识(e.g., Bartelet et al., 2014; Chu et al., 2015)。一方面, Gilmore 等(2013)的抑制控制假说(Inhibitory control hypothesis)认为近似数量系统与数学能力相关显著的原因在于,抑制控制能力在 ANS 比较任务和数学测验中具有重要的作用,而不是近似数量系统在数学能力的发展过程中具有重要的作用(e.g., Fuhs & McNeil, 2013)。然而,越来越多的研究者开始质疑抑制控制假说。例如, Keller 和 Libertus (2015)发现,在控制抑制控制能力后,学前儿童的近似数量系统与数学能力仍显著相关。同样, Peng 等(2017)在控制视觉注意和工作记忆后,未发现抑制控制能力对近似数量系统或计算能力的影响。此外, Malone 等人(2019)发现在控制基数知识、工作记忆和注意力后,学前儿童的 ANS 敏锐度仍与数学能力(计算能力)显著相关;且 ANS 敏锐度对数学能力的预测程度,显著大于抑制控制和不一

<sup>2</sup> ANS 比较训练借鉴了测量 ANS 敏锐度的点阵比较范式,在屏幕上同时或相继呈现两张点阵图片,要求被试判断哪张点阵图片所包含点的数量更多(Wang, Odic, et al., 2016)。

<sup>3</sup> ANS 计算训练要求被试估计两张相继呈现点阵图片的点数之和或之差,并判断其估计结果是否比第三张点阵图片的数量更多或更少(Park & Brannon, 2013, 2014)。

致试次<sup>4</sup>中正确率对数学能力的预测程度。

另一方面,Chu等人(2015)提出了基数知识中介假说(Cardinal knowledge mediation hypothesis)来解释学前儿童近似数量系统和早期数学能力之间的关系。该假说认为,近似数量系统通过促进学前儿童基数原则的学习,来促进其早期数学能力的发展(Peng et al., 2017)。例如,van Marle等(2014)采用长时研究发现,在控制一般认知能力(智力和抑制能力等)后,学前儿童3岁时的ANS敏锐度可以显著预测其两年后的基数知识和早期数学能力,且儿童的基数知识在ANS敏锐度与早期数学能力之间起到完全中介的作用。该结论获得了Chu等人(2015)的支持。

## 2 学龄儿童近似数量系统和数学能力的关系

大量研究发现,在控制了环境和个体认知水平等因素(如智力、父母教育水平、抑制控制、语言、工作记忆)后,无论是学龄儿童(e.g., Halberda et al., 2008; He et al., 2016; Inglis et al., 2011),还是青少年儿童(e.g., Geary et al., 2015),其近似数量系统与数学能力都具有显著的正相关关系。例如,Halberda等人(2008)首先对64名5岁儿童进行了追踪研究(从幼儿园到六年级,5~11岁),结果发现,在随后6年的时间内,被试每一年的ANS敏锐度均与其当时的符号数学能力呈显著相关。同时,九年级儿童的ANS敏锐度均能反向预测这6次数学成绩。即使控制了16种一般认知能力(包括一般智力、执行功能、语言能力等),九年级儿童的ANS敏锐度仍与其三年级时的数学成绩呈显著的相关关系。随后,Inglis等人(2011)研究验证了这一结果,他们发现7~9岁儿童的ANS敏锐度和数学能力显著相关,ANS敏锐度越高的儿童,其数学成绩也越好。这似乎表明近似数量系统可能是产生数学能力个体差异的主要原因。

众多针对学龄儿童近似数量系统的干预研究也发现,ANS比较训练(Hyde et al., 2014; Obersteiner et al., 2013)和ANS计算训练(Gouet et al., 2018;

