

A Study on Chinese and English Transfer in French Writing of L3 French Language Beginners

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Abstract—In order to investigate the language transfer existing in the field of third language acquisition, and to provide effective strategies of learning two or more languages, this research, based on theories related to the third language acquisition and error analysis, collected 32 French compositions written by English majors' undergraduates as a corpus, analyzed errors in those compositions, and further discussed the negative transfer of Chinese and English in their French learning. Eight types of errors from the lexical and syntactic perspectives were identified in the research findings. What is more, the negative transfer of English and Chinese appeared at both lexical and syntactic level, and the negative transfer of English is more than Chinese. "lexical errors" occupied more than "syntactic errors" in the transfer of English, while syntactic errors existed more frequently than lexical errors in the transfer of Chinese. There are three main reasons for results of transfers: language distance, language exposure, and language frequency, which provide effective strategies for third language acquisition.

Index Terms—Third language acquisition, error analysis, language transfer, second foreign language

I. INTRODUCTION

In recent decades, studies related to the Second Language Acquisition (SLA) have experienced two main periods including the theoretical model guided by the Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis (CAH) and the Interlanguage Hypothesis (IH) [1]. With the enhancement of globalization, rapid social development requires more studies under the multi-language environment [2]. What is more, after IH has been raised in 1970s, it is quite limited that those studies were fixed to the first language (L1) and the second language (L2). There is an increasing number of learners who can handle over two languages [3]. Meanwhile, universities and colleges also require the students majoring in languages to learn the second foreign language beside the students' major.

When analyzing the first, second and third languages (L3), the mutual effects among languages appear inevitably, namely, the Language Transfer (LT) [1], which refers to "the influence resulting from similarities and differences between the target language and any other language that has been previously acquired" [4]. The research on LT has been carried out over 70 years. From 1980s to the present, Cognitive Linguistics and Neuro-psychology have gradually come into the field of LT. Lots of studies have been conducted on those two theories, such as recognizing the phenomenon of LT in writing [1], and distinguishing the differences of the influence of L1 under the guidelines of the

theory of behaviorism and cognition [1]. The interlingual influence among languages and the principles of learning languages should get further research.

Basing on the studies of SLA, Third Language Acquisition (TLA) can apply some research achievements of SLA [5]. For example, SLA and TLA believe that learners can learn a new language with the foundation of language learned [6]. This study also intends to identify and analyze errors existing in French writings of L3 French language beginners by applying error analysis. It will first identify errors made by L3 French language beginners, and the transfers of Chinese and English will be further explored when learning French. However, many differences are found, such as the various learning paths and the improvement of language competence [5]. Researchers should deepen the researches related to TLA with the basis of SLA, and they should collect a quantity of experimental data for TLA researches.

Therefore, this research related to the language transfer among three languages have the theoretical and practical significance. Firstly, the theory of LT under the guidelines of TLA was adopted as the theoretical model in this study, and the influence of mutual transfer in the learning of Chinese, English towards French language is also analyzed. Secondly, this study presents two significances as follows: for one thing, the transfer of L1 and L2 on learning an L3 is quite complex. Thirdly, this study figures out the weaknesses in the process of learning an L3, makes learning French for English majors have more specific aims, and further facilitates the education related to the second foreign language at universities and colleges.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

This research has three main focuses including the Third Language Acquisition, Language Transfer, and Error Analysis. The definition, classification and procedures are introduced in this section.

A. Third Language Acquisition

Ellis believed that "second language" means the general conceptions of languages learned beside L1 and L3 is included in L1 [7]. However, with further discussions about L2, it is easier for L3 learners with the experience of learning L2 to learn the L3, and the process of learning an L2 differs from learning the L3 [6]. Beside L1 and L2, L3 can be thought as the target language the learners are learning, in other words, "being greater than or equal to three" [6]. According to Fouser [8], L3 does not mean specifically a kind of language, instead, a general conception. TLA is "the acquisition of a language beyond the second language or the first foreign language" [8]. Jordá [9] also regarded L3 as a general conception.

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This study mainly adopts Fouser's definition of TLA as a general conception. There are two main reasons: firstly, it brings a specific range for L3. Fouser [8] believed that L3 is a general conception, and does not mean a specific language. the definition of L3 brings a wider range for identifying L3. Secondly, it gives a learning order of L1, L2 and L3. Fouser believed L3 "refers to all languages beyond the L2 because the psycho-linguistic processes of learning a language beyond the L3 are similar to those used in learning the L3" [8], which is also one of important reasons why TLA can be distinguished from SLA. In this research, for those Chinese who major in English, their L1 is Chinese and L2 is English. The French language can be regarded as their L3, which is the target language beside L1 and L2. All the conditions of this research meet the requirements of Fouser's definition of TLA.

