

# A Corpus-based Analysis of Verb Errors in Senior High School Students' English Writing

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## Abstract

English verbs have consistently posed a significant challenge for English learners in China, and many students make verb errors in their English writing. To investigate the prevalence and nature of students' verb use, 242 compositions from 7 different senior high schools were collected to analyze students' verb errors based on the classification of CLEC. Research findings revealed that the frequencies of verb errors from highest to lowest were as follows: tense errors, finite errors, agreement errors, auxiliary verb errors, set phrase errors, pattern errors, non-finite errors, voice errors, and mood errors. Also, there were statistically significant differences across different proficiency levels of students, and the reasons for students' verb errors were discussed, including interlingual and intralingual transfer. Finally, some pedagogical implications were proposed to guide students' learning of English verbs.

## Keywords

Corpus-based analysis; English writing; Error analysis; Senior high school; Verb errors

## 1. Introduction

Writing, a critical skill in English, has long been emphasized in the teaching process, especially after the reform of the college entrance examination. The new examination pays more importance to writing, which accounts for nearly 27% (40 points) of the total score (150 points) (MOE, 2020). Writing, however, as a productive skill, can be difficult for many students. Due to the complexity, students often make errors during the production process, only to discover that these errors result in the loss of points in their writing. It can be said that errors are an inevitable part of language learning, and Students constantly make errors and correct their errors in the learning process so that they make progress in writing.

Among these errors, especially worthy of notice are the verb errors, which take up a large number. Verbs are both the most difficult part of learning English and the most important part in the writing process (Ye, 2023). As a result, because of the difficulty

of verbs reflected in the inflection, collocation, multi-meaning, and so on, students usually make errors in the use of verbs in their writing. Therefore, it is meaningful for teachers to analyze verb errors in students' writing to help identify typical errors and explore the underlying reasons, so that teachers can adjust their teaching to meet students' needs and improve their writing ability in English.

Based on the above ideas, this paper combines quantitative and qualitative studies to analyze the verb errors in students' writing, supported by a teaching corpus to help teachers better quantify verb error frequencies systematically.

## 2. Literature Review

This part mainly focuses on the theoretical foundations of the research, including error analysis and language transfer, together with the relevant research in English writing errors and research gaps.

### 2.1. Errors and error analysis

In the field of Second Language Acquisition, errors are viewed as systematic deviations of learners' language competence, which reflected the incomplete mastery of the rules in the target language Corder (1967). Based on Corder's view, James (2013) further analyzed errors, emphasizing that errors reflected the incompleteness of learners' interlanguage, and they could not be corrected by learners themselves. In China, Hu (2019) attributed errors to the lack of knowledge of learners. Errors were committed because students did not know the correct form of language, or they could not use the language correctly.

Error analysis refers to the process of collecting, analyzing, describing, and explaining learners' errors in their language learning. It tries to identify what errors learners commit and the reasons why they make these errors. According to Corder (1974), the procedures of error analysis can be divided into five steps. (1) Language samples are collected. Teachers are encouraged to collect real language data that reflect students' real language use so that the latter analysis can be valid and reliable. (2) Errors are identified. They need to decide whether students' expressions are in line with the rules of the L2 or not. If not, the expressions can be regarded as errors. (3) Teachers need to describe errors. In this stage, teachers also need to classify errors. This research is based on the classification of the Chinese Learner English Corpus (Gui & Yang, 2003), in which verb errors are divided into nine types, including pattern errors, set phrase errors, agreement errors, finite errors, non-finite errors, tense errors, voice errors, mood errors, and modal and auxiliary verb errors. (4) Teachers need to analyze the reasons for the errors. Reasons can be acquired from interlingual transfer, intralingual transfer, and so on. (5) Errors are evaluated and corrected finally. Teachers need to evaluate the severity of these errors and correct them in an appropriate way to help students improve their language ability (Cheng, 2022).

## 2.2. Language transfer

Language transfer has received emphasis in the research process. Here, “transfer” refers to a kind of influence. Researchers have proposed various definitions of language transfer. According to Lado (1957), learners tended to transfer forms, meaning, and the distribution of forms and meaning from their L1 to the L2, and language transfer occurred in this process. While Odlin (1989) defined language transfer as the influence resulting from the similarities and differences between the L2 and any other language that has been previously acquired, a definition which extends from the relationship between the L1 and the L2 to the relationship between the L2 and other languages. As a result, language transfer can be defined as the influence of one language on the other.

