

MASTER'S THESIS

Error analysis of the written works produced by the undergraduates from PRC, Taiwan and Hong Kong

Lee, Wai Ching

Date of Award:
2002

[Link to publication](#)

General rights

Copyright and intellectual property rights for the publications made accessible in HKBU Scholars are retained by the authors and/or other copyright owners. In addition to the restrictions prescribed by the Copyright Ordinance of Hong Kong, all users and readers must also observe the following terms of use:

- Users may download and print one copy of any publication from HKBU Scholars for the purpose of private study or research
- Users cannot further distribute the material or use it for any profit-making activity or commercial gain
- To share publications in HKBU Scholars with others, users are welcome to freely distribute the permanent URL assigned to the publication

**ERROR ANALYSIS OF THE WRITTEN WORKS PRODUCED
BY THE UNDERGRADUATES FROM PRC, TAIWAN AND
HONG KONG**

LEE WAI CHING, CRYSTAL

STUDENT NO. 00404535

**A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
MASTER OF ARTS IN LANGUAGE STUDIES**

HONG KONG BAPTIST UNIVERSITY

AUGUST 2002

ABSTRACT

**Error Analysis of the written works produced by the undergraduates
from PRC, Taiwan and Hong Kong**

by

Crystal Wai Ching Lee

The study is a cross-sectional one which examines the nature of errors that occurred in the English writings produced by undergraduates from PRC, Hong Kong and Taiwan. The present study adopted a combination of Contrastive Analysis and Error Analysis with the objective to find out if the errors made by the learners of the similar linguistic backgrounds regardless of their nationalities are predominately the result of the influence of their L1. Dulay, Burt and Krashen's surface strategy taxonomy was used for the categorization of errors: Within each error, the sources of them were analyzed and discussed. It was found that the ranking of the errors in terms of frequency was misformation, omission, addition and misordering. Transfer and simplification were found to be the primary source of errors whereas overgeneralization ranked only third. The results answer the three hypotheses that:

- 1) Grammatical differences between Chinese and English lead to errors during the process of writing English.
- 2) A majority of errors made by the learners from the three regions are the result of interference.
- 3) Learners at an advanced level do not inevitably produce more intralingual errors.

摘要

此橫剖研究以中國大陸、香港及台灣三地大學生為對象，分析他們在寫作英文時所犯錯誤的因由。此研究集合了對比分析(Contrastive Analysis)及錯誤分析(Error Analysis)，旨在找出來自不同地方、擁有相似語言背景的學生，所犯的英文文法錯誤是否受母語所影響。本研究使用了杜尼、伯切及克拉斯遜的表層策略分類學(surface strategy taxonomy)為每個文法錯誤歸類。對於每個類別的文法錯誤，他們的成因都會作出分析和討論。結果顯示在所有錯誤當中，出現最多的是構造錯誤(misformation)，其次為省略錯誤(omission)、附加錯誤(addition)以及排列錯誤(misordering)。另外，母語轉移(Transfer)及簡化(simplification)是最常引致文法錯誤的，過分概括化(overgeneralization)只為其次。研究結果剖析了以下假設：

- 1) 中、英文文法之分別會引致學生在寫作英文時犯文法錯誤
- 3) 三地學生所犯的文法錯誤當中，大部份都是受到母語影響
- 3) 學習英文較長時間的學生並非一定犯較多過分概括化的錯誤

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER ONE INTRODUCTION	11
1.1. BACKGROUND	11
1.2. LANGUAGE USE IN TAIWAN, PRC AND HK.....	13
1.2.1. <i>Mandarin in Taiwan</i>	14
1.2.2. <i>English in Taiwan</i>	15
1.2.3. <i>Putonghua in PRC</i>	17
1.2.4. <i>English in PRC</i>	17
1.2.5. <i>Cantonese in Hong Kong</i>	20
1.2.6. <i>English in Hong Kong</i>	20
1.3. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY	23
1.4. RESEARCH QUESTIONS.....	24
1.5. HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY.....	26
CHAPTER TWO LITERATURE REVIEW	27
2.1. CONTRASTIVE ANALYSIS (CA).....	27
2.1.1. <i>Background of CA</i>	27
2.1.2. <i>CA Hypothesis</i>	28
2.1.3. <i>The strong and weak version of CA Hypothesis (CAH)</i>	29
2.1.4. <i>Criticisms of CA</i>	30
2.2. ERROR ANALYSIS (EA).....	34
2.2.1. <i>Background of EA</i>	34
2.2.2. <i>EA assumption</i>	34
2.2.3. <i>Changes in attitude towards learners' errors in an L2</i>	35
2.2.4. <i>The Significance of Learners' Errors</i>	36
2.2.5. <i>Errors of competency and Mistakes of Performance</i>	37
2.2.6. <i>Steps in EA research</i>	39
2.2.7. <i>Criticism of EA</i>	42
CHAPTER THREE METHODOLOGY	44
3.1. COLLECTION OF DATA	44
3.1.1. <i>Subjects</i>	44
3.1.1.1. <i>Mother tongue of the subjects</i>	45
3.1.2. <i>Samples</i>	45
3.1.3. <i>Topic of the samples</i>	46
3.2. IDENTIFICATION OF ERRORS.....	47
3.2.1. <i>Coding the Errors</i>	47
3.2.2. <i>Dulay, Burt and Krashen's Surface Strategy Taxonomy</i>	48

3.3.	DESCRIPTION OF ERRORS	52
3.4.	EXPLANATION OF ERRORS.....	53
3.5.	LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY	57
CHAPTER FOUR FINDINGS		59
4.1.	DESCRIPTION OF ERRORS	59
4.2.	DETAILS OF THE SAMPLES	59
4.3.	INTENSITY OF ERRORS.....	59
4.4.	DISTRIBUTION OF ERRORS	62
4.5.	SOURCE OF ERRORS	64
4.5.1.	<i>Source of errors in the Taiwan samples</i>	69
4.5.1.1.	Source of MF errors	69
4.5.1.2.	Source of OM errors	69
4.5.1.3.	Source of AD errors	69
4.5.1.4.	Source of MO errors	69
4.5.2.	<i>Source of errors of the PRC samples</i>	72
4.5.2.1.	Source of MF errors	72
4.5.2.2.	Source of OM errors	72
4.5.2.3.	Source of AD errors	72
4.5.2.4.	Source of MO errors	72
4.5.3.	<i>Source of errors of Hong Kong samples</i>	74
4.5.3.1.	Source of MF errors	74
4.5.3.2.	Source of OM errors	74
4.5.3.3.	Source of AD errors	74
4.5.3.4.	Source of MO errors	74
CHAPTER FIVE DISCUSSION		76
5.1.	EXPLANATION OF ERRORS.....	76
5.2.	MF ERRORS DUE TO THE SOURCE OF TS	77
5.3.	MF DUE TO THE SOURCE OF OV.....	85
5.4.	OM DUE TO THE SOURCE OF TS/SP	89
5.5.	AD DUE TO THE SOURCE OF OV.....	101
5.6.	AD DUE TO THE SOURCE OF TS.....	108
5.7.	MO DUE TO THE SOURCE OF TS	112
CHAPTER SIX CONCLUSION		117
6.1.	SUMMARY OF FINDINGS	117
6.2.	ANSWERS TO THE HYPOTHESES.....	118
6.3.	RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH	119

APPENDIX A SAMPLES OF DATA (TAIWAN)	122
APPENDIX B SAMPLES OF DATA (PRC).....	126
APPENDIX C SAMPLES OF DATA (HONG KONG).....	131
BIBLIOGRAPHY	136