

The Factors Affecting the Verb Pattern Errors Writing of Students in EFL Chinese College: A Case Study of Non-English Major

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Abstract

This research aimed to describe verb pattern errors and examine the factors affecting verb pattern errors in English writings committed by EFL Chinese college non-English major students. This article was a combination of quantitative and qualitative research. The error analysis method was used to guide the steps, which are collecting errors from students' writing tests, identifying errors, describing errors, and explaining errors. The research sample was 44 students' writings of non-English majors. The research instruments were a writing test and a set of questionnaires.

The finding showed 11 categories of verb pattern errors existing and verb pattern errors (33.33%) were the most serious. Surface structure taxonomy was adopted to analyze the errors' forms, and the percentage of each error was omission (36.78%), addition (32.18%), misformation (29.89%), and misordering (1.15%). Based on the questionnaires, the factors affecting verb pattern errors concluded that intralingual interference stemming from overlooking cooccurrence restrictions was the main reason. L1 interference because of collocational errors was the secondary reason. The result of the questionnaire also showed that the materials used in English class were a significant factor affecting verb pattern errors. This study provided teachers and researchers with some suggestions that cooccurrence restrictions, collocational rules, and teaching materials in future English teaching should be paid special attention.

Keywords: Factors Affecting; Verb Pattern Errors Writing; EFL Chinese College; Non-English Major

Introduction

A verb pattern (VP) contains "a verb and the words that come after it. The words after a verb might be a noun, a noun group, an adjective group, a gerund, a non-finite clause, an adverb group, a finite, a prepositional phrase" (Chia, Yap & Ng. 2010 : 109). Verb pattern is one of the most difficult grammatical points for EFL Chinese learners, and verb pattern errors are very common among Chinese college non-English major students.

In order to figure out the factors causing verb pattern errors, the researcher conducted a writing test among freshmen majoring in Human Resource Management of Economics and Management Faculty (HRMEMF) of a Chinese college in the winter semester of the 2022-2023 session. The errors just focused on verb errors in their English writings and the subcategories of verb errors were divided into verb pattern, set phrase, agreement, finite/non-finite, tense, voice, modal/auxiliary, and mood according to Guo (2014: 19). The result showed

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that verb pattern errors ranked the highest frequency and percentage, occupying 41.63%. There were 209 verb errors in this writing test, while verb pattern errors were 87 out of 209 verb errors. The percentage of verb pattern errors was rather serious.

As the verb pattern errors were serious among EFL students' writing, the researcher wanted to figure out the factors causing these problems by exploring the related literature reviews. By searching for the "CNKI" (China National Knowledge Infrastructure) database, "Google Scholar", the researcher found that verb pattern errors hadn't been paid enough attention. In August 2023, in the CNKI database, the researcher inputted the keywords "verb pattern error", and there were only 3 related theses. In "The Google Scholar" database, based on advanced searching with the keywords in the title of the article without time limitation, the researcher inputted the keyword "verb pattern error" and only one related article was found (Chia et al., 2010: 96). Then the researcher inputted the keywords "verb pattern" with appearing the keywords in the title, and 12 theses were found. This information showed that studies on verb pattern errors did not get sufficient attention. Among these related theses, only one study discussed the verb pattern errors, and the others showed the verb pattern categories in samplings. It was necessary to study verb pattern errors and figure out the factors causing these errors, which can help educators adjust their teaching methods.

The students' writing test showed that verb pattern errors were serious, which proved that verb pattern was a weak point in their English writing. Meanwhile, the research on verb pattern errors in some well-known databases was also very little, which proved that the related researchers did not pay enough attention. Based on these reasons, the research aimed to figure out the frequency and percentage of verb pattern errors based on surface structure taxonomy, and then further investigate the factors affecting verb pattern errors in EFL Chinese college students' writings by conducting a writing test and a set of questionnaires.

Research Objectives

1. To describe the verb pattern errors based on surface structure taxonomy.
2. To examine the factors affecting verb pattern errors in EFL Chinese college non-English major students' writings.

Research Hypothesis

It was hypothesized that verb pattern errors committed by EFL Chinese college non-English major participants showed sentence structure knowledge. This research aimed to explore the answers to the following questions:

1. What was the frequency of verb pattern errors based on surface structure taxonomy in the students' writings?
2. What were the factors affecting verb pattern errors in Chinese college non-English major students' writings?