Khanum et al., 2016)均可显著提高6~7岁学龄儿童的数学能力,且二者的训练效果并无显著的差异(Hyde et al., 2014)。此外,Libertus等人(2020)发现,视觉通道的ANS训练既能提高6岁儿童听觉通道的ANS敏锐度,也能促进其早期数学能力的发展。以上结果表明,低年级学龄儿童存在从近似数量系统到早期数学能力的单向因果关系。相似地,He等(2016)采用纵向研究和交叉滞后相关分析发现,8~11岁的儿童仅存在从近似数量系统到数学能力的单向因果关系。然而,Matejko和Ansari(2016)发现6岁儿童的符号比较能力可以预测其1年后的ANS敏锐度,但其早期ANS敏锐度无法预测其1年后的符号比较能力。同样,Suárez-Pellicioni和Booth(2018)采用fMRI技术也发现10岁儿童的符号计算能力可预测其2年后的ANS敏锐度和顶内沟激活程度,但反向预测不成立。

可见,尽管大多数研究表明学龄儿童近似数量系统与数学能力之间存在显著的相关或因果关系,但仍有部分研究未发现二者的相关关系(e.g., Holloway & Ansari, 2009; Sasanguie et al., 2013; Vanbinst et al., 2012),或二者的正向因果关系(Matejko & Ansari, 2016; Suárez-Pellicioni & Booth, 2018)。产生上述矛盾结果的原因除了ANS比较任务中的数量范围较小(e.g., Matejko & Ansari, 2016; Vanbinst et al., 2012)和数学能力测验工具不统一(e.g., Sasanguie et al., 2013; Suárez-Pellicioni & Booth, 2018)之外,研究者认为,测量指标也会影响实验结果。例如,将数值比率效应(Numerical Ratio Effect, NRE)或数值距离效应(Numerical Distance Effect, NDE)<sup>5</sup>作为ANS敏锐度的测量指标。研究者发现,这两种指标的重测信度或分半信度较低(Inglis & Gilmore, 2014; Sasanguie et al., 2011),且与其他ANS测量指标(正确率和韦伯分数)聚合效度较差。相比较而言,韦伯分数和正确率的重测信度较高,且高度相关,是更为理想的测量指标(Inglis & Gilmore, 2014)。

此外,还有一些研究者认为上述研究未控制

<sup>4</sup> 点阵中点的数量与感觉线索呈负相关的试次,例如,若点阵中点的数量越多,则点的大小越小。部分研究者将其正确率、韦伯分数或反应时作为领域特异性的抑制控制能力测量指标(e.g., Gilmore et al., 2013; Malone et al., 2019)。

<sup>5</sup> NRE是指两个待比较非符号数量的数值比率越大,被试的反应时间就越长,正确率就越低;NDE是指两个待比较非符号数量之间的数值距离越大,被试的反应时间越短,正确率越高(Buckley & Gillman, 1974)。

影响学龄儿童近似数量系统和数学能力之间关系的额外变量,如视觉形状知觉能力(Zhou et al., 2015)。视觉形状知觉假说(Visual form perception hypothesis)认为,视觉形状知觉能力可能是近似数量系统与数学能力之间关系的共同机制,其中起作用的关键因素是视觉知觉的加工速度(e.g., Wang, Sun, et al., 2016; Zhang et al., 2019)。首先,视觉形状知觉与ANS敏锐度和计算流畅性均具有显著相关(Cui et al., 2017; Wang, Sun, et al., 2016; Zhou et al., 2015);其次,Zhou等(2015)发现,在控制了视觉追踪、心理旋转、言语工作记忆、选择反应时和推理能力后,ANS敏锐度仍与计算流畅性显著相关。然而,在进一步控制视觉形状知觉能力后,二者相关不再显著(Zhou et al., 2015)。最后,发展障碍儿童的ANS敏锐度和视觉形状知觉能力均存在缺陷,但在控制视觉形状知觉之后,他们不再有近似数量系统方面的缺陷(Zhou & Cheng, 2015)。

近来两项元分析研究一致表明,近似数量系统与数学能力之间的关系随着年龄的增长有所下降: $r_{(3-6岁)} = 0.40$ ;  $r_{(6-18岁)} = 0.17$ ;  $r_{(3-6岁)} = 0.31$ ;  $r_{(6-9岁)} = 0.22$  (Fazio et al., 2014; Schneider et al., 2017)。Schneider等(2017)也发现,对于学龄儿童来说,相比于近似数量系统与数学能力之间的相关( $r = 0.24$ ),其符号数量系统<sup>6</sup>与数学能力的相关( $r = 0.30$ )程度更大。这表明,除了近似数量系统以外,符号数量系统也对学龄儿童的数学能力有显著的影响。而且,随着年龄的增长,学龄儿童数学能力的发展可能更依赖于后者。可见,无论学龄儿童近似数量系统与其数学能力之间的作用机制如何,以上研究均在一定程度上表明:随着年龄的增长,近似数量系统与数学能力之间的关系会由于领域特异性符号数量系统和领域一般性认知因素(如,视觉形状知觉、抑制控制等)的影响而变得越来越复杂。