Five characteristics for multi-language environments including "non-linearity", "learner variation", "maintenance and stability", "interdependence" and "change of quality" were examined to prove that TLA can be an independent research field [10]. Compared with SLA, there are also seven obvious differences in TLA including "the various learning paths", "the non-linearity of language ability", "the strength of the learners' cognition", "Maintenance and reversibility", "mutual independence of multi-language", "mutual functions of LT among languages", and "the complexity of the influential factors of TLA" [1, 5]. Therefore, TLA should be regarded as the independent research field comparing with SLA.

Chinese, English, and French languages, which belong to different language families and have lots of distinctions, have been involved in this research.

The Chinese language belongs to the Sino-Tibetan language family. It concludes many dialects. From the perspective of lexicons, Chinese language includes many disyllabic words, and it a great number of compound words. Besides, Chinese lexicons usually add adverbs in the sentence structure instead of changing the lexical forms. Because Chinese vocabulary is a comprehensive system including voices, glyphs and semantics, which maintains many differences to English and French. There are many synonyms in Chinese [11]. In terms of syntax, Chinese language belongs to the analytic language, which depends on word orders and expletives, such as the "SVO" structure and attribute-adjective construction.

The English Language belongs to the West Germanic branch in the Indo-European language family, and it is widely used around the world. The number of English users occupies half of the world population. From the perspective of lexicons, English vocabularies consist of many letters. The forms of nouns in old English also cover masculine, feminine and neuter and it is quite similar to French that distinguishes two groups including masculine and feminine. There are also other changes in the Modern English such as single and plural forms, and some lexicons which change their forms according to the tense. Jutes, Saxons and Angles conquered England because of historical reasons. and English language has many different forms of vocabularies which are oriented from German and French language [12]. From the perspective of syntax, the common English sentence structure is "SVO" or "SVC", and sometimes the "OSV"

structure is also used. English language has 16 tenses, ranging from the past, the present to the future tense.

The French Language belongs to the Roman branch in the Indo-European language family, and French is also pointed as one of the official languages in the United Nations. In terms of lexicons, there are many classifications such as single and plural forms, and the gender. Masculine and feminine should be classified in French language [12]. What's more, French also belongs to the analytic language. It has six modes of discourse, and total 15 tenses. The "SVO" and "SVC" structures are commonly used in French.

Based on the previous illustration about the involved languages and SLA, previous studies about the TLA can be discussed.

TLA is the new field of research in China, on the basis of CNKI, nearly 91.3% of research achievements about TLA has been published within a decade. Previous studies in China mainly discuss the characteristics distinguishing TLA from SLA [5], various kinds of influential factors of TLA, and the influence of Chinese and English on a third language [3], such as German, French, and Russian [12, 13].

Before TLA was regarded as an independent research field, characteristics which distinguish TLA from SLA should be figured out. The study conducted by Zeng and Li [10] mainly analyzed the characteristics of TLA. TLA has seven aspects differing from SLA: 1) the variety of the learning process. The learning order in TLA differs from SLA, and TLA has more learning paths than SLA; 2) non-linear development of language competence. The development of learning L3 is a process of continuity and discontinuity with the inner and external influential factors instead of linear developmental process; 3) speech reversibility and maintenance. When learners can handle with more language systems it is difficult for them to maintain the language competence. Therefore, the learners with more than two language systems should cost more efforts than the learners with singular language system; 4) the strengths of metalinguistic awareness. The learners with more than two language systems have stronger language competence with more experience of learning languages, and they show more metalinguistic awareness than the learners with just singular language system; 5) the mutual dependence among languages. languages learned before have mutual influence. When the new language system L3 is appended to the previous language system, the learners' language system is reconstructed; 6) the complexity of the interlingual transfer. TLA involves more than three languages and the sophisticated learners' language system has formed; and (7) the complexity of the influential factors. Because there are mutual dependence and interlingual transfer, therefore, more factors should be mentioned and discussed in TLA.

The essence of TLA and its influential factors are also research subjects. According to Kellerman [14], on account of the theory of LT, the process of LT is mutually influenced by two factors: psycho-typology and proto-typicality. The influential factors of TLA are analyzed. Li [15] also carried out a study on language transfer of Japanese and Korean under the guideline of TLA through error analysis. She generalized three influential factors containing language distance, psycho-typology and foreign language effect. What is more, Zhu [16] gave three general principles of teaching L3 through analyzing the definition of TLA and LT under the

background of TLA in her research. Firstly, enough attention should be paid to balance the similarities and differences of languages. Secondly, it is unnecessary for teachers to keep comprehensive and systematic during the process of teaching because of the flexibility of languages. Thirdly, teachers should consider about the mutual disturbing and rationality of the education of languages. Zhu [17] also collected compositions from students at Nanjing University and analyzed errors existing in those composition. She found that when students at different levels of L2 learn L3, with the influence of L1 and L2, the higher the level of French is, the more the French vocabularies are, and the larger the negative transfer of language is.