Literature Review

1. Verb Pattern

Verb is the center of a sentence, which stands on the central position. Verb determines the complements' forms, and also determines whether there is one object following it. According to Eizo (1967 : 40), most English sentences are made up of one or more clauses. A clause includes a subject, a verb pattern (also including a single word), and sometimes one or

more complements. In English sentence, a verb can be followed by adverb or prepositional phrases to show the time, place or manner. When the time, place, manner is not important, the adverb group or prepositional phrase is not included as part of the verb pattern (Chia et al., 2010 : 109). Different grammarians gave verb patterns different names. Eizo (1967 : 40) used “verb pattern”. Zhang (2009 : 16) used “basic sentence pattern”. “Verb Pattern” is used such as in Cambridge Dictionary, Hornby (2004 : 2171), (Chia et al., 2010 : 96), Yang (2011 : 1). In this thesis, verb pattern refers to verb and its complements in sentences.

Verb pattern were classified into different categories by different researches. In Cambridge dictionary, verb pattern contains 9 categories. Eizo (1967 : 40) listed 4 main verb forms based on *be*, *intransitive*, *transitive and copulative classes*, and verb patterns are further divided according to their complement types. Hornby (1975 : 12) proposed 5 verb patterns used intransitively, and 20 verb patterns used transitively. Zhang (2009 : 16) listed 5 sentence patterns, including SV, SVO, SVOO, SVOC, SVC. As verb patterns listed by Hornby (1975 : 13) was rather complete and comprehensive, this thesis used the verb patterns raised by Hornby to analyze the verb pattern errors in the sampling writings.

Wahibatual (2008 : 18) analyzed verb pattern in reading texts in English national examination 2008 at senior high school based on Hornby’s theory. Based on 25 verb patterns proposed by Hornby (1975 : 13), 17 verb patterns are found in the reading texts and verb pattern 6 (VP6), (i.e., S + vt + noun/pronoun), has the highest frequency. Analyzing the verb pattern in reading texts is helpful for students to be familiar with verb patterns and the grammar rules in reading texts. Fizi (2022: 37) conducted an analysis on verb pattern in reading texts in English national examination 2020 and also found that verb pattern 6 got the highest frequency. These researches just analyzed the types of verb patterns appearing in works, which can prove what types of verb patterns people or students like using, but they did not discuss the verb pattern errors and their factors causing these errors.

Chia et al (2010 : 96) analyzed the factors affecting verb pattern errors in Active-Passive/ Passive-Active sentence transformation in English made by upper primary Singaporean and Malaysian Chinese Children with specific language impairment. Compared with passive to active transformation, active to passive voice appears more verb pattern errors among the participants’ works. When one verb form has several meanings or one meaning has several verb forms, children may feel confused easily between these meaning or verb forms. By experimental study among 27 participants, the authors found that learners having difficulties on receiving and expressing language are caused by limited word knowledge or vocabulary.

Owada (2013 : 1) conducted research on verb patterns of accusative verbs *appear*, *happen* and *occur* in L2 English Written by Japanese Learners through a university-level essay corpus, the SILS-JLE Corpus. The research found that Japanese learners present ungrammatical accusative passives in using *appear*, *happen*, and *occur* in writing. The research also found that accusative verbs *happen* and *occur* sometimes are used as causative verb in Japanese Learners’ writing, but the causatives of *appear* are used seldomly. The use of *appear*, *happen*, and *occur* with adverbials tends to be common among Japanese learners.

In China, Yang (2011 : 41) conducted the study of verb pattern errors committed by Chinese college students based on Chinese Learner’s English Corpus (CLEC), and the findings are as follow. The errors of transitive verb used in intransitive ways and grammatical irregularity get rather high frequency. The error frequency of intransitive verbs having an object is also quite high. Chen (2019 : 122) did the research on transitive verbs and intransitive

verbs' syntax. The author mentioned that transitive verbs and intransitive verbs oppose with each other. There are many verb patterns about the transitive verbs with objects. At the specific operational level of grammar, it is not semantics but syntactic structure that determines the fundamental attributes of verbs. Once a verb appears in a specific syntactic structure, syntactic operations determine whether it is a transitive verb or an intransitive verb. The criterion for determining transitive and intransitive verbs is the syntactic form criterion. Yuan and Zeng (2005 : 32) proposed that the phenomenon of intransitive verbs with objects hides the mutual transformation process between intransitive verbs and transitive verbs.

In short, verb pattern has aroused the researchers' interesting, while the factors affecting verb pattern errors are still at the start stage, which are deserved to be paid attention.

2.Surface Structure Taxonomy

Surface structure taxonomy is a framework which shows how surface structure is deviated and errors appear eventually (Ariffin, Darus, Halim, & Awang, 2021 : 45). Surface structure taxonomy can show us the cognitive process of learners. Surface structure taxonomy are classified into four elements which are omission, addition, misformation and misordering (Ariffin et al, 2021 : 45). Dewi, Rangkuti and Supriadi (2021 : 14) conducted a study on grammatical errors on EFL students' conversation practice based on surface strategy taxonomy, and analyzed the errors from omission, misformation, addition errors, and misordering errors.

