# Tense and aspect in second language acquisition

## A corpus-based comparison of Chinese and German learner English

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# Contents

# Abbreviations

| | |
|---|---|
| CA | Contrastive Analysis |
| CIA | Contrastive Interlanguage Analysis |
| CLI | Cross-linguistic Influence |
| DEE | Detection-Explanation-Evaluation transfer model |
| GJT | Grammaticality Judgment Test |
| ICLE | The International Corpus of Learner English |
| ICLE-CN | The Chinese learner English sub-corpus of ICLE |
| ICLE-GE | The German learner English sub-corpus of ICLE |
| ICM | Integrated Contrastive Model |
| IL | Interlanguage |
| L1 | The first language |
| L2 | The second language |
| LOCNESS | The Louvain Corpus of Native English Essays |
| NL | Native Language |
| OL | Original Languages |
| SL | Source Language |
| TL | Target Language |
| TrL | Translated Language |

# List of figures

# List of tables

# 1 Introduction

The role that the native language plays in second language acquisition has been researched since the 1940s. Native language transfer manifests itself in errors, facilitation, avoidance/underuse, and overuse in learning a second language. It arises as a result of differences and similarities between the target language and the L1, working with other factors, including social factors, markedness, prototypicality, language distance and psychotypology and developmental factors (Ellis 2009). This research presents a corpus-based (the International Corpus of Learner English and the Louvain Corpus of Native English Essays) comparison of tense and aspect usage in Chinese learner English and German learner English. It combines quantitative and qualitative methods of analysis in a research design to understand how language transfer operates in the context of other factors relevant for the learning process. In line with current trends in learner corpus research, an experiment/ survey complements the corpus analysis.

## 1.1 Introduction

**Language transfer and second language acquisition**

We experience the world carrying on or setting aside our past life experiences. We learn to run after learning to walk, and we put one foot in front of the other. Like or unlike the other life experiences, we keep the first language (L1), our mother tongue, as a foundation consciously or subconsciously when we learn a new language. This previously learnt language's influence on the new language is language transfer. As Odlin defines: 'Transfer is the influence resulting from similarities and differences between the target language and any other language that has been previously (and perhaps imperfectly) acquired' (Odlin 1989: 27). Dechert and Raupach (1989) point out that transfer is a fundamental principle of human cognition: 'Unknown areas of language can be processed – and as such acquired – only on the basis of known areas of

language or nonverbal knowledge sources. Transfer between known and unknown, old and new, verbal and nonverbal is the fundamental principle of human cognition.' (Dechert & Raupach 1989: xii). Language transfer is an integral part of learning languages. Studying language transfer is obviously important for research on language learning and teaching.

The term 'second language acquisition' in this study is used in a general and broad definition. 'Second language' refers to 'any language other than the first language' (Ellis 1994: 11). The distinction between second and foreign language is not crucial in this study. For both Chinese learners of English and German learners of English, English is a foreign language learnt in China or in Germany.

**Tense and aspect**

'Yesterday is history, tomorrow is a mystery, today is a gift of God, which is why we call it the present'[1]. Although it might sound like a cliché, the topic and the story about present, past and future always make us wonder at the power and importance of time. That is also one of the reasons that many linguists have been engaged in research on tense and aspect, the grammatical way to express time in language. According to Comrie, tense is 'the grammaticalisation of location in time' (Comrie 1985: I). There are three common tenses: present, past and future. If the moment of speaking is regarded as the reference point, the present tense locates events at the moment of speaking, the past tense locates events prior to the moment of speaking, and the future tense locates events after the moment of speaking.

Henry van Dyke[2] wrote in his poem 'Time Is',

> Time is
> Too slow for those who wait,
> Too swift for those who fear,
> Too long for those who grieve,
> Too short for those who rejoice,

[1] A quote by Bil Keane, an American cartoonist.
[2] Henry van Dyke: an American author, educator, and clergyman.

But for those who love,
Time is eternity.

Everyone experiences the same amount of time every day, but the perceptions of the pace and the length are rather different. Similar to this, people have different perspectives or aspects of viewing internal time of an action, a process or an event. Aspect is defined as 'different ways of viewing the internal temporal constituency of a situation'(Comrie 1976: 3). The most discussed aspects in research include progressive, perfect, perfective, and imperfective.

## 1.2 Research aims and scope

The ultimate aim of analyzing language transfer in the acquisition of English tense and aspect is not to simply judge the impact of the native language on learning a new language, but to apprehend the phenomenon itself systematically overall, so as to understand the interactions between the pre-mindsetting native language and the subsequently acquired language(s) in learners' minds. It helps to comprehend second language acquisition better, thus making contributions to second language acquisition research and language learning and teaching.

To achieve this ultimate goal, this research investigates four relevant areas: 1) reviewing the theoretical background and relevant research regarding language transfer; 2) making comparisons of English and Chinese, and of English and German, in the grammatical domain of tense and aspect, thus laying a theoretical foundation for explaining the L1 transfer in tense and aspect in Chinese learner English and German learner English; 3) exploring the use of tense and aspect in learner Englishes, especially Chinese learner English and German learner English, from learner corpora (the International Corpus of Learner English, ICLE) and native English from the corpus of native English (the Louvain Corpus of Native English Essays, LOCNESS), thus to figure out the distribution of tenses and aspects and the general trends of learner Englishes compared with native English. It is to find out about

overuse and underuse, to identify and explain errors, the most prominent errors, the intralingual and transfer errors, and then to discover the L1-specific and common features. These help to understand the L1 transfer in acquiring English tense and aspect for Chinese learners of English and German learners of English; 4) validating the findings of the corpus study through an experiment/ a survey, to study further Chinese students' and German students' knowledge of English tenses and aspects, their perspectives of different actions or situations and to inspect the correlation between L1 transfer and learners' perceptions of similarity and markedness.