Since this kind of influence has various directions, language transfer can be divided into different types accordingly. Odlin (1989) divided language transfer into positive and negative ones. Positive transfer refers to that when there are similarities between the L1 and the L2, the transfer will promote the learning of the L2, while negative transfer means the impediment of the L1 to the L2 due to their discrepancy. Furthermore, language transfer includes interlingual transfer and intralingual transfer. Interlingual transfer meant the transfer of linguistic features from the L1 to the L2, while intralingual transfer referred to the transfer of linguistic features within the L2 itself (Mahmoud, 2011). In this paper, the two types of transfer are used to account for the occurrence of students’ errors in their writing.

## 2.3. Research on the English writing errors

Researchers at home and abroad have conducted studies on the analysis of verb errors in students’ English writing, including the occurrence of different types of errors, as well as the analysis of the reasons behind them. The following part focuses on the two aspects respectively.

In terms of the occurrence of different types of errors, scholars used different classifications and various research views to investigate errors in students’ English writing. In a research conducted in Indonesia (Mustafa et al., 2017), errors were divided into two aspects, including the surface taxonomy of errors and linguistic taxonomy errors. It was said that the most problematic grammatical errors for students were word forms, followed by articles, non-finite verbs, tenses, and prepositions. In another research, Chen (2021) investigated writing errors of 90 non-English majors in a university in China with the use of COCA as a research tool. It was found that part of speech and word choice were the two major sources of errors. Furthermore, some researchers conducted a study on the English writing errors of five 6th-grade students aged 11 to 12 years old in Taiwan. In this study, writing errors were classified into 5 types, namely grammatical errors, lexical errors, semantic errors, mechanical errors, and intelligible errors (Wu & Graza, 2014). Among these errors, S-V agreement ranked the highest, with the second and third frequent errors of sen-

tence fragment and sentence structure. Also, participants made more interlingual/transfer errors than intralingual/developmental errors.

Apart from studies conducted by scholars abroad, researchers in China have also conducted some research. Xu (2016) combined error analysis and a corpus-based approach to study English writing errors of English majors by using two sub-corpora in CLEC. It was found that the top four errors were agreement errors, tense errors, pattern errors, and non-finite errors, respectively. In another study, He (2009) used corpora from CET 4 and CET 6 in CLEC to analyze vocabulary errors of non-English majors. She found that vocabulary errors took up 59.33% of the total language errors, and spelling and substitution errors were the two major errors. Also, students of different language levels showed a significant difference in the number of vocabulary errors. Furthermore, Yan (2020) investigated writing verb errors of four classes of students in a school. The classification of verb errors was in line with Gui and Yang's in CLEC. In this study, the major errors were non-finite errors, agreement errors, set phrase errors, and modal verb errors.

In terms of the reasons for the writing errors, different scholars have proposed relatively similar ones. The first reason is interlingual transfer. Due to the differences between Chinese and English, such as inflection, part of speech, and sentence structures, students in their language learning process constantly make errors by transferring features of Chinese to English (Yan, 2020; Mustafa et al., 2017; Wu & Garza, 2014; Zhao, 2022). The second major reason is intralingual transfer. In the early stage of learning, owing to the incomplete mastery of grammatical rules, students are inclined to transfer one specific rule of the L2 to all situations without considering the variation. In such a case, intralingual transfer occurs. It can be said that intralingual transfer is another reason for the errors in students' writing (He, 2009; Yan, 2020; Xu, 2016). Some researchers also proposed other potential reasons to explain the occurrence of writing errors through experiments. For example, Yan (2020) identified students' affective attitudes, cognitive strategies, teacher factors, and teaching methods. While Ye (2022) carried out a study to explore the differences in errors among students of different writing abilities, from which she concluded the reason of English language levels.

## 2.4. Summary

Prior research has deeply analyzed students' English writing errors from various aspects. Although these studies use different classifications of errors, they mainly concentrate on college students' writing errors with little attention to senior high school students. Moreover, students involved in these studies are predominantly from the same school, which will weaken the validity and reliability of the research outcomes. To bridge these research gaps, in this paper, the participants are senior high school students from 7 different schools in Sichuan province. The inclusion of students from different schools can help to identify typical errors in English writing and improve the validity of research outcomes.

### 3. Research methodology

This part involves the design of the research. It primarily focuses on the research questions, participants, materials, research tools, and procedures involved in the research process.