Omission refers to a certain component required in a grammatical correct sentence is omitted, for example, *My sister can happy. In this example sentence, copula *be* is omitted. Addition errors are presence of a certain component which shouldn't appear in a grammatical correct sentence, for example, *Tom can be read. Here the copula *be* should be deleted. Misformation errors are the use of incorrect form of a structure, for example, *He have a book. Here *have* should be changed into *has*. Misordering errors refer to the wrong order of words in a sentence, for example, *That be can interesting. In this sentence, the placement of copula *be* and modal auxiliary *can* should be exchanged (Suhono, 2016 : 17).

3.Error Analysis

Error Analysis (EA) was first developed in sixties of last century. Errors show the derivation of words, pronunciation, or sentence structure with target language, which shows the learners' knowledge of the target language at any point in target language development (Corder, 1967 : 163). It is a method to analyze errors occurring during a second language and a foreign language learning. Learners' errors are the evidence of systems. Error analysis should be based on the evidence of second language learners' study status, which is a system showing the trace of first language interference because of the differences between the target language and the native language.

Error analysis involves detailed descriptions of errors made by second language learners, which can figure out what learners really knew about the language. Ringbom (1987 : 69 cited in Ridha, 2012 : 26) mentioned that error analysis can be used to exam the extent of a person for a concrete language knowledge, know the ways for acquiring a language, and figure out the language learners' problems occurring during language learning processes. Error analysis involves four steps, which are collecting samples, identifying errors, describing errors, explaining errors (Duan, 2020 : 7).

Corder (1967 : 167) pointed out that analyzing learners' errors has three significances. For teachers, if they conduct a systematic analysis of students' errors, they can discover which stage the learner has reached in the process of approaching the target language and how much

content remains to be learned. By analyzing errors, teachers can clarify learners' achievements and difficulties, and then adjust teaching resources and methods. For researchers, error analysis provides evidence on how learners learn or acquire language. They also provide the learning strategies and steps used in the learning process for researchers. Error analysis is also essential for learners themselves, as they can consider making errors as a learning segment used by learners for the purpose of acquisition. By analyzing errors, learners can understand their level of mastery on the learned content, the use of learning methods and strategies, in order to further deepen their learning (Jin, 2010 : 8).

Research Methodology

In order to figure out the frequency of the verb pattern errors and examine the factors affecting verb pattern errors in English writings committed by EFL Chinese college non-English major students, this research used the combination of qualitative and quantitative research. Error analysis theory and a set of questionnaires were used to achieve the research aims.

Population and Sample

This study operated the systematic random sampling. The whole population was 50 freshmen majoring in HRMEMF of a Chinses college in autumn semester of the 2022-2023 academic year. According to systematic random sampling, the samples were selected at a regular interval. The interval may be in terms of time, space or order. The whole samples were 44 according to Krejcie and Morgan (1970 : 608).

Research Tools

Several research tools were adopted to achieve the research objectives, which include a writing test, Microsoft Excel spreadsheet, error analysis theory, surface structure taxonomy, a set of questionnaires. A writing test was conducted to collect the data of verb pattern errors. Microsoft Excel spreadsheet was used to record the verb pattern errors. Error analysis theory was used to guide the steps for analyzing verb pattern errors. The processes mainly included to collect the data from the freshmen's writings of HRMEMF, identify the verb pattern errors based on criteria of Hornby (1975 : 13), describe the categories of these verb pattern errors based on surface structure taxonomy (Suhono, 2016 : 12; Maolida & Hidayat, 2021 : 340). A set of questionnaires was designed to survey the factors affecting verb pattern errors. The validity of the questionnaires was evaluated by three content experts and the reliability of the questionnaires was calculated by Cronbach's Alpha.

The questionnaires included four dimensions. Dimension one was to investigate the influence of mother tongue on English verb pattern, which was composed of 6 items. Dimension two was to investigate the influence of intralingua interference on verb patterns, which was made up of 8 items. Dimension three was to investigate the factors of induced errors in English writing, which contained 5 items. Dimension four was to investigate other reasons for causing verb pattern errors in English writings composed of 5 items, which were mostly related to learning environment. The validity of the questionnaire had been evaluated by three experts. The reliability of the questionnaires was tested by the Cronbach's Alpha of SPSS statistics 26.