## 1.3 Structure of the study

Chapter 1 briefly introduces the research topic, research aims and scope and the structure of the study. Chapter 2 discusses language transfer in second language acquisition. It begins with discussing terminology and definitions, then focuses on explaining characteristics and features of language transfer, and classification of types of language transfer. Following the importance of language transfer and the history of relevant theoretical developments, it discusses the relationship between language transfer, typology, language contact and language universals. Empirical research on language transfer and recent landmark findings are reviewed briefly. Chapter 3 concentrates on the target linguistic forms of this research, the grammatical domain of tense and aspect in English. It reviews the general theories on tense and aspect, discusses and establishes the comparability between English, Chinese and German, then analyzes tense and aspect in English, Chinese and German and finally makes a comparative analysis of Chinese and English, of German and English. The comparisons are considered as the theoretical and foundation for the empirical research on language transfer in tense and aspect in Chinese learner English and German learner English. Chapter 4 reviews the methods adopted in previous research on language transfer and describes the method used in this corpus-based study, including introducing the comparable corpora (ICLE and LOCNESS), and explaining data retrieval in detail. Chapter 5 demonstrates the corpus findings on tense and aspect in learner Englishes and

native English. It portrays the data and the general trends of learner Englishes from ICLE and of native English from LOCNESS. Then the learner errors, most prominent errors, and transfer errors in Chinese learner English and German learner English are listed and explained. Comparisons between Chinese learner English and German learner English are made to understand language transfer in acquiring English tense and aspect. Chapter 6 documents the experiment / survey which is based on some of the findings of the corpus study. A grammaticality judgment test, a picture description task, and general questions are used in this study to examine the Chinese students' and German students' knowledge of the English present perfect, the simple past, the present progressive and the simple present. The influences of L1 Chinese and L1 German are revealed through the statistical comparisons of the learners' and native English speakers' judgments in Grammaticality Judgment Test (GJT). The preferred tense and aspect choices by both learner groups and the native speakers are investigated in the picture description task. The correlation between L1 transfer and learners' perceptions of similarity and markedness is tested statistically. Chapter 7 discusses the research findings of the corpus-based study and the experiment/survey. The discussion focuses on the characteristics and manifestations of language transfer, L1-specific features and universals in learner Englishes, and the relationship between language transfer and learners' perceptions of similarity and markedness. The research limitations are also pointed out at the end. Chapter 8 summarizes all the research findings including comparisons of English, Chinese and German, the corpus-based study and the experimental survey. It points out the contribution to second language acquisition and learner corpus research, delivers advice for pedagogical practice, and puts forward suggestions for future research.

# 2 Language transfer in second language acquisition

This chapter focuses on language transfer in second language acquisition. It discusses terminology and definitions, characteristics and features of language transfer, classification, the importance of language transfer, history of theoretical development, the relationship between language transfer, typology, language contact and language universals, recent landmark findings and empirical research on language transfer.

## 2.1 Terminology and definitions

Researchers use various terminologies to name the phenomenon that previously acquired language(s) influence the language that is being acquired or is to be acquired, such as 'language transfer', 'cross-linguistic influence', 'cross-linguistic transfer', 'interlanguage transfer', 'cross-associations', 'linguistic interference', 'the role of the mother tongue', 'native language influence', 'language mixing' and so forth.

Selinker puts forward the following operational definition of language transfer:

> […] process occurring from the native to the foreign language if frequency analysis shows that a statistically significant trend in the speakers' native language […] is then paralleled by a significant trend toward the 'same' alternative in the speaker's attempted production of the foreign language sentences, phonetic features, phonetic sequences, etc. (Selinker 1966: 103)

'Cross-linguistic influence' was suggested by Sharwood Smith and Kellerman (1986). They define it as 'the interplay between earlier and later

acquired languages'. As they conceive it, the term is 'theory-neutral, allowing one to subsume under one heading such phenomena as "transfer", "interference", "avoidance", "borrowing" and L2-related aspects of language loss and thus permitting discussion of the similarities and differences between these phenomena' (Sharwood Smith & Kellerman 1986: 1). It can be used for the effects of a previously acquired language on the language acquired later, and the reverse direction, the effects of later acquired language on the language acquired previously. It can be used irrespective of the direction of the influence. Besides, it can subsume the term 'avoidance'. It is not restricted to second language acquisition; it can also be used in language contact situations. In short, the term 'cross-linguistic influence' is overarching but very general. Thus it cannot describe specifically what this study focuses on.

Sharwood Smith and Kellerman (1986) use 'transfer' to refer to 'those processes that lead to the incorporation of elements from one language into another' (Sharwood Smith & Kellerman 1986: 3). They think the term 'transfer' does not cover the discussion of 'avoidance' and 'different rates of acquiring certain L2 structures'. They suggest abandoning the term 'interference' and 'facilitation', since it is not necessary for the researcher to assign negative and positive connotations to the linguistic processes (Sharwood Smith & Kellerman 1986: 1).

Odlin puts forward a working definition of transfer, which argues that 'transfer is the influence resulting from similarities and differences between the target language and any other language that has been previously (and perhaps imperfectly) acquired' (Odlin 1989: 27). He also points out an imperfection of this definition. The conditions that trigger judgments of similarity or identity are not completely understood. Many other terms such as strategy, process and simplification need to be clearly defined, and the relations between transfer, overgeneralization, simplification and other second language phenomena need to be characterized correctly. He comments that 'language transfer' and 'cross-linguistic influence' are the most commonly employed in contemporary second language research.

In book *Language transfer*, Odlin (Odlin 1989: 25–27) discusses four important conceptions about what transfer is not. First, 'transfer is not simply a consequence of habit formation'. The behaviorist notion of transfer indicates

the extinction of earlier habits. However, second language acquisition normally does not need to cause replacement of the primary language. Therefore, behaviorism might have nothing to do with the study of language transfer. Secondly, 'transfer is not simply interference'. Interference is negative transfer, and transfer includes negative and positive transfer. Thirdly, 'transfer is not simply a falling back on the native language'. The native language may facilitate second language acquisition; native language influences can interact with other factors, therefore, there is often 'no neat correspondence' between native language patterns and the use of the target language. Fourthly, 'transfer is not always native language influence'. When the learner knows two or more languages, knowledge about them might influence the acquisition of another language. However, 'pinning down the exact influences in multilingual situations is often hard', and the native language is the most typical basis for transfer.