#### 3.1. Research questions

This research aims to identify the typical verb errors in students' English writing and determine the reasons why these errors occur. Besides, students will be grouped separately based on their English writing scores to see whether there are differences in verb errors among students with distinct writing abilities. To achieve the above objectives, the research questions in this paper are as follows:

- (1) What is the distribution of verb errors in senior high school students' writing?
- (2) What are the differences in verb errors among students with distinct writing abilities?
- (3) What are the major causes of these verb errors?

#### 3.2. Research participants

This study involves 242 senior high students from 7 different schools in Sichuan province, from whom 237 compositions are collected, except 5 invalid compositions. The topic of the composition is school life. It requires students to describe their school lives before and after the reduction of learning load. Students' compositions are scored by two raters using standardized rubrics established for the national college entrance examination, with a third rater resolving discrepancies (more than 5-point differences).

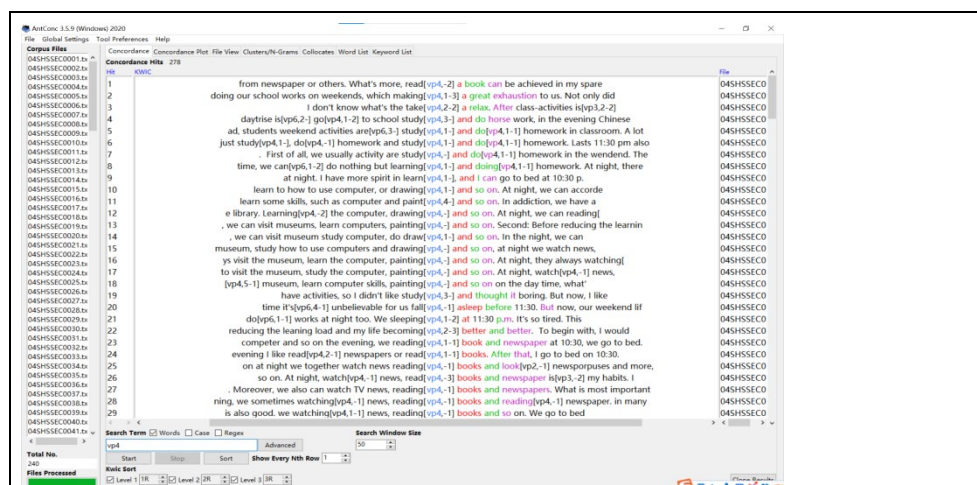
#### 3.3. Research instruments

First, AntConc 3.5.9, a powerful text analysis software, is used to explore the distribution of students' verb errors together with the concordance in their English writing. Additionally, SPSS 27 is used in this research, a statistical software widely employed in social science research. In this study, ANOVA and post hoc comparison are used to determine whether there exist significant differences in verb errors among students with different writing abilities, and what the differences are.

#### 3.4. Research procedures

The research procedures in this study are divided into three stages.

The first stage is to collect language samples. In this study, 242 compositions are collected from senior high students from 7 different schools in Sichuan province, with 5 invalid ones. The collected language data are transformed into raw texts by researchers for research purposes.



**Figure 1.** The retrieval outcome of students' verb errors from AntConc 3.5.9.

The second stage is to identify and code verb errors. In this process, the author adopts the classification of the Chinese Learner English Corpus (CLEC) established by Gui and Yang (2003). In this classification, verb errors are coded as "vp", and verb errors are further divided into 9 types, including pattern errors (vp1), set phrase errors (vp2), agreement errors (vp3), finite errors (vp4), non-finite errors (vp5), tense errors (vp6), voice errors (vp7), mood errors (vp8), modal and auxiliary verb errors (vp9). This classification is used in this research to code verb errors. After coding verb errors, AntConc 3.5.9 is used to retrieve the data for the sake of analysis. Figure 3.1 illustrates part of the outcomes.

The third stage is to analyze and explain these verb errors. First, students are grouped into three categories according to the scores of their writing. Students whose scores are above 18 (18 included) are divided into the upper-level group. Students whose scores are between 15 and 17.9 are divided into the middle-level group. Students whose scores are below 15 are classified as part of the lower-level group. Then AntConc 3.5.9 is used to retrieve students' verb errors in their writing based on the established classification. Besides, ANOVA is run to see whether there exist significant differences among the three groups of students. Finally, the typical verb errors are analyzed one by one with the explanation of potential reasons.