Validity of the Questionnaires

The validity of the questionnaires was evaluated by three content experts. The items of the questionnaires were 24. The formula for calculating the U-IOC parameter was proposed by Turner et al (2002 : 2), which was the congruence between the content of a single questionnaire item and an objective that the item was intended to test or measure. The formula was shown as the following format:

$$I_{ik} = \frac{(n - 1) \sum_{j=1}^n X_{ijk} - \sum_{i=1}^N \sum_{j=1}^n X_{ijk} + \sum_{j=1}^n X_{ijk}}{2(N - 1)n}$$

When I_{ik} = Index of congruence between objective i and item k

N means all objectives.

n means all content experts.

Each content expert had only one choice for evaluating if a particular item can measure the intended object. The three choices were Yes, No and Questionable. *Yes* was equal to plus one score (i.e. +1); *No* was equal to minus one score (i.e. -1); and *Questionable* was equal to zero (i.e. 0).

The result of three content experts on the congruence between the content of a single questionnaire item and an objective showed the questionnaire was validity. For item 1 to 19, three content experts gave the concord agreement on the congruence about the items and their objectives. The IOC of items 1 to 19 were 1, which proved these questions had good validity. While the IOC of items 20 and 24 got 0.6667, and items 22 and 23, the IOC was 0.5, which needed to be revised or deleted. Items 20 to 24 belonged to the same objective to investigate other factors and they got the low scores on IOC evaluation, which proved that there was lack of congruence about the items and their objectives. So, items 20 to 24 were deleted, and these other items can be used as factors in the questionnaires.

Reliability of the Questionnaires

The reliability of the questionnaires was gotten by predictions test among 29 students. All the 29 students were from the subjects. The questionnaires about factors causing verb pattern errors were distributed among 29 students via Wen Juan Xing (an application of online distributing and collecting questionnaire), and all the 29 questionnaires were collected, with a 100% response rate. No one had been excluded. The prediction result was entered into the SPSS statistics 26, and the Cronbach's Alpha showed the reliability of each dimension. The reliability of the test was usually indicated by contents consistency. The higher the reliability scores were, the more consistent, stable, and reliable the test results were. The following figures showed the result of predictions of the factor questionnaire.

Table 1 Reliability on Questionnaires of Factors Causing Verb Pattern Errors

Cronbach's Alpha	Items
.862	19

Table 1 was to test the reliability of the whole questionnaire for investigating the factors causing verb pattern errors in EFL Chinese college non-English major students' English writings. The subjects were 29 students from the samples. All the 29 answers from the subjects were valid. The items for testing the three dimensions were 19. According to the data above,

the tests for all the dimensions were reliable. Table 1 showed that the Cronbach's Alpha was 0.862, which was higher than 0.50. The questionnaires for testing the factors affecting verb pattern errors were reliable, which can be used to evaluate the factors of affecting verb pattern errors.

Data Collection

The data was collected from the 44 samples majoring in Human Resource Management of Economics and Management faculty freshmen's English writings. All the participants were freshmen who had been learning English for at least 9 years. All the writings were handwritten and were submitted to the researcher on the spot. Then verb pattern errors were identified according to Hornby (1975 : 14-77). Surface structure taxonomy (Suhono, 2016 : 12; Dewi, Rangkuti, & Supriadi, 2021: 10) was used to describe these verb pattern errors. The errors were analyzed from four perspectives, which were omission, misformation, addition errors, and misordering errors. The researcher marked the verb pattern errors twice, and the time interval was one week. The researcher did not know the names of the students. A week later, the researcher marked it again. The reshuffle modal was used for not knowing the names of the sampling students.

Data Analysis

Data analysis included two parts. The first part presented the frequency and percentage of verb pattern errors based on surface structure taxonomy. The second part showed the factors affecting verb pattern errors.

Part one included the categories of verb pattern errors based on Hornby (1975: 14-77), and the frequency and percentage of verb pattern errors based on surface structure taxonomy (Suhono, 2016: 12; Dewi, Rangkuti, & Supriadi, 2021: 10).

1. Verb Pattern Errors Based on Hornby

1.1 The Criteria of Verb Patterns

The 25 verb patterns proposed by Hornby (1975: 13) were used as the criteria to identify types of verb pattern errors in this thesis. Before proceeding to the next step, it was necessary to clarify some terms related to verbs.

1.2 Finite Forms of Verbs and Non-Finite Forms of Verbs

The non-finites are the infinitive (present and perfect, with or without *to*), the present participles, the past participles and the gerund (or verbal noun).

For examples: I want to go.

I ought to have gone.

The two sentences above are called *to*-infinitive. In the two sentences, *to go* and *to have gone* are the form of *to*-infinitive.

For examples: She must leave.

I should have eaten.

The two sentences are called bare infinitive without *to* (Hornby, 1975 : 1), because the two words, *leave* and *have*, are used in the original form.