From the perspective of psychology, transfer occurs in all meaningful learning, which naturally includes language learning. Ausubel (1963, 1968) explains the phenomenon of transfer by stating that 'transfer occurs when an existing cognitive structure – an individual's organization, stability, and clarity of knowledge in a particular subject-matter field at any given time – influences the learning of new cognitive functioning or the learning of new meaningful material'(Ausubel 1963: 26; Ausubel, Novak & Hanesian 1968: 128).

Dechert & Raupach (1989) points out that language transfer is a metaphor since nothing is really transferred:

> The language transfer metaphor appears to designate in a very special way human interaction via language and represents a particular case of the conduit metaphor. Language transfer, so to say, is a meta-metaphor of verbal interaction […] We assume that the patterns, structures, forms and meanings generated in one area or in one language are carried over to other areas of language or to the other language. (Dechert & Raupach 1989: xii)

Corder (1992) takes the cognitive perspective to describe the interaction

between the native language and the target language, stating 'if anything which can be appropriately called transfer occurs, it is from the mental structure which is the implicit knowledge of the mother tongue to the separate and independently developing knowledge of the target language. The evidence for such a process of transfer is presumably the persistent occurrence of incorrect mother-tongue-like features in the learners' performance […]'(Corder 1992: 25).

As 'cross-linguistic influence' suggested by Sharwood Smith and Kellerman (1986) is too general and overarching, this study adopts Selinker's (1966) operational definition and Odlin's (1989) working definition of 'language transfer', and agrees with Ausubel's (1963/1968) psychology-based explanation, Corder's (1992) cognitive perspective and Dechert & Raupach's (1989) metaphorical basis. Therefore, language transfer in this study refers to the phenomenon that the previously acquired language, typically the native language in this research, influences the current target language learning positively, negatively, or neutrally due to the similarities and differences between them. It is the incorporation of elements from the native language into the target language and does not exclude discussing avoidance and different learning rates due to the influence of native language. It is demonstrated by mother-tongue-like features in learners' language. It is a metaphor of verbal interaction in learners' language, and occurs as naturally as all the other meaningful learning.

Regarding positive and negative transfer versus facilitation and interference, some researchers suggest stopping using 'interference' and 'facilitation'. Corder (1992) claims that no process appropriately called interference takes place as far as the acquisition of syntactic knowledge is concerned. He argues that what so called interference is the presence of mother-tongue-like features in the learners' language which are considered incorrect according to the rules of the target language and it is actually not an inhibiting process (Corder 1992: 19–20). He also explains that the more similar the mother tongue and the target language are, the greater help the mother tongue can give in acquiring the second language. Not being helpful or no facilitation does not mean inhibition or interference. 'Where languages are

distantly related there is no inhibition, simply little facilitation, which is not at all the same thing' (Corder 1992: 21).

The use of terms 'facilitation and interference' puts language learners into a passive state where native language or any other previous acquired languages seem to be given an active role to influence the learning process. However, it is language learners who decide to learn or master a new language and have the will and determination to improve their currently acquiring target language, no matter whether positive or negative transfer between languages within their own minds takes place or not, consciously, subconsciously or unconsciously. Emphasis should be made that successful language learners have the full capacity to manage their cognitive resources, to maximize the positive transfer and minimize the negative transfer. To put it simple, this study assigns agency in the learning process to the learner but not the input. Since the theoretical-neutral terms positive transfer and negative transfer can better portray the phenomenon of cross-linguistic influencing in second language learning than terminologies facilitation and interference, they will be used in this study.

## 2.2 Characteristics and features of language transfer

There is no doubt that transfer occurs in learner language. It is developmental, systematic, and constrained by the formal properties of the linguistic devices in the languages involved (Wode 1986: 174). The following part will discuss its three important characteristics.

### 2.2.1 Coexistence with other different processes

The process of language transfer is ambiguous, thus difficult to identify it because it might coexist with other different processes. Kohn studies German learner English and puts forward that the transfer process is not 'monolithic process', but functions both in the developmental organization of interlanguage knowledge and in the retrieval of this knowledge in production (Kohn 1986: 21–34). He states 'The crucial problem involved is that the

relationship between "observable" structural patterns and the underlying processes is usually quite ambiguous in that the same pattern can be compatible with different processes' (Kohn 1986: 31). One language production could be attributed to transfer, over-generalization or simplification.

Ellis also points out that L1 and developmental factors work together. As he puts, 'there is growing evidence to suggest that the L1 and developmental factors work together in determining the course of interlanguage --- or, to put it another way, "transfer is selective along the developmental axis" (Zobl 1980)' (Ellis 1994: 332).

The coexistence of language transfer and other processes makes it difficult to figure out the triggering conditions and might lead to a circular reasoning. However, the occurrence of transfer needs to be identified independently so that a certain determining condition can be figured out. Usually, 'transfer is assumed to be the process underlying a particular pattern only as long as no other process can be found which has the same outcome'(Kohn 1986: 32). Moreover, the ambiguity of transfer and the elimination of other processes also cause underestimation of transfer effects, 'in the case where transfer is in competition with other processes, however, the criterion is too rigid; and it is highly probable that transfer will be rejected as an explanation when in fact it is responsible for the learner's output, either alone or in combination with the alternative process(es)'(Kohn 1986: 32). Therefore, we should take more consideration on the possible language transfer in language acquisition research.

Just as Ellis describes, 'Transfer is sometimes apparent and sometimes not' (Ellis 1994: 300). The 'now you see it, now you don't' (Kellerman 1983: 112–134) is the nature of language transfer. To conduct research on language transfer for better understanding of the phenomenon, we should accept and respect the ambiguous nature of language transfer and the fact that transfer works with other processes in the interlanguage. As Kohn suggests, 'instead of trying (probably in vain) to reduce a learner's interlanguage behavior to isolated processes, we should accept that interlanguage processes have a tendency to join forces in their operation'(Kohn 1986: 32).

### 2.2.2 Fundamental process of language learning

Language transfer is a fundamental process of language learning. The psychologist Ausubel (1963) points out that transfer takes place in all kinds of meaningful learning, and there is no learning that does not involve a process of transfer. He states that 'transfer occurs when an existing cognitive structure […] influences the learning of new cognitive functioning or the learning of new meaningful material. All meaningful learning involves transfer because it is not possible to conceive of any instance of such learning that is not affected in some way by the existing cognitive structure.' (Ausubel 1963: 26; Ausubel, Novak & Hanesian 1968: 128).