### 3 成人近似数量系统和数学能力的关系

当前对成人近似数量系统与其数学能力之间关系的研究尚未达成一致结论。一些研究发现,

成人近似数量系统与其数学能力之间存在显著的正相关(e.g., DeWind & Brannon, 2012; Guillaume et al., 2013; Lyons & Beilock, 2011); 另一些研究则未发现(e.g., Castronovo & Göbel, 2012; Inglis et al., 2011; Price et al., 2012)。例如,Inglis等人(2011)在研究中同时考察学龄儿童和成人的ANS敏锐度和数学能力之间的关系,结果发现二者的关系在儿童被试中显著,但在成人被试中不显著。然而,近来两项元分析研究均表明,相比于学前儿童,成人的近似数量系统与其数学能力之间仍存在较小但显著的正相关, $r_{(18-65)} = 0.21$  (Fazio et al., 2014; Schneider et al., 2017)。分析以往的研究结果可知,造成矛盾结论的原因可能与方法学及个体数量认知发展的成熟度有关。

一方面,从方法学角度来看,被试样本内数学能力的个体差异较小(e.g., Guillaume et al., 2013)、ANS敏锐度实验范式和测量指标不同(e.g., Price et al., 2012)、数学能力测量工具不同(e.g., Schneider et al., 2017)、甚至是控制变量不同或不全(e.g., Fazio et al., 2014)等问题都是影响实验结果稳定性的原因。更重要的是,成人近似数量系统与其数学能力之间的关系可能仅限于其中的计算能力(Wei et al., 2012); 另一方面,从个体数量认知能力的发展视角来看,成人符号数量系统已完全替代近似数量系统,成为个体未来数学能力(主要是计算能力)的最主要预测因子(e.g., Geary et al., 2013; Inglis et al., 2011)。例如,以往研究发现,无论对于成人的研究是否发现了近似数量系统与其数学能力之间的关系显著,只要研究中同时测量了符号数量系统知识,则均表明符号数量系统知识在近似数量系统和数学能力之间起到完全中介的作用(e.g., Castronovo & Göbel, 2012; Lyons & Beilock, 2011)。

大多针对成人近似数量系统训练的研究均发现,ANS比较和ANS计算的训练效果(主要是对计算能力)出现了分离。主要表现为,ANS比较训练均未能提高成人的数学能力(Cochrane et al., 2019; Park & Brannon, 2014),而ANS计算训练则具有显著的促进效果(Park & Brannon, 2013, 2014)。为进一步考察ANS计算训练的作用机制,Park和Brannon(2014)将ANS计算训练细分为多种认知成分(ANS比较能力、视觉空间短时记忆、心理计算能力),并比较这三种认知成分与ANS计算的

<sup>6</sup> 人类特有的、具有依赖于语言系统的、后天的符号数量系统(Symbolic Number System, SNS),例如,“2”、“二”、“two”等(Piazza et al., 2007)。

干预效果。结果表明,ANS 计算训练能显著提高成人的数学能力(主要是计算能力),而ANS 比较训练和短时记忆训练则不能。这一结果支持了Park 和 Brannon (2013)的假设,即与儿童不同,ANS 计算训练对成人数学能力的作用机制可能在于其心理计算能力的提高,而不是其ANS 敏锐度的提高(Lindskog & Winman, 2016; Park et al., 2016)。因此,仅针对近似数量系统进行的训练(ANS 比较)并不会促进成人数学能力的发展。