## 4. Results and discussion

This part will try to answer the three research questions with the support of relevant data, including the distribution of verb errors in students' English writing, the differences in verb errors among students with distinct writing abilities, and the factors affecting students' errors.

### 4.1. Distribution of verb errors in students' English writing

Table 4.1 shows the distributions of verb errors in students' English writing. It includes the number and the percentage of each type of error.

**Table 1.** Distribution of verb errors in students' English writing.

Error Type	Number of Errors	Percent of Errors	Ranking
vp1 pattern error	38	2.73%	6
vp2 set phrase error	63	4.52%	5
vp3 agreement error	167	11.98%	3
vp4 finite error	278	19.94%	2
vp5 non-finite error	27	1.94%	7
vp6 tense error	653	46.84%	1
vp7 voice error	22	1.58%	8
vp8 mood error	2	0.14%	9
vp9 auxiliary verb error	144	10.33%	4

According to Table 4.1, there are 1394 verb errors in students' English writing. Among these errors, tense errors take the largest part (46.84%) with the number of 653. Finite errors rank in the second place (19.94%) with the number of 278. While there are 167 agreement errors, ranking in the third place (11.98%). The fourth place comes the modal verb errors (10.33%) with the number of 144. Moreover, set phrase errors, pattern errors, non-finite errors, and voice errors represent 4.52%, 2.73%, 1.94%, and 1.58% of the total, respectively. Finally, there are only 2 mood errors in students' writing, which rank last. As the last three types of verb errors collectively constitute a small proportion (6.25%) of total verb errors, the analysis mainly concentrates on the first six types of verb errors.

#### 4.1.1 Tense errors

Tense errors refer to the misuse of tense in sentences. Tense is the verb form to differentiate time (Zhang, 2017). There are 16 different tenses in English, each of which has its own form and meaning. Students are required to choose the correct one according to specific elements such as time adverbials and meanings. Among the 1394 verb errors, there are 653 tense errors, which indicates that the choice of tense in English writing is a difficult point for senior high school students. This research finds that students frequently confuse different tenses in their writing, especially the simple present tense and simple past tense.

- (1) In the past, at weekend, we do homework day and night. **(did)**
- (2) In the weekends before, we had to do homework and have classes. **(had)**
- (3) On the weekend, schools always have put pressure on us. **(put)**

In the first two examples, there are clear time adverbials to indicate the use of the past tense. However, students wrongly use the simple present tense in the two sentences. Therefore, the predicate verbs "do and have" should be changed to their past tense. Jiang & Jiang (2021) concluded that Chinese learners are inclined to make errors in verb tense in long-distance dependency relations, which is reflected in the second example. In the last example, this sentence is used to describe the facts before the reduction of learning load, where the past tense is used. But the writer wrongly uses the present perfect tense. From these sentences, it can be concluded that students frequently misuse tenses in their writing, especially the simple present



tense, the simple past tense, and the present perfect tense, which corroborates previous findings (Ye, 2022; Cheng, 2022; Wang, 2024)

#### 4.1.2 Finite errors

Finite errors mean the misuse of predicate verbs and non-predicate verbs in English writing. In English writing, each sentence contains only one predicate verb, while other verbs should be used in non-predicate forms. In this study, 278 finite errors are identified, taking up 19.94% of the total verb errors. It is found that students use several verbs in one sentence without the change of form.

(1) We watching news, reading books and so on. (**watch/read**)

(2) Because I like play computer games. (**playing**)

(3) We can also read books instead of do homework. (**doing**)

In the first example, both verbs are used in their non-predicate forms without a predicate verb in this sentence. Therefore, the two verbs “watching” and “reading” should be changed to their predicate form so that it becomes a compound sentence. In the second example, the two verbs “like” and “play” are both in their predicate form. Here, the verb “play” should be used in its gerund form. In the last example, there are two predicate verbs, and the verb “do” is used behind a preposition. As a result, it should be changed to its gerund form as well.

#### 4.1.3 Agreement errors

Subject-predicate agreement means that the subject and the predicate verb in sentences should be in line with each other in person and number (singular or plural) (Zhang, 2017). Any violation of the regulation will result in agreement errors. Sometimes, students will also forget the use of predicate verbs after the subject. In this research, there are 167 agreement errors, which account for 11.98% of the total verb errors.