Dechert and Raupach (1989) state that any information is processed based on other information, and transfer between different areas of information is a crucial principle of human cognition. They claim:

> Any information that is processed is done so in terms of other information, such as verbal information in terms of visual information; new information in terms of given information; procedural information in terms of declarative information; semantic information in terms of episodic information; and so on. Unknown areas of language can be processed – and as such acquired – only on the basis of known areas of language or nonverbal knowledge sources. Transfer between known and unknown, old and new, verbal and nonverbal is the fundamental principle of human cognition. (Dechert & Raupach 1989: xii)

Sajavaara (1989) also states that the transfer of previous knowledge to the area of new knowledge is the foundation of all teaching. As he puts,

> In psychology, the term 'transfer' is used to refer to the phenomenon of previous knowledge being extended to the area of new knowledge. It is the basic concept that is the foundation of all teaching: Learners are expected to be able to transfer

what is taught to new situations. (Sajavaara 1986: 35–52)

From the perspective of education psychology and cognitive science, researchers conclude that language transfer is an essential and fundamental part of language learning. It lays a foundation of language teaching to a certain extent. 'It is an integral part of how people learn languages' (Wode 1986: 174).

### 2.2.3 Variation in several dimensions

Wode states that there is variation along several dimensions: individual variation among the transfer-based learner utterances; situational or task-specific variation as some situations tend to trigger transfer-based utterances more than others; and developmental variation (Wode 1986: 174).

## 2.3 Classification

There are different criteria to classify language transfer. Language transfer can be classified into strategic transfer, automatic transfer, and subsidiary transfer based on two cognitive dimensions named attention and automation. It can also be divided into blind transfer and short-sighted transfer according to the sources of transfer, and it can be categorized into positive transfer and negative transfer based on the effect on the learning results in the perspective of psychology.

According to Faerch and Kasper (1986), cognitive dimensions of language transfer include attention and automatization. Considering the two areas of declarative knowledge, language transfer can be classified into strategic transfer, automatic transfer, and subsidiary transfer. Strategic transfer is 'transfer of declarative knowledge from a secondary area functions as a communication strategy', and 'L1 can be used as a means of solving problems in the planning and execution of speech' (Faerch & Kasper 1986: 57). In this situation, the learner focuses on a problem and its solution, which is based on secondary knowledge, typically L1 knowledge. Automatic transfer refers to 'the activation of highly automatized sub-routines from a secondary area of

declarative knowledge' (Faerch & Kasper 1986: 59). In this case, the learner's attention is on something else. Subsidiary transfer relates to 'sub-plans in IL production which are in subsidiary attention at the moment of their production' (Faerch & Kasper 1986: 60).

Kean suggests that there are two potential sources of transfer (Kean 1986: 80–90). One is called 'blind transfer', where the learner fails to note a certain property of the target language which is different from the native language, and uses native knowledge when the linguistic demands require it. It is inevitable when the linguistic demands exceed the L2 resources. The other is what he calls 'short-sighted transfer'. In this situation, the learner notices a certain property of the target language, but is unable to fully distinguish it from the native language when using it.

From the psychological perspective, transfer refers to the phenomenon that previous knowledge is extended to new knowledge (Sajavaara 1986: 69–70). Positive transfer means that previous knowledge has a positive influence on the new knowledge, and negative transfer means that previous knowledge has a negative influence on the new. In terms of direction, transfer can be seen as proactive or retroactive, i.e. the old knowledge influencing the new, or the new influencing the old (Sajavaara 1986: 69–70).

Regarding classification of language transfer, Gass and Selinker (1992) argues that there is no need to attribute different kinds of transfer to the learner: 'We now believe that there is no need to attribute separate processes (for example, positive, negative, or neutral) to the learner. Our view is that the learner is transferring prior linguistic knowledge resulting in IL forms which, when compared by the researcher to the target language norms, can be termed positive, negative or neutral.' (Gass & Selinker 1992: 6). Indeed, the classification does not make much difference for learners since transfer is essential and unavoidable. Classifications about language transfer should be oriented toward theoretical and applied linguistic research. The classification, namely positive, negative or neutral transfer in this study, is based on the target language norms.

## 2.4 The importance of language transfer

Language transfer is an essential component in language learning and in the functioning of natural language. The research on language transfer will not only benefit language teaching but also provide insights on language contact, language change, and language universals. Language transfer deserves more attention despite some skeptical points of view.

Language transfer, as has been discussed, is an essential component in language learning. It deserves language teachers' and linguists' attention, as understanding the effects of transfer will make language teaching more effective. Odlin (Odlin 1989: 4) points out that language teachers and linguists should pay attention to the problem of transfer, as teaching will be more effective when considering the differences between languages and cultures, thus being able to figure out the errors made by learners with specific language backgrounds, and when noticing similarities of learning errors among learners with different language backgrounds, thus knowing the general difficulties for all learners. Besides, Wode also states that language teachers and linguists should pay attention to it and keep a tolerant attitude toward it.

> Transfer is so much an essential component of the general functioning of natural languages that problems of transfer deserve much more attention as well as a much more sympathetic attitude on the part of language teachers, language students, language purists, and professional linguists. We have to learn to tolerate transfer because without it natural languages would not function as efficiently as they do, let alone the languages of not fully competent L2 speakers. (Wode 1986: 182)

Wode explains the reason why linguistic theories should include transfer. It is crucial component in the functioning of natural languages, and a part of learning mechanism, and the ability to transfer is part of people's language competence. As he puts it:

> Transfer and the cognitive systems underlying it constitute a very important component within the total functioning of natural languages. […] transfer contributes a great deal to those mechanism which enable languages to be flexible enough to adapt quickly to changes in the world around us. It seems that this kind of flexibility is one of the basic requirements that natural languages have to meet, and it therefore constitutes one of the fundamental characteristics of living natural languages. […] consequently the ability to transfer must be regarded as part of people's competence when they know a language, just like their ability to paraphrase or to make grammaticality judgements. (Wode 1986: 181)

On the other hand, knowledge about language transfer can contribute to the understanding of language contact, change, and universals. Odlin makes points that knowledge about language transfer can lead to insights about the relation between language contact and language change, and better understanding of the nature of language acquisition in any context and thus providing empirical check on merits of language universal theories (Odlin 1989: 4).