1.3 The Anomalous Finites

The anomalous finites refer to the 24 finites of auxiliary verbs (i.e.: am, is, are, was, were; have, has, had; do, does, did; shall, should; will, would; can, could; may, might; must; ought; need; dare; used). The most obvious characters of the 24 anomalous finites are that they can be contracted with *not* to form their negative forms. For example, the contracted negative form of *is not* can be written into *isn't*. While *be* also can be copula verbs. Verb *be* belongs to intransitive verb pattern in Hornby (1975 : 1-2).

In the following example, the finites of *be* is a copula verb. She *is* my sister. *Be* can be an auxiliary. Just like in *have been* verb pattern, the original form *be* of *been*, is an auxiliary.

1.4 Frequency and Percentage of Verb Pattern Errors

The 44 samples written by 44 students of HRMEMF were the corpus. The errors were identified by the researcher manually three times. Spreadsheet was used to keep the errors. In this thesis, the data collection and data analysis about the verb patterns in the samplings were conducted with the same forms as in Wahibatul (2008 : 12-51).

The data analysis steps were conducted as the following steps: (1) Classifying all the verb pattern errors according to Hornby's (1975 : 13) classification; (2) The errors that were not verb pattern errors were excluded, such as the spelling, tense and subject-verb agreement.

The verb pattern errors were identified based on Hornby's (1975: 14-77). The researcher identified the samples three times, and the interval was at least one week separately. The writings in each identification have been reshuffled to avoid bias. There were 87 verb pattern errors in total in the 44 samplings, which were distributed into 11 verb patterns. There were 16 errors deriving from verb pattern 1, 5 errors deriving from verb pattern 2, 15 errors deriving from verb pattern 3, 29 errors deriving from verb pattern 5, 6 errors deriving from verb pattern 6, 2 errors deriving from verb pattern 13, 4 errors deriving from verb pattern 14, 4 errors deriving from verb pattern 17, 4 errors deriving from verb pattern 18, 1 error deriving from verb pattern 19, 1 error deriving from verb pattern 21.

The percentage of each error frequency was calculated with the statistical calculation formula: $P=F/N \times 100\%$ (Dewi, Rangkuti, & Supriadi, 2021: 13). In this formula, P represented the percentage of verb pattern errors. F was the frequency of each verb pattern error. N was the sum of verb pattern errors.

The following table shows the frequency and percentage of each verb pattern error. Table 2 shows that the errors of verb pattern 5 occupy the highest percentage, which was 33.33%. Then the errors of verb pattern 1 ranked the second place, which was 18.39%, and verb pattern 3 was the third highest error category, which occupied 17.23%. The three verb pattern errors accounted for more than half of the errors.

Table 2 Verb Pattern Errors' Frequency and Percentage

Verb pattern errors	Frequency	Percentage
1	16	18.39
2	5	5.75
3	15	17.23
5	29	33.33
6	6	6.90
13	2	2.30
14	4	4.60
17	4	4.60
18	4	4.60
19	1	1.15
21	1	1.15
Total	87	100

2. Frequency and Percentage of Verb Pattern Errors Based on Surface Structure Taxonomy

2.1 Categories of Surface Structure Taxonomy

Based on the characteristics of surface structure taxonomy and the research focus, this thesis analyzed the verb pattern errors from angles of omission, addition, misformation, and disordering errors. This thesis just focused on verb pattern errors, and other errors were excluded. For example, in the following sentence “With the college education *become* more and more common, there are also exist increasingly problems during most students' *lifes*.” more than one error existed, but just *are exist* was discussed because *become* belonged to preposition collocation errors, while *lifes* belonged to noun plural form errors, which were not verb pattern errors according to Hornby (1975 : 28).

2.2 Analyzing of Verb Pattern Errors Based on Surface Structure Taxonomy

This passage analyzed the verb pattern errors from four perspectives omission, addition, misformation, and disordering errors. Some examples are shown here.

2.2.1 Omission

Omission means that some necessary components are omitted, which causes sentences to be ungrammatical. In samplings, the following examples are ungrammatical, because they omit some necessary components.

(a)*Last but not least, when we on the road of catch others feet, we should do some outdoor activities to relax ourselves.

In sentence (a), the subject is *we*, while the necessary predicate verb *are* is omitted, which belongs to an omission error. *Of* is a preposition which should be followed by a gerund. Even though the word *catch* is used with the wrong form, it won't be counted as a verb pattern error in this thesis, because it belongs to preposition collocation errors. The alternative correction for this sentence can be like this: Last but not least, when we are on the road of catching others' feet, we should do some outdoor activities to relax ourselves.