(1) I feel that my school life have become colorful and meaningful. (**has**)

(2) We go to bed at 10:30 pm, which make sure we have enough time to rest. (**makes**)

(3) The study \_\_\_ time also long. (**is**)

In the first example, the subject of the object clause is “my school life” which is in its third-person singular form. Therefore, the predicate verb “have” should also be in its singular form. The second sentence is a complex sentence with a relative clause. The antecedent of the relative clause is the main clause. In such a case, the predicate verb of the relative clause should be in its singular form, so that “makes” is used. In the third example, the writer even forgets the predicate verb.

#### 4.1.4 Auxiliary verb errors

In English, auxiliary verbs are used to assist predicate verbs to express tense and mood. Auxiliary verb errors include the misuse of both common auxiliary verbs and modal verbs. There are 144 auxiliary verb errors in this research, constituting 10.33% of the total verb errors. It is found that students constantly misuse modal verbs, and



they often add auxiliary verbs before and after predicate verbs when it is not necessary.

(1) We can visiting exhibitions, painting, and learning computers. (**visit, paint, learn**)

(2) I must devoted into a busy and boring study life. (**devote**)

(3) We **are** go to bed at 11:30 pm. (~~are~~)

It is known that the verbs behind modal verbs should be used in their base form. In the first two examples, verbs behind the two modal verbs are used in their gerund form and past participle form, which causes the auxiliary verb errors. As a result, these verbs should all be changed to their base form. In the third example, the phrase “go to bed” acts as the predicate verb, so that there is no need to use another auxiliary verb to indicate tense or mood. The above examples show that students often make form errors in those verbs after the modals, which is consistent with previous research (Lu, 2021).

#### 4.1.5 Set phrase errors

Set phrases are a bunch of words that go together to form meanings. However, due to various reasons, students sometimes lose or misuse one or two words in these set phrases, which will cause set phrase errors. Also, the inappropriate match of verbs and objects is another type of set phrase error. In this research, there are 63 set phrase errors, accounting for 4.52% of the total verb errors. In these errors, students mainly miss or add prepositions or articles in a set phrase.

(1) Now, we go to the bed at 10:30 pm. (~~the~~)

(2) We have more time in sleeping, which is good **at** our health. (**for**)

(3) We can read some books, look news, and look magazines. (**watch, read**)

In the first example, the writer wants to use this phrase to express sleeping. However, the definite article is inappropriately added, only to find the change in the meaning. Therefore, the definite article should be deleted here. In the second example, the writer wants to express that more time for sleep is beneficial to our health. Whereas, the preposition is wrongly used here, which will change the meaning of the phrase. In the last example, the verb does not match the object in English. News usually goes with “watch”, while magazines often go with “read” or “look through”. These examples reveal that students sometimes mismatch verbs and prepositions, and verbs and nouns, which aligns with the results of Wang(2024).

#### 4.1.6 Pattern errors

In English, verbs can be divided into different types based on various criteria. Based on whether objects can be added directly behind, verbs can be classified into transitive and intransitive verbs. Transitive verbs refer to those that objects can be added directly behind, while intransitive verbs refer to those that objects cannot be added directly unless the use of proper prepositions. Those who confuse the two types of

verbs will commit pattern errors. In this research, 38 pattern errors are found in students’ writing, constituting 2.73% of the total verb errors. Students sometimes misuse intransitive verbs as transitive ones (Zhu & Wang, 2016), a conclusion which is reinforced in this research.

(1) At night, we can watch **to** some news. ~~(to)~~

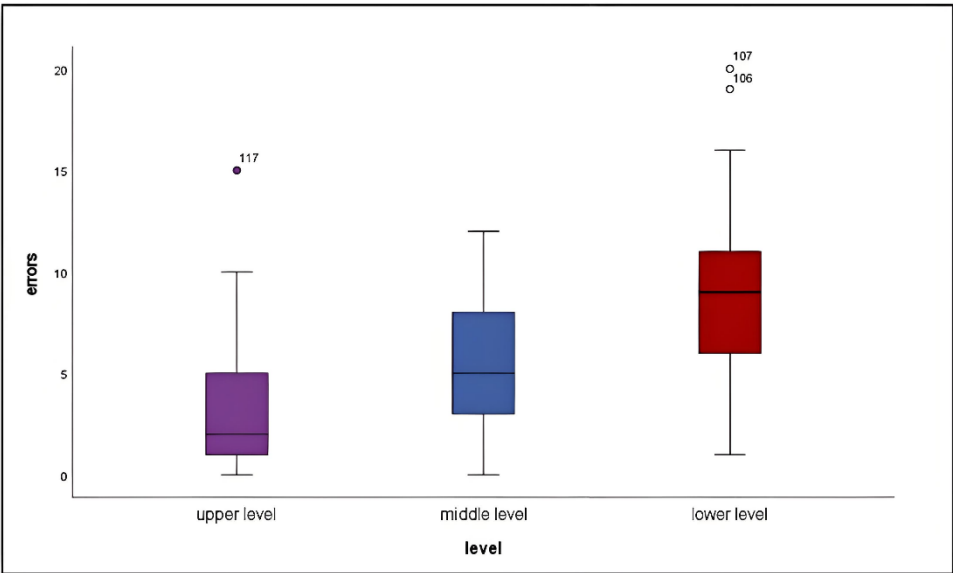
(2) Please reply \_\_ me at your earliest convenience. **(to)**