Odlin (1989) also discusses both theoretical and empirical shortcomings of the skeptical positions against the importance of language transfer which were articulated at earlier time. Regarding the theoretical shortcomings, many skeptical positions focus on errors. However, errors are not the whole part of acquiring a second language: 'while errors no doubt provide important evidence for the strength or weakness of particular language influences, they are far from being the only evidence' (Odlin 1989: 23). Besides, it is questionable to set up universal developmental sequences as the opposite of language transfer. It is problematic to assume that transfer cannot play a substantial role in acquisition if universal developmental sequences also play a major role. He argues that 'cross-linguistic influences work in tandem with the psychological factors governing developmental sequences'. Moreover, it is not necessary to inextricably connect language transfer with theories of habit formation. Another problem is overemphasis on morphology and syntax. In

fact, transfer happens in all linguistic subsystems. And there are some shortcomings in the empirical studies, for example, there is no careful exam on the most relevant language contact evidence, some equate bilingual situations with borrowing transfer, and some cases discussed have various language proficiency levels. Therefore, the importance of language transfer cannot be denied by these arguments with insufficient and biased evidences.

'It is shown that transfer must be regarded as an important component of the cognitive system underlying the language processing abilities of human beings' (Wode 1986: 174).

## 2.5 History of theoretical development

As early as 1945, Fries stated the necessity for contrastive analysis. Harris (1954) proposed 'transfer grammar'(Harris 1954), pointing out the pedagogical usefulness of structural comparison. In the most influential early work on contrastive analysis and language transfer, Lado (1957) proposed a contrastive model for training foreign language teachers, and also stated that the comparison between the native language and the target language 'must be considered a list of hypothetical problems until final validation is achieved by checking it against the actual speech of students' (Lado 1957: 72). It led to experimental investigations of actual learner speech behavior.

Weinreich (1953) stressed that not all sources of interference are linguistic, there are other factors including age of learning, motivation, loyalty to a language, language aptitude and attitude (Weinreich 1953). Di Pietro (1964: 224) stated that contrastive analysis is one important step towards understanding language transfer, 'as a preliminary step to understanding the range of transfer from one linguistic structure to another.'

Selinker (1966, 1969) conducted one of the first experimental studies on language transfer, with three major research questions: What can be or actually is transferred (transferable)? How does language transfer occur? What types of transfer occur? Later, in 1979, Gass (1979) added two more important questions: What evidence is necessary in order to attribute a form(s) to influence of the native language? What is the relationship of transfer to

language universals? She stressed that researchers should relate language transfer to language universals.

Dulay and Burt (1974) set up an alternative approach to contrastive analysis: L2=L1 hypothesis. They showed that there are aspects of second language acquisition which do not seem to be influenced by learners' native language, and second language acquisition is developmental in nature in the perspective of the cognitively based theory. They made an analogy between the processes of first language acquisition and those of second language acquisition, claiming that language transfer is not a significant factor in second language learning. This led to the loss of prestige for the concept of language transfer from the late sixties.

Gass (1992), however, pointed out that the contrastive analysis hypothesis and Dulay and Burt's cognitively based theory are not mutually exclusive. As she states:

> it is indeed possible and not incompatible to view second language acquisition as both (1) a process of hypothesis testing in which learners create bodies of knowledge from the second language data they have available to them, while at the same time viewing it as (2) a process of utilizing first language knowledge as well as knowledge of other languages known to learners in the creation of a learner language. Thus, it is clearly possible to accept some version of assumptions underlying the CA hypothesis while at the same time accepting cognitive principles underlying Dulay and Burt's work. (Gass & Selinker 1992: 6)

Eckman (1977: 315) argued that it is possible to predict the areas of difficulty and the relative degree of difficulty if typological markedness is incorporated into the Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis. Kellerman (1979, 1983) proposed the transferability of linguistic elements and argues that there are definite constraints on transfer which go beyond simply the similarities and differences of languages. He suggested two interacting factors involved in language transfer: the learner's perception of the nature of the L2 and the

degree of markedness of an L1 structure. Transferability depends on the perceived distance between L1 and L2 and the structural organization of the learner's L1. The perceived distance changes as learners acquire more of the target language. He proposed the 'reasonable entity principle', claiming that language transfer is promoted when the product results in a more systematic, explicit and logical interlanguage.

Andersen (1983) suggested that there is a filter controlling what of L2 input is retained by the learner, and supports that natural acquisition processes work with language transfer processes. He proposed and tested a 'Transfer to somewhere' principle, 'a grammatical form or structure will occur consistently and to a significant extent in interlanguage as a result of transfer if and only if there already exists within the L2 input the potential for (mis)generalization from the input to produce the same form or structure' (Andersen 1983: 178). He attempted to integrate different constraints on language transfer, including congruence, boundness, invariance, complexity and frequency etc.

While Andersen's (1983) Transfer to somewhere principle concentrates on conditions leading to interlanguage transfer, Kellerman (1995) put forward a complementary theory 'Transfer to nowhere principle', 'there can be transfer which is not licensed by similarity to the L2, and where the way the L2 works may very largely go unheeded' (Kellerman 1995: 137). He discussed and explained how cross-linguistic influence can take place when there seems to be no basis for interlingual identifications, stating 'learners may not be able to capitalize on cross-linguistic correspondences because some types of "thinking for speaking" may be beyond individual awareness' (Kellerman 1995: 143).

Gass (1979, 1992) held that language transfer should be discussed with language universals, as she stated, 'Language transfer must be put into a broader perspective than what had been previously recognized by relating it to the issue of language universals' (Gass & Selinker 1992: 7).