2.2.2 Addition

The addition is the opposite of omission, which means the unnecessary components are presented causing the sentences to be wrong. The following sentence shows the addition errors.

(b)* Their tips may be can't help us to change the peer pressure.

In English, the anomalous finite could not be stacked, so sentence (b) is incorrect. In this sentence, several anomalous finites such as *may*, *be*, and *can* are stacked, which causes the sentence ungrammatical. The alternative correction for this sentence can be like this: These tips may not help us change the peer pressure.

2.2.3 Misformation

Misformation errors involve incorrect forms used in a structure, which includes content-oriented lexical misformation and form-oriented lexical misformation (Dewi et al, 2021: 15). Form-oriented lexical misformation deviates the grammar rules. Content-oriented lexical misformation deviates from the expression habits of the target language. In the samplings, there are two kinds of misformation.

(c)*This may help *they* divert their attention.

Sentence (c) is a form of oriented lexical misformation. *Help* is a transitive verb, whose object should be accusative case *them*, not nominative case *they*. The alternative correction for this sentence can be like this: This may help them divert their attention.

(d)* you can *pay* some time on reading and exercise to

In English, *pay* and *spend* have different meanings and verb patterns. We can say *spend some time or some money on something* or *in doing something*, while we often use *pay money for something* or *pay sb some money*. In sentence (d), *pay* should be replaced by *spend*. Sentence (d) is content-oriented lexical misformation.

2.2.4 Disorder

Disorder involves incorrect word order in a sentence which violates the grammar rules.

(e)*In life, we *have may* unhappy things and pressure.

In sentence (e), the finite verbs are *may*, which should be followed by a bare infinitive. At the same time, the anomalous finite should be put before the full verb. In this sentence, *may* should be placed in front of *have*, so it is disordering. The alternative correction for this sentence can be like this: In life, we *may have* unhappy things and pressure.

The verb pattern errors based on surface structure taxonomy are analyzed according to the above reasons. After 3 times identification by the researcher, the frequency and percentage were obtained.

2.3 Frequency and Percentage of Verb Pattern Errors Based on Surface Structure Taxonomy

Based on the surface structure taxonomy, the percentage of each verb pattern error was calculated according to the following calculation formula: $P=F/N \times 100\%$ (Dewi et al, 2021 : 13)

P means the percentage of verb pattern errors.

F means the frequency of each verb pattern error.

N means the sum of verb pattern errors. The following table shows the frequency and percentage of each verb pattern error.

Table 3 Frequency and percentage of each verb pattern errors based on surface structure taxonomy

Verb Pattern	Frequency					Freq.	%
	Omission	Addition	Misformation	Misordering	Blend Error		
1	6	2	8	0	0	16	18.39
2	0	1	4	0	0	5	5.75
3	14	1	0	0	0	15	17.23
5	7	14	7	1	0	29	33.33
6	0	6	0	0	0	6	6.90
13	0	0	2	0	0	2	2.30
14	2	0	2	0	0	4	4.60
17	2	0	2	0	0	4	4.60
18	0	4	0	0	0	4	4.60
19	0	0	1	0	0	1	1.15
21	1	0	0	0	0	1	1.15
Total	32	28	26	1	0	87	100
Percent-age	36.78	32.18	29.89	1.15	0	100	

From Table 3, omission errors had the highest error frequency, it occupied 36.78%. Addition was the second highest error frequency, which was 32.18%. The frequency of misformation errors was also very high.

Research Conceptual Framework

Conceptual Framework (see Figure 1) was created based on the related literature review, students' writing status, and research objectives. It mainly included three parts, which are mother tongue interference, intralingual errors, and induced errors. The three parts were made up of different items.