In the first example, the verb “watch” is a transitive verb, so the object can be added directly. However, in the second example, the verb “reply” is an intransitive one. As a result, the preposition “to” should be used here to link the verb and the object.

4.2 Differences in verb errors among students with distinct writing abilities

This part will use ANOVA and post hoc comparisons to analyze students’ verb errors in their writing to see whether there exist differences in verb errors among students with different writing abilities.

Figure 2. Box-and-whisker plot for students’ overall verb errors.



The above box-and-whisker plot shows students’ overall verb errors in their writing. The line in the box means the median value, and the top and bottom of the box represent the first and the third quartiles. The top whisker extends to the maximum value, while the bottom whisker extends to the minimum value of the group. Moreover, the dots are outliers. According to Figure 4.1, the outlier in the upper-level group is 117, while the outliers in the lower-level group are 106 and 107.

Table 2. ANOVA results for students’ overall verb errors.

Group	N	M/SD	95% CI LL UL	F	p	$\eta^2$	Post hoc comparisons( $p/\eta^2$ )
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upper	58	3.29/2.810	2.55 4.03	49.44	.001	.299	U&M (.001/0.127); U&L
middle	108	5.49/2.879	4.94 6.04				(.001/0.299); M&L
lower	69	8.74/3.709	7.85 9.63				(.001/0.071)

Note: U, M, and L denote upper level, middle level, and lower level, respectively.

CI = confidence interval; LL = lower level; UL = upper level

As is shown in Table 4.2, ANOVA results reveal that there are statistically significant differences among students with distinct writing abilities ( $F [2,232] = 49.44$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Furthermore, according to Cohen's criteria, it has a large effect size ( $\eta^2 = .299$ ). Then, post hoc comparisons are performed to further explore the differences. As is shown in Table 4.2, there are statistically significant differences between the upper-level group and the middle-level group ( $p < .001$ ,  $\eta^2 = 0.127$ ), between the upper-level group and the lower-level group ( $p < .001$ ,  $\eta^2 = 0.299$ ), and between the middle-level group and the lower-level group ( $p < .001$ ,  $\eta^2 = 0.071$ ).

The above results illustrate that senior high school students with distinct writing abilities differ significantly from each other in their verb errors. The upper-level group makes fewer verb errors than the middle-level group and the lower-level group, and the lower-level group makes the most verb errors in their English writing, results which are in accordance with Ye's research (2022).

### 4.3 Reasons for verb errors in students' English writing

This part involves the factors affecting students' verb errors in their writing, including interlingual transfer and intralingual transfer.

#### 4.3.1 Interlingual transfer

As mentioned above, interlingual transfer refers to the impact of the L1 on the use of the L2. The influence of L1 mainly concentrates on vocabulary, syntactic structure, and grammatical structure (Zhao, 2022). Chinese and English belong to different language systems. In Chinese, the logic between sentences is implicit, and the expression of tense and voice, and so on depends on the addition or deletion of words. On the contrary, the structure of English is like a tree, which showcases a logical connection between one part and the other. The expression of grammatical points relies on inflection. Students who are starters will inevitably make errors in their expression. Some typical examples of the influence of interlingual transfer are listed below.

(1) Nowadays, we can read books, look newspapers and news. (**read/watch**)

(2) I am writing to reply \_\_\_ you now. (**to**)

(3) In the past, we have classes and do tests at daytime. (**had/did**)

In the first example, the writer confuses the meaning of "look" in Chinese and English. In English, the word "look" emphasizes the action, and it cannot go together with "newspaper" and "news" to express meanings. The second example shows another feature of Chinese and English. In English, verbs are divided into transitive ones and intransitive ones, while there is no such classification in Chinese. Here,

“reply” is an intransitive verb, so that a preposition “to” must be added. As is shown in the last example, in Chinese, the expression of tense is through the addition of words, while inflection is used in English. This learner apparently forgets the change of verb form in the past tense due to the influence of his or her L1.