It can be seen that the theories develop from 1940s' theoretical contrastive analysis to later experimental studies such as Selinker, Gass etc. Although Dulay and Burt's alternative L2=L1 hypothesis lessens the importance of language transfer in second language acquisition from late 1960s, there are more relevant theories coming afterwards. Eckman (1977)

relates learning difficulties to typological markedness, pointing out the necessity of discussing markedness in second language acquisition. Andersen (1983) discusses transferability and his transfer to somewhere principle raises the attention on different constrains on transfer. Complementarily, Kellerman's (1995) Transfer to nowhere principle argues about the cases where there is no basis for interlingual identifications. Gass (1979, 1992) emphasizes the relationship between language transfer and language universals. Although there is still no overall accepted theory about language transfer, the relevant theories grow more and more comprehensive.

## 2.6 Language transfer, typology, language contact and language universals

Odlin (Odlin 1989) summarizes the contribution of typological analysis to the study of transfer: typological analyses 'provide a basis for estimating language distance'; they 'encourage the study of transfer in terms of systemic influences'; they 'allow for a clearer understanding of relations between transfer and developmental sequences' (Odlin 1989: 45). For example, the typologically common patterns in first language exist as errors and correct forms, and these patterns in second language may sometimes reflect native language influences, sometimes developmental factors, and sometimes both. Typologically common features also indicate universal preferences in linguistic structures.

When discussing language transfer, language contact, and the study of pidgin and creole languages, Odlin summarizes that not all contact will lead to transfer, and transfer plays a relatively minor role in some situations such as some pidgins and creoles in New Guinea, but a major role in other cases, for example, the Hawaiian Pidgin English spoken by many Japanese, which shows clear influences of Japanese word order and other structures. He thinks that 'perhaps the contact between speakers of many different languages keeps any native language influence from greatly affecting the newer creoles of the region such as Tok Pisin' and also suggests that 'when only a small number of languages are spoken in a contact situation, a pidgin will show more transfer

effects' (cf. Singler 1988) (Odlin 1989: 13).

Gass (1979) states that 'an adequate description of language transfer cannot be given without a consideration of target language facts and language universals'(Gass 1979: 327). She used two tasks, a grammaticality judgment task and a sentence combining task, to obtain information of learners' receptive and productive knowledge of English relative clauses (RC). She considered the native language facts and language universals and found that language universals played a leading role in the study as 'they were dominant both in assigning relative orders of difficulty and in determining where language transfer occurs' (Gass 1979: 341). She summarized that surface language phenomena, language distance, and closeness of the interlanguage form to the underlying logical structure are the three characteristics that are universally valid in predicting language transfer. All three factors are not necessarily found in each case of language transfer, but the presence of all three will increase the likelihood of language transfer. She concluded that 'the likelihood of the transferability of linguistic phenomena must take into account both target language facts and rules of universal grammar' (Gass 1979: 343).

The uses of words in second language often show some influences which actually have a universal basis. Semantic innovation such as overextension and approximation is found in the lexical acquisition. The use of the word *travel* for *go / be away* in Nigerian English result from a natural process of semantic extension rather than transfer from the native language (Bamgbose 1982). The uses of *dead food* for *rotting food* (Bartelt 1982) and *air/gas ball* for *balloon* (Váradi 1983) are approximations resulting from metaphoric coinages. Besides, overextensions and approximations are found in first language acquisition as well, so they are universal in all language acquisition contexts (Odlin 1989: 81). 'Such university coexists with language-specific nuances in the lexicon'(Odlin 1989: 81). Osgood, May and Miron's study (1975) supports that (Osgood, May & Miron 1975).

In word order, language universals seem to play an important role in the arrangement of basic clause constituents. In relative clauses, typological factors such as the primary branching direction that a language shows and relativizable positions influence greatly on the development of complex syntax,

in what subordinate clauses learners first use, and how successfully they use them. In negation, one-word negation is considered as the first stage of development universally. Use of preverbal negation at an early stage of syntactic development in some languages is due to typological influence (Odlin 1989: 110–111). 'In the acquisition of word order, relative clauses, and negation, transfer figures as an important factor, but it often occurs in conjunction with other acquisition processes, some of which show hints of typological and universal influences at work' (Odlin 1989: 110).

Odlin makes points that knowledge about language transfer can lead to insights about the relation between language contact and language change, and better understanding of the nature of language acquisition in any context and thus providing empirical check on merits of language universal theories (Odlin 1989: 4).

## 2.7 Empirical research on language transfer on different linguistic levels

This section will review the research on language transfer on different linguistic levels and some recent landmark findings.

### 2.7.1 Language transfer in semantics, lexicon, morphology and syntax

The relevant empirical research focuses on transfer on different linguistic levels, phonetics and phonology, semantics, syntax, discourse etc. The following section will briefly summarize language transfer on semantics, lexicon, morphology and syntax.

**Semantics, lexicon and morphology**

The similarities and dissimilarities in word forms and meanings between native language and target language play a significant role in acquiring a foreign language, influencing the learning speed and outcome. On the one hand, the similarity between two languages might help the learner acquire

vocabularies faster. On the other hand, the similarities and differences also cause false friends. Lexical transfer between different languages happens in words with similar forms, cognates with a partial semantic identity, words with semantic equivalence without morphological similarity, semantically similar cognates with different grammatical restrictions. 'Cognates can provide not only semantic but also morphological and syntactic information, and while some of the information may be misleading, some can facilitate acquisition.' (Odlin 1989: 83).

Lexical transfer related to cognate forms is generally both morphological and semantic transfer (Odlin 1989: 82). The transfer of bound morphemes such as prefixes, suffixes, and any other forms which are meaningful but incapable of standing alone is discussed a lot. Some scholars (Whitney 1881; Krashen 1977; Eubank et al. 1997: 176) found the transfer of bound grammatical morphemes were rare or nonexistent, while the others (Weinreich 1953; Meo-Zilio 1964; Dawkins & Halliday 1916; Li 1984) found such transfer seemed to have occurred. Odlin summarizes that the similarity of bound morphemes in two languages may lead to transfer to facilitate comprehension in the same way the similarity of free morphemes does (Odlin 1989: 83). More recent research shows that bound, overt inflectional morphology does transfer, and the transfer is not rare when L1 and L2 are closely related, for example Czech and Russian (Selinker & Lakshmanan 1992), Spanish and Italian (De Angelis & Selinker 2001), Spanish, French and Italian (De Angelis 2005), Estonian and Finnish (Kaivapalu & Martin 2007).