此外,虽然尚未有研究直接考察成人近似数量系统和数学能力之间的因果关系,但是间接证据表明提高成人数学能力有助于其近似数量系统的发展(e.g., Ferrigno et al., 2017; Nys et al., 2013; Piazza et al., 2013)。例如,Piazza 等人(2013)和 Nys 等人(2013)的研究均发现,相比于未接受过正式数学教育的成人,接受过数学教育的成人具有更高的ANS 敏锐度。Ferrigno 等人(2017)采用点阵比较范式,并允许被试自主选择刺激材料的分类方式(数量信息或其他感觉线索),结果发现成人被试中,根据数量信息进行分类的倾向性与受数学教育程度显著相关。即数学经验更多的被试更倾向于根据数量信息进行分类,而数学经验较少的被试则倾向于根据感觉线索(点阵的表面积)进行分类。

#### 4 个体近似数量系统与其数学能力关系的发展趋势

综上所述,基于以往的实证研究结果,我们可以描绘出个体近似数量系统与其数学能力关系的大致发展趋势:学前期二者之间的关系紧密,近似数量系统主要通过提高基数知识进而提高数学能力;学龄期二者的相关程度逐渐下降,近似数量系统与数学能力的关系受到认知因素和符号数量系统影响较大;而成年期近似数量系统与其数学能力之间相关程度更低。

具体来说,对于尚未习得符号数量知识(符号数量系统尚未发展完整)的学前儿童来说,先天遗传的近似数量系统是其获取符号数量意义或建立符号数量系统的一种途径,是未来数学能力发展的重要预测因子(e.g., Bethany et al., 2016; Chu et al., 2016)。此时,学前儿童更多地依赖于近似数量系统进行数量的加工。且相关证据表明,近似数量系统和符号数量系统具有共同的神经机制,即

不同形式和不同通道呈现的数量刺激均能引起顶内沟的激活(e.g., Butterworth & Walsh, 2011; Dehaene et al., 2003; Holloway et al., 2010; Sokolowski et al., 2016),因此,近似数量系统可能是学前儿童获取符号数量意义的基础(e.g., Bethany et al., 2016; Chu et al., 2016),ANS 敏锐度高的儿童,也更容易理解符号数量知识(如基数知识和计算知识;Chu et al., 2016; Geary et al., 2013; van Marle et al., 2014)。

基数知识是学前儿童近似数量系统与其数学能力之间关系的重要中介变量(Chu et al., 2015; Peng et al., 2017),近似数量系统通过促进儿童基数知识的发展,间接促进其早期数学能力的发展(Peng et al., 2017)。此外,ANS 敏锐度较高的学前儿童或许能够在数量估计、比较和计算题的完成中,获得成就感和自信心。而这间接培养了其对数学学习的兴趣,促使他们主动学习更多的数学知识,进而获得更高的数学能力(Odic et al., 2014; Wang, Odic, et al., 2016)。因此,对于学前儿童的数学教育,相比于旨在提高儿童正式数学能力的小学化教学方式(符号数量系统训练),培养儿童对数学学习的兴趣更为重要(以具体实物为中介,不涉及抽象符号数字的近似数量系统训练),也更符合学前儿童的数学学习特点(Szkudlarek & Brannon, 2018)。同时,在早期数学学习中,学前儿童符号数量知识和计算经验的增加或许也可以有效促进其近似数量系统的发展(Goffin & Ansari, 2019)。

随着年龄的增长,学龄儿童和青少年儿童(6~18岁)的符号数量系统日渐成熟。由于符号数量系统自身的精确性特点,儿童在数量加工过程中对近似数量系统的依赖逐渐降低,而对符号数量系统的依赖逐渐升高(e.g., Geary et al., 2013)。此时,符号数量系统逐渐代替近似数量系统成为个体未来数学能力的关键预测因子(e.g., Kolkman et al., 2013; Vanbinst et al., 2015)。即,近似数量系统和数学能力的相关程度会随儿童年龄增长而逐渐下降,而符号数量系统和数学能力的相关程度则会随儿童年龄增长而逐渐提高(Schneider et al., 2017)。

与此同时,相比于ANS 敏锐度,个体的其他认知能力(如,视觉形状知觉、工作记忆、抑制控制、策略选择等)会成为影响其数学能力发展的重要因素(e.g., Gilmore et al., 2013; Zhang et al.,