Language acquisition which is not based on Chinese as L1 or English as L2 is discussed as well. Many kinds of languages such as Japanese, Korean and Spanish are introduced [5]. Zhao [18] did a research of TLA under the guideline of LT, and she collected compositions from students majored in two foreign languages, English and German, to figure out LT. She found that the language rules of English caused negative transfer and raised three solutions from three aspects: the influence of external factors of language, the functions of language universals and strategies of language outputs.

In China, dialects used by minorities are also included in the field of TLA, for instance, He [19] also discussed Tibetan in his research. All those Chinese scholars tried to recognize the language transfer under the background of multi-language involving minority languages.

Studies abroad mainly focuses on the following three targets below: theories of EA and LT, the influential factors of TLA, and the language acquisition of non-native Chinese speakers or L2 English learners.

The theories of EA and LT were discussed. Error Analysis was raised by Corder in 1967 [4]. It is used to analyze and describe the origin of errors made by the L2 learners while learning L2 [20]. Corder transferred the philosophies of SLA into EA, and set the fundamental opinion of transferring the key of SLA from “how to teach” into “how to learn” [21]. Cross-linguistic influence in Third Language Acquisition: Psycho-linguistic Perspectives has also been published. The fields of TLA in the children’s early education, interlingual influence and mutual functions, and the linguistics in TLA were also been mentioned [4].

TLA has also many influential factors. Ana Muñoz-Restrepo, Ramirez and Gaviria [22] presented the motivational strategies of language acquisition in the research basing on the theoretical foundation of Automatic Decision containing autonomy, competence and relatedness. They also gave some principles for language learning and teaching, and teachers should use the dynamic assessments to test students for the better effects of learning languages. Besides, Ayodele [22] noted that transfers of French should get noticed, and it is easier for those who use English as L1 to learn French. Therefore, language learners should more frequently expose themselves into the target language.

The language acquisition for those who do not use Chinese language as L1 or English language as L2 is also mentioned. Reyhan and Katalin [23] did a semi-structured interview to test the willingness of communication for Turkish students. They figured out the willingness of using L2 for

communication in the environment of three languages is quite complex. There are seven influential factors for willingness: communicators, topics, learning strategies, attitudes towards communication, involvers, nationalities, and proficiency of using L2. Brevik and Rindal [24] also observed the videos of English classrooms and tested the performance of students in interlingual environment. According to the research results, L1, L2 and L3 have the interlingual influences, and the languages that students have learned can be well used to improve the understanding of the target language.

To generalize the studies above, there is still a research gap of language transfer in native Chinese English learners’ French learning. What is more, many studies have been done on oral language instead of written language. The research methods and contents used in SLA are slightly differed from the methods and contents used in TLA. Therefore, this thesis adopts the research methods used in SLA and TLA, and explore the influences of language transfer of Chinese and English on French learning.

B. Language Transfer

Many conceptions have been raised by scholars. Language transfer (LT) refers to “the influence of one language on another has something to do with the storage of two knowledge systems within the same brain” [1]. It can also be defined as “the influence resulting from similarities and differences between the target language and any other language that has been previously (and perhaps imperfectly) acquired” [4]. Odlin’s definition of LT has been widely accepted in the field of SLA. Because LT focuses on the interlingual influences between two languages, LT has its own functions in the field of TLA.

As for the classification of language transfer, it can be regarded as a product as well as a process. If LT is seen as a process, it is dynamic and keeps changing. When the influences of L1 or foreign languages are discussed, LT should be regarded as a product as well of a process [1], [4] [25]. When LT is considered as a product, it is split into groups of two: positive transfer and negative transfer [4].

On the one hand, positive Transfer refers to that the language knowledge learners have handled can be utilized in the process of learning L2, and do not make any errors [1]. Positive transfer is “transfer which makes learning easier, and may occur when both the native language and the target language have the same form” [26]. Basing on the definition of positive transfer, it is clear that positive transfer can date back to the similarities appearing in the language learners have learned like L1 and L2, and those language knowledge can make L3 learning easier.