Odlin summarizes that lexical similarities in two languages can greatly influence comprehension and production in a second language, but it still remains uncertain how much influence semantic structures in one language can have in another language (Odlin 1989: 83). Jarvis and Odlin points out that transfer involving bound inflectional morphology 'extends beyond the direct usage of overt L1 inflections on L2 words' (Jarvis & Odlin 2000; Jarvis 2015) and it often involves the use of L2 forms to express L1 meanings and functions (Meriläinen 2010; Jarvis 2015).

**Syntax**

Research on transfer in word order includes word-order rigidity (e.g. Granfors

& Palmberg 1976; Trévise 1986; Håkansson, Pienemann & Sayehli 2002), basic word-order patterns (e.g. Bickerton & Givón 1976; Luján, Minaya & Sankoff 1984; Pienemann 1998), word order within the clause (e.g.Selinker 1969; Andersen 1979; Véronique 1984), relative clauses including branching direction in relative and adverbial clauses (Flynn & Espinal 1985; Singler 1988), resumptive pronouns in relative clause (e.g. Gass 1979; Hyltenstam 1984), preverbal and postverbal negation (e.g. Ravem 1968; Hyltenstam 1977; Wode 1986).

Many errors reflect the flexible patterns in the native language of some learners; native speakers of a language with rigid word order make fewer errors of word order than do the speakers with flexible word order in their native language; when basic word orders of target language and native language differ, negative transfer account better for many errors (Odlin 1989: 91).

### 2.7.2 Recent landmark findings

Jarvis (2008, 2015) summarizes the eight landmark findings on transfer (Jarvis & Pavlenko 2008; Jarvis 2015), which were first obtained before 1990 (cf. Odlin 1989). The table below (Jarvis 2015) lists the eight empirical findings and theoretical explanations. He points out that progresses in research on transfer is an ongoing and perpetual cycle: it starts with observations and empirical discoveries, followed by formulating theoretical explanations, which then generate new hypotheses, and the testing of those hypotheses leads to new empirical discoveries and so forth.

Table 2.1: Eight landmark findings on transfer (Jarvis 2015)

| *Finding* | *Explanation* | *Relevant literature* |
|---|---|---|
| (1) Positive effects | CLI does not always result in errors. Most cross-linguistic effects may in fact be positive and advantageous for a language learner. | Kecskes and Papp (2000); Ringbom (1987) |
| (2) Rate and route | CLI can affect both how quickly a learner acquires the language and the stages and sequences he/she will go through. | Master (1997); Ringbom (2007) |
| (3) Similarities | Most cases of transfer appear to derive not from cross-linguistic differences per se, but rather from the learner's assumptions about which features of the native language and the target language are similar. | Andersen (1983); Kellerman (1995); Ringbom and Jarvis (2009) |
| (4) Non-linear changes | Transfer effects do not steadily decrease over time. In some areas, they may fluctuate and even increase with advancing L2 proficiency. | Jarvis (2000); Zobl (1984) |
| (5) Directions | CLI does not work solely from the L1 to an L2. It can also operate from an L2 to an L3, an L3 to an L2 and even an L2 to the L1. | Cenoz *et al.* (2001); Cook (2003) |
| (6) Transferability | Not all features of a language are equally likely to show cross-linguistic effects. Learners' intuitions about which features are universal versus language-specific have an important impact on the cross-linguistic associations they make. | Eckman (1977); Kellerman (1978, 1983) |
| (7) Meaning | CLI involves not only forms and structures, but also the meanings and functions that underlie those forms and structures. | Graham and Belnap (1986); Odlin (2008); Pavlenko (2011); Ringbom (1987) |
| (8) Individual differences | No two learners will be identical in terms of motivation, language aptitude, language experience (both L1 and L2), reliance on implicit versus explicit knowledge or ultimately the types of assumptions they make about how the target language works. Such differences can and do give rise to differing patterns of transfer. | Hakuta (1976); Jarvis and Pavlenko (2008); Odlin (1989) |

Besides these eight prominent findings about transfer, namely, positive effects, rate and route, similarities, non-linear changes, directions, transferability, meaning, individual differences, there are three more hidden effects discussed by Jarvis (2015). The table lists the three hidden effects: transfer and memory, the end points of the action, complex language-use patterns with specific language backgrounds.

Table 2.2: Three hidden effects (Jarvis 2015)

| *Finding* | *Explanation* | *Relevant literature* |
|---|---|---|
| Transfer and memory | If learners' L1 is very similar to English, they appear to be able to remember the content in English better than those whose L1 is unrelated to English. | Odlin (2000); Gass (1997); Ringbom (2007) |
| The end points of the action | German speakers tend to mention the end point, whereas English speakers tend not to, when they describe brief film clips of motion events where the end point of the action is not shown and not easily inferable. This relates to whether the learners' L1 contains a grammaticalized progressive aspect or not. | von Stutterheim (2003); von Stutterheim & Nüse (2003) |
| Complex language-use patterns with specific language backgrounds | Recent research tries to identify complex language-use patterns which are characteristic of specific language backgrounds by using computer-based classification tools | Mayfield Tomokiyo and Jones (2001); Jarvis and Crossley (2012) |

## 2.8 Empirical research on language transfer in tense and aspect

There are many empirical studies focusing on language transfer in the grammatical domain of tense and aspect. The following remarks will present a brief review of the relevant research about language transfer in Chinese learner English, German learner English, comparisons of learner Englishes and – to the extent that the studies are relevant to the present project – language transfer in other learner Englishes and in the acquisition of other languages.

### 2.8.1 Tense and aspect in Chinese learner English and language transfer

Various studies on the impact of L1 Chinese on the acquisition of L2 English tense and aspect have been conducted. Most studies concentrate on the tense-aspect forms which are relatively difficult for Chinese students to learn, such as the simple past, the present perfect and the simple present (third person singular).