2019),也削弱了个体的近似数量系统与其数学能力(主要是计算能力)之间的相关程度(Inglis et al., 2011)。虽然已有研究表明近似数量系统和符号数量系统的训练均可显著提高学龄儿童的数学能力(Obersteiner et al., 2013),但可能仅局限于低年級的学龄儿童(Zhang et al., 2016; Zhou et al., 2015)。对于学龄儿童来说,相比于近似数量系统的相关训练,符号数量系统的训练更适于作为被试筛选和干预研究的理论基础(Schneider et al., 2017)。

成人的近似数量系统与其数学能力之间的相关程度更低,这可能与符号数量系统的成熟和数学经验的增长有关(e.g., Guillaume et al., 2013)。具体来说,以符号作为主要形式的数学能力逐渐摆脱近似数量系统的影响,已完全依赖于符号数量系统进行数学学习(e.g., Geary et al., 2013; Peng et al., 2017)。但由于符号数量系统的成熟和数学经验也能够促进ANS敏锐度的发展(e.g., Guillaume et al., 2013)。因此二者之间仍然具有显著却微弱的正相关(Fazio et al., 2014; Schneider et al., 2017)。也正是这一原因使得仅仅针对近似数量系统的训练(ANS比较训练)无法促进成人数学能力的发展(Park & Brannon, 2014)。

此外,虽然ANS计算训练能同时提高儿童和成人的数学能力,但是其作用机制可能不同。对学前儿童的ANS计算训练,是通过提高其ANS敏锐度来提高其早期数学能力的,且未发现心理计算过程对数学能力具有额外作用(Park & Brannon, 2014);而对成人的ANS计算训练,是通过提高成人的心理计算能力来提高其数学能力(计算能力)的,且未发现ANS敏锐度有所提高(Park & Brannon, 2014)。可见,对成人近似数量系统和数学能力之间的关系研究均未得到积极的结果,尚需进一步挖掘其理论意义和实践价值。

## 5 小结和展望

近似数量系统可能是学前儿童获取符号数量意义的基础(e.g., Chu et al., 2016; van Marle et al., 2014),是个体早期数学能力的重要预测因子(Park et al., 2016; Szudlarek & Brannon, 2018),是学前儿童数学能力个体差异的源头(Bethany et al., 2016; Chu et al., 2016)。而对于年龄较大的儿童和成人来说,符号数量系统才是其数学能力发展的重要预测因子(Sasanguie et al., 2014; Wei et al.,

2012)。为了进一步检验该推论,未来研究可从以下四个方面来关注此问题:

(1)在测量ANS敏锐度时,需选择恰当的实验范式和测量指标。大量研究表明,ANS比较任务中对感觉线索的不合理控制(e.g., Smets et al., 2015)、不恰当的点阵数量范围和数量比例(e.g., Sasanguie et al., 2013)、不同的呈现时间(e.g., Zhang et al., 2019)、不同的呈现方式(e.g., Wang, Sun, et al., 2016)、以及不同的ANS敏锐度指标(e.g., Peng et al., 2017)等,都是导致矛盾结果的重要原因。首先,在感觉线索的控制方面,Gebuis和Reynvoet (2012)发现在ANS比较任务中,被试会受到感觉线索的影响,且会整合多种感觉线索。因此,Gebuis和Reynvoet (2012)提供了一种更为合理的ANS比较任务(同时控制凸包、总表面积、密度、点的平均大小四种感觉线索)来测量个体的ANS敏锐度,并得到研究者们的一致认同(Clayton et al., 2015; Gilmore et al., 2016; Norris et al., 2019)。此外,大多数研究通过控制呈现时间来抑制被试的数数行为,而缺少相应的评定指标(e.g., Fuhs & Mcneil, 2013)。在未来的研究中,研究者可以通过对比允许数数和限制数数条件下被试的反应来确定具体的行为特征,并以此为依据确定恰当的点阵数量范围、比例、呈现时间以及呈现方式(e.g., Cordes et al., 2001; Crollen et al., 2011)。最后,相比于NRE和NDE,同时采用正确率和韦伯分数作为ANS敏锐度的因变量指标更为理想(Dietrich et al., 2015; Lindskog et al., 2013; Inglis & Gilmore, 2014)。