On the other hand, negative transfer is that learners also make use of the language knowledge learners have learned, but make errors while learning [1]. Negative transfer is also regarded as “interference”, and “the use of a native-language pattern or rule which leads to an error or inappropriate form in the target language” [26]. In other words, the language learners have learned makes the process of learning L3 obstructed, and it is necessary to figure out “errors” or “inappropriate form”.

The current study concentrates on the negative transfer. That is because the purpose of this study is to explore the LT

of Chinese and English on French learning by exploring errors in L3 French beginners' writing.

Language Transfer has been studied since last century. There are three stages of the development of LT in China: "1950s and 1960s", "1970s" and "1980s" [27]. At the first stage, LT occupied a dominant position in SLA. It was closely connected with the behaviorist theory of language learning, and both of them are the theoretical foundation of CA. At the second stage, with the influence of Chomsky's theory of Universal Grammar, CA and LT were questioned. The functions of LT have also been despised from late 1960s to middle 70s. From late 1970s, LT has been a focus in language teaching, and it has been regarded as an important strategy for language learning. The functions of LT were also discussed from the perspectives of psychology, language and society [28].

C. Error Analysis

Error analysis, one of the significant research methods of SLA, was raised by Corder in 1967, and *The Significance of Learners' Errors* is the sign of the establishment of EA. It has become a hit since 1970s [20]. Error analysis is not a narrow study, and it involves not only the teaching of L2, but also the teaching of L1 [29]. *The Significance of Learners' Errors* states that the learning acquisition of the target language and L1 is affected by the same Mechanism, Procedures and Strategies. The existing of errors proves that the language systems of L1 and L2 are developed, which is called the Transitional Evidence [4]. Corder also posed five analytic methods for EA in 1971, and "how to learn" should be focused [30–31].

Errors are not equal to mistakes. Corder [21] believed that errors reflect the essential capability of language learners, while mistakes just show those faults on the surface when learners use languages. Error is a kind of form that the output of L2 used by learners cannot match the language knowledge learners have learned, and errors is systematic because of the lack of language ability. Mistake is a kind of form that learners cannot use language ability of L2 correctly because of some factors including inattention and carelessness [20].

As for the classification of errors, Corder [30] divided them into three categories according to different periods of time when errors are made: 1) "Pre-systematic error". It means that learners do not thoroughly know about the new language rules, and they do not handle the method of expressing through the new language. Pre-systematic error cannot be corrected by self-correction; 2) "Systematic error". Those errors mainly caused because learners do not know how to make use of the rules they have learned, and they are made when the system of the new language was forming; 3) "Post-systematic error". Although many language rules have been learned at this period and learners can make use of those rules, sometimes they forget to use and they have not formed the custom of using those rules [7].

Richards [32] did further classification based on Corder's classification, and he classified errors into two categories: (1) "interlingual error". It is "an error which results from language transfer, that is, which is caused by the learner's native language" [26]. and (2) "intralingual error". It is "one which results from faulty or partial learning of the target language, rather than from language transfer and may be

caused by the influence of one target language item upon another" [26].

This study adopts Richards' method of classifying errors. The reason is because the aim of this study is to recognize the language transfer of Chinese and English in French writing of L3 French beginners, and the negative transfer is quite important in this thesis. Richards classified errors into interlingual errors and intralingual errors, which is suitable for the purpose. Besides, this study figured out the transfers of Chinese and English towards French in writing through error analysis. Therefore, interlingual errors are concerned in the following chapters.

Richards' classification differentiated intralingual errors form interlingual errors. Hsiao-ping Wu and Esther V. Garza [33] also further classified interlingual errors into five main groups: 1) "grammatical errors". it contains nigh categories including verb tense, sentence structure, singular or plural etc. 2) "lexical errors". it consists of nigh groups such as noun, pronoun, verb and adverb; 3) "semantic errors". it only concludes word choice according to the meaning; 4) "mechanics error". It contains three parts including punctuation, capitalization and spelling; and 5) "intelligible errors". it only consists of one category "If any".

Wei [34] also classified all errors based on Duskova's classification of lexical errors and syntactic / grammatical errors [34] into six groups: "spelling", "number of nouns", "contracted article" and "preposition" at lexical level, and "agreement" and "word order" at syntactic level. "Preposition" at lexical level was further classified into two categories: "misuse of preposition" and "preposition 'de'". "Agreement" at syntactic level was divided into three main categories: "subject-verb agreement", "auxiliary verb-main verb agreement" and "the number and gender of noun and that of modifiers agreement". What is more, "word order" was classified into three categories: "position of adjective, adverb and object pronoun".