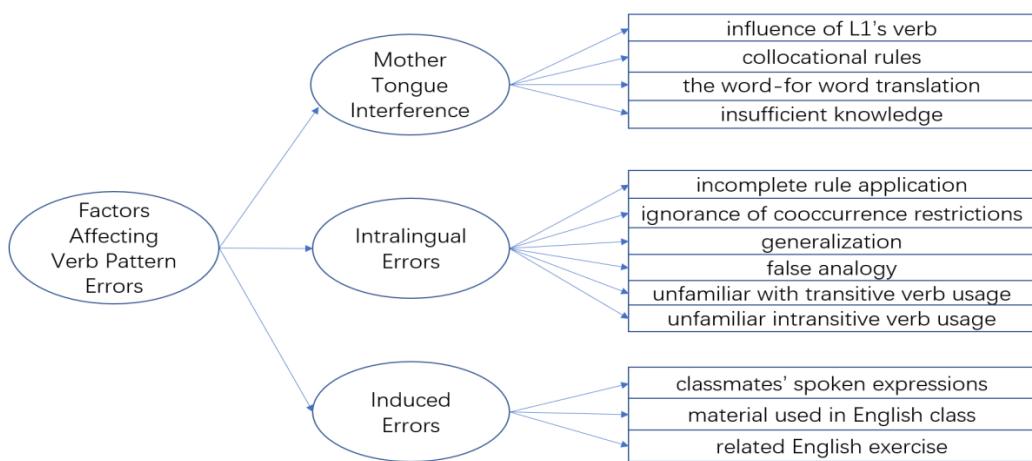


Figure 1 Research Conceptual Framework

Research Results

Part two showed the factors affecting verb pattern errors. The factors affecting verb pattern errors in EFL Chinese college students' writings were concluded from the verb pattern error status of the writings and questionnaires.

1. Factors Affecting Verb Pattern Errors Based on Writings

Based on Kaweera (2013 : 10-11), interlingual interference included lexical, syntactic, and discourse interference and the reasons for causing errors were word-for-word translation, the literal translation from L1, and insufficient knowledge of similarities and differences between L1 and English grammatical structure. For the lexical level, L1 interference included confusion of sense relation and collocational errors. For syntactic level, L1 interference included sentence construction errors (e.g, *Has a girl in the room* should be revised into *there is a girl in the room*), sentence boundary errors (for example, run-on sentences), and word structure errors (disordering). L1 Discourse interference mainly focused on examining the organization of the paragraph, because this thesis just focused on verb pattern errors, so discourse interference was excluded. Intralingual interference mainly included the following seven categories, which were false analogy, misanalysis, incomplete rule application, exploiting redundancy, overlooking cooccurrence restriction, hypercorrection (monitor overuse), and overgeneralization (or system-simplification).

The error categories in the following table were relative, not absolute, because some errors may belong to one category error, and they can also be attributed to another one. For example, *listen music* not only can be regarded as L1 collocational errors but also as a false analogy. About these kinds of errors, in this thesis, were treated as L1 interference errors (i.e. collocational errors) based on Kaweera (2013: 11). Based on Kaweera (2013 : 11-15), the frequency and percentage of each error category were gotten as follows.

Table 4 The frequency and percentage of each error category

Interference Types	Interference Level	Error Categories	Freq.	Percent-age
L1 interference	Lexical	confusion of sense relation	1	1.45
		collocational errors	24	27.59
	syntactical	construction errors (sentence structure)	2	2.30
		sentence boundary errors (run-on sentences)	6	6.90
		word structure errors (disordering)	1	1.45
	Total of L1 interference		34	39.08
	False analogy	0%	0	
Intralingual interference	Learning strategy-based error	Misanalysis	0%	0
		Incomplete rule application	12	13.80
		Exploiting redundancy	0	0
		Overlooking cooccurrence restrictions	24	27.59
		Hypercorrection (monitor overuse)	7	8.05
		Overgeneralization (or system- simplification)	10	11.49
		Total of intralingual interference	53	60.92

Table 4 shows that collocational errors and overlooking cooccurrence restriction errors had the same frequency. The two kinds of errors occupied the highest percentage. Compared with first language (L1) interference, intralingual interference had a higher percentage, which occupied 60.92%. But L1 interference also occupied every high percentage (39.08%). So, from the frequency and percentage, a conclusion can be made that L1 interference and intralingual interference were factors causing verb pattern errors, while intralingual interference was the main factor affecting verb pattern errors.

2. Factors Affecting Verb Pattern Errors Based on Questionnaires

2.1 Factors Affecting Verb Pattern Errors Based on Questionnaires

The questionnaires used a 5-point Likert rating scale (Likert, 1932). Each item included 5 choices, which were extremely agree, strongly agree, moderately agree, slightly agree, and absolutely disagree. Among the five choices, extremely agree and strongly agree meant high agreement; Moderately agreement lay in the middle, which meant that it may have

or may not have an influence on verb pattern learning; Slightly agree and absolutely disagree showed low or no agreement.

2.1.1 Mother Tongue Interference

In order to figure out the influence of mother tongue on verb pattern errors in EFL Chinese college students writings, the researcher designed questions from 5 angles to investigate L1's influence, which mainly focused on the influence of L1's verb on transitive and intransitive verbs, insufficient knowledge of differences between L1 and English, the influence of L1's different verb pattern on English verb pattern and verb collocation, the word-for-word translation from mother tongue to English verb pattern learning.