(2)在测量数学能力时,需要根据前人研究结果选择符合研究目的的测验。先前研究采用了不同种类的数学能力测验,而这会放大或缩小近似数量系统和数学能力之间的关系(e.g., Szudlarek & Brannon, 2017),因此研究者在表述、引用或推论时需谨慎。对学前儿童,大多研究采用早期数学能力测验(the Test of Early Mathematics Ability-III, TEMA-3, Ginsburg & Baroody, 2003; e.g., Keller & Libertus, 2015),还有少部分研究采用数感筛选测试(Number Sense Screener, NSS, Glutting & Jordan, 2012; e.g., Szudlarek & Brannon, 2018);对于学龄儿童和成人,大多研究采用计算能力测试(Mathematics Fluency and Calculation subtests of the Woodcock-Johnson III Tests of Achievement,

Woodcock et al., 1990; e.g., Holloway & Ansari, 2009; Inglis et al., 2011), 或加减法计算题(e.g., Agrillo et al., 2013; Geary et al., 2009; Zhou et al., 2015); 少量研究采用基于课堂的数学成绩(期中或期末数学成绩, Scholastic Aptitude Test, SAT; e.g., Halberda et al., 2008; Libertus et al., 2012)。此外, 也有研究者发现近似数量系统只与特定的数学能力相关, 如 Zhang 等(2016)发现 ANS 敏锐度与计算流畅性显著相关, 但与数学推理能力无关。

(3)在考察近似数量系统与数学能力的关系时, 需选择合理的控制变量。研究表明, 人口学变量, 如年龄(e.g., Schneider et al., 2017)、父母教育背景(e.g., LeFevre et al., 2010)、社会经济地位(e.g., Szkudlarek & Brannon, 2018); 一般认知因素, 如视觉空间能力(e.g., Sigmundsson et al., 2010)、抑制控制(e.g., Bull & Lee, 2014)、工作记忆(e.g., Swanson, 2011)、加工速度(e.g., Zhou et al., 2015)、执行功能(e.g., Clark et al., 2010)或一般智力(e.g., Geary, 2011)等; 领域特异性因素, 如基数知识(e.g., Chu et al., 2015)、符号数量系统知识(e.g., Bartelet et al., 2014)、映射能力(e.g., Alvarez et al., 2017)等都会影响近似数量系统与数学能力之间的关系。因此, 在研究二者之间的关系时, 需控制这些变量。

(4)在研究方法上, 既可以采用纵向研究, 系统考察各年龄段被试近似数量系统与不同数学能力之间关系的发展趋势、因果方向、关键转折点和潜在机制, 以更好地理解近似数量系统在各年龄阶段个体数学学习中所起的作用。如, 同时考虑领域特异性和领域一般性假说, 并在此基础上建立完善的早期数学能力发展模型, 为更有效地提高不同年龄儿童的早期数学能力提供理论依据。也可以采用干预的研究方法, 对不同年龄段个体进行最为恰当的近似数量系统或符号数量系统训练, 从而更有效地提高其相应的数学能力, 为学前教育和正式数学教育提供系统而完善的理论与实践指导。还可以基于数学学习困难儿童的早期发展研究采集数据, 进一步检验上述理论问题, 并对这些儿童进行科学适时的数学早期干预教育, 尽量弥补其认知发展的不足。

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## The relationship between the approximate number system and mathematical abilities: Evidence from developmental research

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**Abstract:** The approximate number system plays an important role in the development of individual mathematical abilities, and the relationship between the two factors is affected by age. Mainly, as age increases, the degree of correlation gradually weakens, and the mechanisms change from cardinal knowledge mediation to the joint effect of multiple intermediary variables. Future research should use a more rigorous experimental design and multiple research methods to investigate the development trend, causal direction, key turning points and the underlying mechanisms of the relationship between the approximate number system and different mathematical abilities of children of all ages to better understand the role of the approximate number system in the development of individual mathematical abilities.

**Key words:** approximate number system, mathematical abilities, cardinal knowledge mediation hypothesis, visual form perception hypothesis, development