Corder raised five steps for error analysis: 1) "Collection of Errors". Researchers can adopt proper methods such as natural samples and elicitation, and longitudinal as well as cross-sectional studies; 2) "Identification of Errors". Researchers need to identify errors existing in the samples, and they should recognize whether learners violate the rule of usage or the rule of use [35]; 3) "Description of Errors". Researchers need to reconstruct the meanings learners want to express by the target language, and compare interlanguage and target language from the perspective of language characteristics; 4) "Explanation of Errors". The origin of errors and the reasons of appearance should be explained. And 5) "Evaluation of Errors". Researchers need to evaluate to what extent that errors have been made from perspectives of emotion and understanding [1, 36].

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this chapter, the methodology adopted in current study is introduced. It begins with the introduction of research questions. specific requirements for research subjects, research designs, and procedures are also presented. this study is based on Corder's five steps of error analysis in this chapter, adopting collection of compositions and procedures.

A. Research Question

This study is to identify the language transfer of Chinese and English in French writing of L3 French beginners. It attempts to answer the following two questions: 1) What are the common types of errors English majors made in French writing? And 2) Which errors are caused by the transfer of Chinese, and which are by the transfer of English? What are the reasons?

B. Research Subject

The subjects are 32 undergraduate students majored in English at a famous university in China. They are senior and junior English majors. They share some similar background: All subjects successfully passed the Test for English Majors-Band Four (TEM-4). Their L1 is Chinese and L3 is French. Besides, no one has learned French before, and they only learn French at the university as a second foreign language in addition to English. Every subject has two-hour French lecture per week, and altogether 16 weeks for one semester. On average, each subject has learned French for 54 hours. According to the European Standard for French, all subjects in this thesis can be seen as learners at A1 level, which equals to the beginners' level.

C. Research Procedure

The current study mainly adopted a qualitative method by analyzing French compositions written by subjects. the designs and requirements of compositions, and the collection as well as analysis of data were also introduced in the following part.

At beginning, all participants were required to write a composition in French for this study. Specific requirements for the writing task were set as follows: The topic is set, which is 'La Présentation' (a self-introduction). The time limit is 45 minutes. Every composition contains 150 words on average. During writing, students cannot have mutual communications. Meanwhile, any references or tools including computers and French dictionaries cannot be used. All samples were collected immediately to keep the materials real and valid.

After collection, all errors were identified and described. To identify the errors existing in the samples, a French teacher who teaches French as the second foreign language was invited to help figure out the errors.

As for describing errors, based on the classification of scholars mentioned above such as Wei [34], Wu and Garza [33]. This study classified all errors collected and identified into two categories: lexical errors and syntactic errors. Lexical errors contain five groups including "misspelling and word form errors", "misuse and omission of preposition", "misuse and omission of article", "misuse and omission of pronoun", and "misuse of adverb". Syntactic errors consist of "agreement errors", "word order errors" and "sentence structure errors". The frequency and proportion of each type of errors are also calculated.

According to the statistics collected, this thesis calculated the frequencies of each type of errors made in the writings, classified all errors by identifying what transfers of languages have caused those types of errors in L3 French beginners' writing. gave examples for each type of errors, try to find out the reasons why those errors appear, and finally presented

suggestions for learning and teaching L3.

IV. FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

Lexicon is quite important for sentences and passages. As for the syntactic structures and meanings, they are the core for a passage [11]. With the analysis of errors identified, the following table also presented errors in each type and its proportion.

A. Overall Situation of Errors

In Table I presented above, the total number of errors is 346. According to Richards and Schmidt [26], interlingual error can be defined as "an error which results from language transfer, that is, which is caused by the learner's native language", while intralingual error can be noted as "one which results from faulty or partial learning of the target language, rather than from language transfer". Those errors were identified as interlingual with the samples and evidences of researches [37].

TABLE I: TYPES OF ERRORS

	Types of Errors	Frequency (times)	Proportion (%)
Lexical Level	Spelling & Lexical Form	85	24.57
	Preposition	50	14.45
	Article	29	8.38
	Pronoun	21	6.07
	Adverb	1	0.29
Total Errors at Lexical Level		186	53.76
Syntactic Level	Agreement	68	19.65
	Word Order	18	5.20
	Sentence Structure	74	21.39
Total Errors at Syntactic Level		160	46.24
Total Errors		346	100

Errors collected were further classified into two main categories (see Fig. 1), namely lexical errors accounting for about 53.76% of all errors identified, and syntactic errors which occupy approximately 46.24% of all interlingual errors. It is apparent that more lexical errors than syntactic errors were made in L3 French learners' writing (see Fig. 1).