The answers of students in the questionnaires reflected the influence of the mother tongue on verb pattern use in English. According to the result of the questionnaire, a conclusion can be drawn that the mother tongue had a significant influence on verb pattern errors in EFL Chinese non-English major college students writing. First, the mother tongue had a notable impact on the use of intransitive and transitive verbs in EFL learning. Most respondents, a total of 68.18% combining extremely agree and strongly agree, believed that their L1 influenced the use of intransitive verbs, while only 2.27% of respondents completely disagreed with the notion. The use of transitive verbs was also influenced by the L1. Combining extremely agree and strongly agree, 70.45% of respondents showed that L1 affected the use of transitive verbs. Second, the respondents supported that insufficient knowledge about the differences between their L1 and English may affect verb pattern learning (i.e. the knowledge gaps). 65.91% of the respondents gave an extreme agreement on this notion, and no one chose a slight agreement or complete disagreement, which showed a strong recognition of knowledge gaps between L1 and English. Third, combining extreme agreement, 65.90% of respondents agreed that word-for-word translation also had a strong influence on English verb pattern learning. No one chose complete disagreement.

2.1.2 Intralingual Errors

The researcher designed questions from 8 angles to investigate the intralingual errors, which mainly focused on incomplete rule application, ignorance of cooccurrence restrictions of the target language, generalization, hypercorrection, false analogy, poor master verb part of speech, unfamiliar with transitive and intransitive verb usage of the target language.

According to the questionnaires, intralingual errors were the major problem. Among these data of students' answers on intralingual errors, ignorance of cooccurrence restrictions of the target language occupied the highest agreement with 75%, which meant that ignorance of rule restrictions in the target language was a significant factor causing verb pattern errors. Unfamiliar with intransitive verbs' usage of the target language ranked second place with 70.45% of respondents completely agreeing, which proved that the verb pattern or collocation of intransitive verbs was very difficult for EFL Chinese college students. Overgeneralization, false analogy, and unfamiliar with transitive verbs' usage almost received the same percentage, with 61.36% or 61.37%, which proved they had a significant impact on verb pattern learning. The respondents supporting the impact of incomplete rule application, hypercorrection and poor mastering of verb's part of speech had exceeded a half.

2.1.3 Induced Errors

The researcher designed questions from 5 angles to investigate the induced errors, which mainly focused on classroom environment, your teacher-talk, your classmates' wrong spoken expressions, the material used in English class and the related English exercise.

According to the questionnaire, induced errors occupied a certain percentage. On teacher-talk-based verb pattern errors, the majority of respondents chose disagreement, which occupied 54.55%. Only 29.55% of the respondents thought there were some relationships between teacher-talk and verb pattern errors. For your classmates' wrong spoken expressions and the related English exercise as factors affecting verb pattern errors, nearly half of the respondents gave the disagreement attitude, occupying 47.73% and 45.45% respectively. Among these factors, the impact of the material used in English class got the highest percentage with 34.09%, which proved that the materials used in English class had certain influence on verb pattern learning.

Conclusion

Based on the writing test and questionnaires, the findings about factors affecting verb pattern errors were intralingual errors, mother tongue interference, and induced errors.

First, intralingual interference was the most serious factor affecting verb pattern errors, especially overlooking cooccurrence restriction. Based on the writing test, 60.92% of the respondents agreed on the impact of intralingual interference on verb patterns in English learning. As for the questionnaire data, there was a broad agreement among respondents on intralingual interference, with minimal complete disagreement, which showed these factors were widely acknowledged as factors needing attention in English writing teaching, especially ignorance of rule restrictions of the target language with 75% of respondents' agreement.

Second, L1 interference occupied a remarkable percentage, especially collocational errors. The main factors causing these errors were word-for-word translation and insufficient knowledge of the mother tongue and the target language. Mother tongue affected the understanding and use of English verb patterns for EFL learners. In terms of writing, 39.08% of verb pattern errors were caused by L1 interference. In terms of the questionnaire, more than half of respondents agreed with L1's interference on verb pattern errors.

Third, compared with mother tongue interference and intralingual interference, the materials used in English class were widely acknowledged as a significant factor causing verb pattern errors. There were some respondents who agreed on the impact of induced errors, especially the materials used in English class getting rather a high percentage (34.09%). Anyhow, none of these items got half the percentage, so the influence of induced errors on verb pattern errors had a little.

Suggestion

The results of this research gave the researchers, teachers, and EFL Chinese learners some suggestions. In future English teaching and learning, cooccurrence restrictions about verbs should be paid special attention. In addition to this, collocational rules should be stressed in using verbs. The results of this research also gave the teachers some suggestions that teaching materials in English class played an important role in improving students' writing abilities. In future English teaching, the teachers should design more effective and suitable materials, and pay special attention to cooccurrence restriction, collocational rules, and teaching materials used in English class.

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