#### 4.3.2 Intralingual transfer

Unlike interlingual transfer, intralingual transfer means the influence of the L2 itself. In the learning process, as students acquire more and more knowledge in the L2, they are inclined to use the language points they learn from one place to the other, during which intralingual transfer presents itself. Sometimes this kind of transfer will promote the learning process. But it can also cause some language errors. Richard (1971) grouped intralingual transfer into four kinds, including over-generalization, false concepts hypothesized, incomplete application of rules, and ignorance of rule restrictions. Some typical examples are as follows.

(1) We failed asleep at 11:30 pm. (**fell**)

(2) I'd like to reading and watching TV programs. (**read/watch**)

(3) I \_\_\_ looking forward \_\_\_ your reply. (**am/to**)

The first example shows the occurrence of over-generalization. In English, in most cases, -ed is added behind a verb to form its past tense. Whereas, there are also some irregular transforms, such as “take”, “fall”, and so on. Students who apply the regular transform to all verbs will commit the error of over-generalization. In the second example, the writer confuses the preposition “to” and the infinitive, so that he or she wrongly uses the gerund here. In the last example, the writer forgets to use the auxiliary verb to form the tense, and the phrase is not complete without the preposition “to”.

### 5. Conclusion

This part consists of three aspects, namely the major findings of students' verb errors in their writing, some practical implications for students, and the limitations of the research.

When it comes to research findings, this research revealed that tense errors, finite errors, agreement errors, and auxiliary verb errors predominated. The rest five verb errors were set phrase errors, pattern errors, non-finite errors, voice errors, and mood errors. It suggests that students have more problems with tense, finite verbs, subject-verb agreement, and the use of auxiliary verbs. It should be noted that although students make fewer mood errors, it does not mean students have a sound mastery of moods. Subjunctive mood is a complicated language point in English. Most students will avoid using it in their writing to reduce the possibility of making errors. Also, according to ANOVA and post hoc comparisons results, student with distinct writing abilities showed statistically significant differences in overall verb errors in their writing. It indicates that writing abilities inversely correlate with

verb error frequencies. Finally, two factors affecting students' verb errors were proposed: interlingual transfer and intralingual transfer. Interlingual transfer can hinder students' language learning, especially in inflection. While in the process of language development, students' incomplete mastery of the second language will also cause them problems in their writing, a result of intralingual transfer.

Based on the major findings of the research, some practical implications are proposed to help teachers adjust their teaching.

First, teachers are encouraged to use corpora to assist English verb learning. Because of the differences between English and Chinese, the learning of English verbs requires more concrete examples to assist understanding. Therefore, teachers can integrate corpus technology into their classroom teaching. Teachers can use corpora to provide students with real and meaningful language data to help them understand and master English verbs. Furthermore, teachers need to pay more emphasis to tenses. This research found that students made much more tense errors than other types of errors. Teachers need to make students aware of the meaning, usage, and form of different English tenses, especially the simple present tense, the simple past tense, and the present perfect tense. Besides, teachers are supposed to give students personal directions according to their writing ability. Since students differ greatly in verb errors, teachers need to teach students according to the verb errors that they commit most frequently. Also, teachers should pay attention to the verb errors with no significant differences, which indicates problems at all levels of students.

Finally, there are two major limitations in this research. First, although students' writing samples are collected from 7 different senior high schools in Sichuan province, the number of writing samples is only 242. The sample size may limit the generalizability of error frequency rankings for rare error types. In future research, researchers can not only involve samples from different schools, but also increase the sample size to improve the validity and reliability of the research. Second, when discussing the reasons for students' errors, the author only concludes the two factors from students' writings without a face-to-face interaction with typical students to identify their inner thoughts about the use of verbs. As a result, in other research, a semi-structured interview can be involved to probe into students' thoughts to find more possible factors affecting their use of verbs in their English writing.

### Research fund projects

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2025 Annual Project of the "14th Five-Year Plan" for Social Science Research in Nanchong: "Research on AI-Based Feedback Mechanisms for College English Writing" (NC25A064)

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