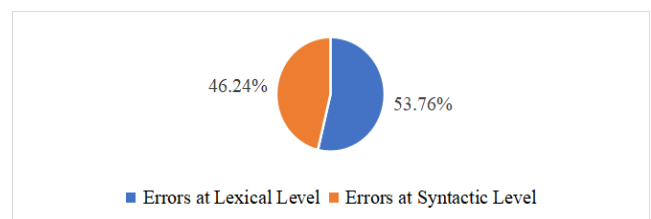


Fig. 1. Types of errors.

The proportion of eight common types of errors which are caused by English majors in French writing is presented (see Fig. 2). Lexical errors consist of 1) misspelling & lexical form errors (24.57%); 2) misuse and omission of preposition (14.45%); 3) misuse and omission of article (8.38%); 4) misuse and omission of pronoun (6.07%), and 5) misuse of Adverb (0.29%). Syntactic errors contain; 6) sentence structure errors (21.39%); 7) agreement errors (19.65%), and (8) word order errors (5.20%).

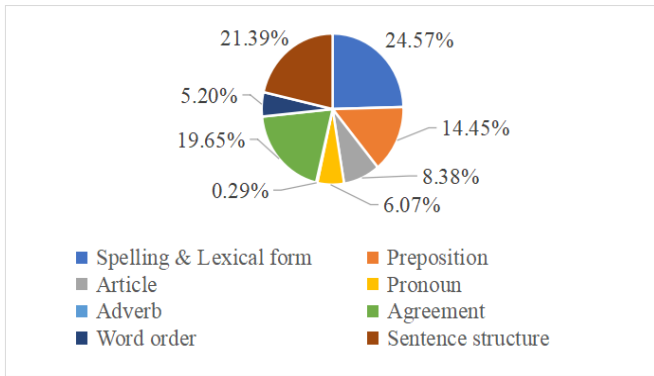


Fig. 2. Types of errors.

As for lexical errors, Wei [34] classified lexical errors into four main groups: “misspelling”, “number of nouns”, “contracted article” and “misuse of preposition”. Zhang [2] divided lexical errors into three categories: “lexical form”, “the confusion of word meaning” and “the coined words”. While Wu and Garza [33] discovered nine categories of errors at lexical level including “number of nouns”, “misuse and omission of pronoun”, “misuse and omission of verb”, “misuse and wrong word order of adjective”, “misuse and wrong word order of adverb”, “misuse and omission of article”, “misuse of preposition”, “wrong word form” and “omission of interjections”. According to the classifying methods and errors collected, the lexical errors identified in French compositions can be classified into five main categories: “misspelling & lexical form errors”, “misuse and omission of preposition”, “misuse and omission of article”, “misuse and omission of pronoun”, and “misuse of adverb”.

As for syntactic errors, Wei [35] divided syntactic errors into two main groups: 1) agreement error. It consists of three different categories including “S-V agreement”, “Auxiliary Verb- Main Verb agreement” and “the number and gender of noun and that of modifiers agreement”; 2) word order error. It contains three main categories including “position of adjective”, “position of adverb”, and “position of object pronoun”. Zhang [2] classified syntactic errors into two main categories: “form errors” and “syntax errors”. Wu and Garza [33] divided syntactic errors into nine groups: “the error of verb tense”, “sentence structure error”, “coordination error”, “the error of relative clause”, “single / plural error”, “the error of verb omission”, “the error of subject omission”, “S-V agreement errors” and “the error of fragment”. Syntactic errors in this thesis are mainly: “sentence structure errors”, “agreement errors” and “word order errors”.

B. Transfer of Chinese (L1) and English (L2) in French Writing

On the basis of the findings and statistics presented, the transfer of Chinese (L1) and English (L2) will be further analyzed in the following chapters.

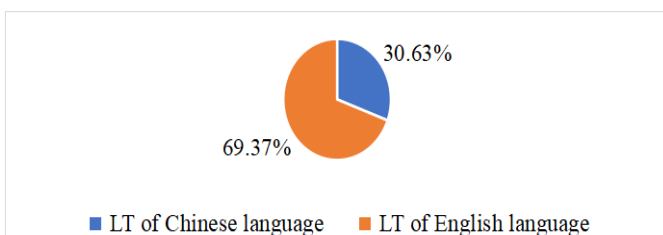


Fig. 3. Language transfer of Chinese and English language.

Fig. 3 indicates the proportion of LT of two languages. The proportion of LT of Chinese language occupies approximately 30.63% of all interlingual errors collected, while the proportion of LT of English language accounts for nearly 69.37%.

In the statistics presented in Table II, the transfer of Chinese and English occur at both lexical and syntactic levels. More transfer of English (69.37%) occurs than the transfer of Chinese (30.63%). To be specific, more transfer is recognized at the syntactic level (19.36%) than at the lexical level (11.27%) from the perspective of the transfer of Chinese, while the transfer of English is different. More transfer occurs at the lexical level (42.48%).

As Table II shows, errors caused by the transfer of Chinese language occupies nearly 30.63%, and there are lexical as well as syntactic errors. Since French language belongs to the Indo-European language family, while Chinese language belongs to the Sino-Tibetan language family. The transfer of Chinese rarely cause errors like capitalization and misspelling. the transfer of Chinese in French writing at lexical and syntactic levels are discussed in the following sections.

TABLE II: LANGUAGE TRANSFER OF CHINESE AND ENGLISH LANGUAGE

		Language Transfer	Frequency (times)	Proportion (%)
Chinese Transfer 30.63%	Lexical Level 11.27%	Preposition	23	6.65
		Pronoun	15	4.34
		Adverb	1	0.29
	Syntactic Level 19.36%	VO Agreement	7	2.02
		PV Agreement	7	2.02
		Word Order	5	1.45
		Sentence Structure	48	13.87
English Transfer 69.37%	Lexical Level 42.48%	Spelling & Lexical Form	85	24.57
		Preposition	27	7.80
		Article	29	8.38
		Pronoun	6	1.73
	Syntactic Level 26.89%	SV Agreement	21	6.07
		Number & Gender	33	9.54
		Word Order	13	3.76
		Sentence Structure	26	7.51

1) Lexical transfer

Lexical transfer of Chinese language in French writing mainly appears because L3 beginners have not thoroughly handled the usage of French language, and they do not know clearly about some French lexicons. The proportion of the lexical transfer of Chinese occupies approximately 11.27% of all interlingual errors.

2) Syntactic transfer

The syntactic transfer of Chinese language in French writing include various kinds according to previous studies, such as “the lack of preposition”, “misorder of words”, “the lack of object”, and “semantic repeat” [2]. As for the syntactic transfer of Chinese in French writing, the proportion of these errors occupies approximately 19.36%. This thesis selects three categories as examples including agreement errors, sentence structure errors and word order errors.

The proportion of errors caused by English language transfer accounts for nearly 69.37%, and it's quite larger than the proportion of errors due to the Chinese language transfer. That is because English and French language both belong to the Indo-European language family, and their lexicons are written in alphabets. What's more, because of history, French language engendered great influence on English language. Therefore, the transfer of English to French learning is stronger than the transfer of Chinese.

3) Lexical transfer

The lexical transfer of English to French can be reflected in the lexical errors made in the L3 French learners' compositions. Altogether, four specific groups of lexical errors have been figured out, namely "misspelling and word form errors", "misuse and omission of article", "misuse and omission of preposition" and "misuse and omission of pronoun".

4) Syntactic transfer

Syntactic transfer of English was found in data collected. It was reflected in agreement errors, sentence structure errors and word order errors.

V. CONCLUSION

In the last chapter, the conclusion contains three sections. major findings of this study will be presented in the following two aspects: types of errors, and the transfers of Chinese and English language in French writing. The second section mainly states implications generalized from the previous analysis. There are still some limitations for this research presented in the last section.

A. Major Findings

The purpose of this study is to identify the types of errors caused by L3 French learners and the language transfer of Chinese and English in French writing of L3 French language beginners. This study has two main research questions: (1) What are the common types of errors for English majors in French writing? and (2) Which errors are caused by the transfer of Chinese, and which are by the transfer of French? What are the reasons behind?

In order to solve those two questions listed, this study followed Corder's five basic steps of error analysis, and tried to evaluate the influence of those errors from two perspectives as follows.

1) Common types of errors

From the collection of statistics presented at the Table I, this thesis discovered that: Errors collected for this study appeared both at lexical and syntactic level. Errors at lexical level can be divided into five categories: 1) misspelling & word form errors; 2) misuse and omission of preposition; 3) misuse and omission of article; 4) misuse and omission of pronoun; and 5) misuse of adverb. Errors at syntactic level can be classified into three categories: 6) agreement errors; 7) word order errors; and 8) sentence structure errors. Errors at syntactic level (46.24%) is less than lexical level (53.76%).

What is more, "misspelling and word form errors" (24.57%) appeared most frequently at lexical level, while the errors of "sentence structure" (21.39%) account for the largest proportion at syntactic level.

2) Language transfer of Chinese and English

From the analysis above and statistics collected for this study (see Table II), there are two major findings about the L1 and L2 transfer as follows.

Firstly, language transfer of Chinese and English towards L3 French appeared at both lexical and syntactic level. The transfer of English (69.37%) is more obvious than Chinese language (30.36%).

Secondly, syntactic errors (19.36%) appeared more frequently than lexical errors (11.27%) in the transfer for Chinese language. "misuse and omission of preposition" (6.65%) occupies the largest proportion caused by Chinese transfer at lexical level, while "sentence structure errors" (13.87%) occupy the largest proportion at syntactic level. lexical errors (42.48%) existed more frequently than syntactic errors (26.89%) in the transfer of English language. "misspelling and word form errors" (24.57%) caused by English transfer are most obvious at lexical level, while "the number and gender agreement errors" (9.54%) appeared most frequently at syntactic level.

As for the reasons why LT of Chinese and English identified for this study appeared, there are many influential factors which can influence transfers, such as "the language distance", "the proficiency of L1 and L2", "learners' age and learning background" and "the frequency of language utilization" [38]. Combining with the transfer of Chinese and English collected for this study, three reasons of transfers of Chinese and English language in this study are discussed.

Firstly, language distance influences the proportion of LT of Chinese and English language. Li Shujie [15] discovered that the closer the language distance is, the more similar the language branches are, the easier learning languages is for language learners. English and French belong to the Indo-European language family, while Chinese belongs to the Sino-Tibetan language. Therefore, it is easier for learners to perceive the transfer of English, and the proportion of LT of English language is larger than LT of Chinese language.

Secondly, the language exposure should be mentioned. The more frequently the learners expose themselves in the multi-language environment, the more transfers the learners engender [38]. Subjects' L1 is Chinese and L2 is English. As English majors, they use English more frequently, while they begin to learn French as juniors. Thus, transfers of English are more effective in learning French.

Thirdly, the proficiency of languages can also influence language transfer. When learners stay at the stage of lower proficiency of L3, there are more transfers of L2 in L3 [39] [40]. All research subjects learn French as beginners with low proficiency. It proved that the transfers of English are more than Chinese.

B. Implications

Basing on the statistics collected and analysis, this section provides three suggestions for L3 teachers and beginners.

First of all, errors should be identified and summarized. Error identification provided three significances [21]: 1) "Errors tell teachers what they need to teach"; 2) "Errors tell researchers and learners what the process of language learning is"; 3) "Errors provide an effective method for learners to test the hypothesis" [1]. As for L3 French beginners, identifying and summarizing errors provides the significance of learning. Teachers can guide beginners to

identify errors and explain the reasons why those errors exist. Therefore, L3 French teachers can correct and improve the teaching methods at both lexical and syntactic level.

Secondly, the basic knowledge about L3 should be emphasized, especially vocabularies. The proportion of lexical errors is larger than syntactic errors according to the statistics collected for this study. When L3 French beginners begin to learn new French vocabularies, they should learn those new French lexicons in sentences, and remember the set expressions. The learners can also use the context meanings to help them to learn L3. Under the comprehensive understanding of context, it is helpful for beginners to memorize vocabularies and its collocations.

Thirdly, the similarities and differences of languages under the background of multi-language should also be further analyzed by language learners. According to those statistics analyzed, the transfers of Chinese are less than English language, and both English and Chinese should be concerned to improve the L3 learning. What is more, those lexicons in Chinese, English and French cannot meet one-to-one correspondence. For example, one Chinese vocabulary can refer to many different expressions both in English and French. The Chinese and English explanations of those new expressions should be noticed and recognized by language learners. The identification of similarities and differences is quite effective for beginners to improve the L3 learning.

C. Limitations

This study attempts to recognize the transfers of English and Chinese in French writing of L3 French beginners, and analyze statistics. However, there are still two main limitations for this study.

Firstly, compositions have just reached the number of testing. If this study needs to get more specific errors, it is quite necessary for researchers to expand the size of samples. Because this study just collects 32 compositions from juniors and seniors at the university, it is difficult for researchers to get accurate results, and to some extent, causes effects to the reliability and validity of the study.

Secondly, the identification of errors may inevitably occur some mistakes. Although the researcher has invited the teacher teaching L3 French to identify the errors existing in samples, there are still some leaks or miscalculations during the process of Error Analysis, and the researcher has also made some mistakes while classifying errors.

Thus, this study can be improved from following aspects: Firstly, the study should further enlarge the size of samples, because the size of samples takes important effects to Error Analysis. Secondly, the researcher should also recheck the results of identification and classification. At the end of this study, the researcher hopes that the education of L3 French at the preliminary level for English majors in China can be enhanced.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

F. A. Wang conducted the research, wrote the paper, and classified and analyzed the errors in students' compositions. F. B. Zang helped to identify the errors existing in the

students' compositions.

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