Some studies examine the learners' written and spoken production/corpus to understand the L1 influence. Yang and Huang (2004) investigate the impact of the absence of grammatical tense in L1 Chinese on the acquisition of the tense-aspect system in L2 English. They study written narratives produced by five groups of students from different school/university years and find that 'the Chinese way of expressing temporality may reinforce the learners' initial tendencies of relying on pragmatic and lexical devices to indicate temporal locations' (Yang & Huang 2004: 49). They also point out that 'the early start of tense use and the L1 reinforcement of the learners' initial tendencies result in an extended period during which the learners' expression of temporality exhibits a very slow shift from depending more on pragmatic and lexical devices to depending more on grammatical devices' (Yang & Huang 2004: 49). Their study clearly shows the L1 influence on the acquisition sequence of using different devices to express time/tenses in English, namely, from relying on pragmatic and lexical devices to more on grammatical devices.

Hong (2008) shows the L1 Chinese Cantonese influence on Hong Kong secondary school learners of English acquiring English simple past through examining and analyzing the results of tasks of blank filling, translation and picture narrative. Hsieh (2009) investigates how L1 Chinese learners of English acquire the English morphemes *–s*(the third person singular), *-ed* (the regular past tense), and the copula *be* through studying the learners' oral production (interview and storytelling). He finds out that learners use non-finite forms instead of verbal inflections due to problems with the realization of surface morphology. The forms of the copula *be* are acquired before the inflectional morphology on thematic verbs.

Liu (2012) conducts an error analysis of tenses used by Chinese EFL

learners based on the Chinese Learner English Corpus. She concludes that learners misuse present tense and past tense most frequently, and the causes are mother tongue influence, target language influence and cognitive factors. Although it is one of very few corpus-based studies, it classifies the errors in a coarse-grained way, only pointing out misuse of different kinds of tenses, but not demonstrating the details of misuse.

These studies based on the learners' production of English do provide some evidence about L1 transfer and influence in the acquisition of some specific forms of English tense and aspect. They explain the causes briefly and generally, whereas there are many more insights about the use of tenses and the causes of errors that can be gained through detailed error analysis, statistical analysis in a corpus-based study.

Besides the studies based on L2 English production, there is some research using elicitation and psycholinguistic experiments to discover the influence of L1 and the difference between L1 and L2 on the processing of English tense and aspect. Chen (2009) investigates whether Chinese learners of English are insensitive to grammatical deviations involving tense during reading. The written tests indicate that Chinese students have the knowledge of the past tense forms and use them in the appropriate contexts, while the reading comprehension tests which measure reading time in sequential segments of a sentence show that they are insensitive to grammatical deviations involving tense.

Kwan and Wong (2016) study the acquisition of the present perfect and the simple past by Malaysian Chinese learners of English as second language (ESL) with intermediate to advanced English proficiency levels. They conduct a written Paradigm Task and an oral production task to investigate whether the persistent difficulty in the use of the present perfect and the simple past is directly attributable to L1 influence. The study shows that the influence from L1 results in difficulty in getting the right perceptions of English temporal reference. They conclude that the persistent difficulty is due to a representational deficit arising from parametric differences between L1 and L2 in the use of the present perfect among Chinese ESL learners, even with an advanced English proficiency.

Yao and Chen (2017) explore the influence of cross-linguistic differences

on late Chinese-English learners' on-line processing of tense and aspect in English. They use the self-paced reading task and the eye-tracking technique to study how cross-linguistic differences between English and Chinese affect late Chinese English learners' on-line processing of tense and aspect in English. The three most commonly used tense and aspect expressions are the target forms: the past tense, the progressive and the present third person singular. The progressive is nearly congruent between Chinese and English, the present third person singular is incongruent, and the past tense is between congruent and incongruent. They find that both high and low proficiency participants show their sensitivity to the violation of the progressive, which is nearly congruent between English and Chinese. Only high-proficiency participants are sensitive to the violation of the past tense, which is similar but not congruent. Only the eye-tracking technique detects that high-proficiency participants are sensitive to the violation of the present third person singular, which is incongruent between these two languages. They conclude that cross-linguistic differences affect late second language learners' on-line processing of English tense and aspect.

These experiment studies show that the Chinese-speaking learners are insensitive to grammatical violation involving tense, parametric differences between L1 and L2 cause persistent difficulty in the use of the present perfect, and the influence of cross-linguistic differences leads to different levels of sensitivities to the progressive, the past tense and the present third person singular. The findings of psycholinguisitic experiments are inspiring, as they help explain the cross-linguistic influence in on-line processing of tense and aspect.

Apart from acquisition of tense and aspect, some researchers also discuss attrition of English tense. Deng (2016) investigates the influence of Chinese context on attrition of English tense though questionnaires and testing papers. The study shows that there is a negative correlation between the degree of language attrition and the amount of English input and contact in the Chinese context. The attrition of aspects emerges more noticeably than that of tenses when the learners reduce or stop learning English.

Some other research focuses on some factors that might not explain second language acquisition directly but might be the potential causes of some

difficulties in acquiring English tense and aspect, such as morphological awareness in the native language and sensitivity to time change. Ku and Anderson (2003) investigate the morphological awareness of Chinese and English students in their respective native languages, Chinese and English. The study shows that morphological awareness is strongly related to reading ability. Yang (2016) finds that native English speakers are more sensitive to time change than Chinese learners of English through experiments. The result also shows that EFL learners of advanced proficiency level are not significantly more sensitive to time change than those of lower level. On the one hand, these studies provide different perspectives for a better understanding of language acquisition. On the other hand, they might lead to circular thinking that languages determine thought and cognition, and/or thought influences languages. Another question is also raised, namely whether morphological awareness and sensitivity to time change correlate with proficiency level. As the relevant research is in low quantity and requires more convincing evidence for statistically significant generalizations, further research work certainly can be done in these areas in the future, though it is not the focus of the present study.

It can be seen from the above review that, although there are many types of studies on the L1 Chinese transfer to English in tense and aspect, many of them are unrelated exploratory in nature and do not add up to a complete and systematic coverage of the field. The findings of the corpus-based studies are far from being detailed and sufficient although those of the recent experiment-based research are revealing. More systematic corpus-based research is needed to draw all the pieces reasonably together to provide a more complete and comprehensive view.

### 2.8.2 Tense and aspect in German learner English and language transfer

Departing from the research on L1 Chinese influence in Chinese learner English, the following will give a concise review of empirical research on L1 German transfer in German learner English.

Swan and Smith (2001) document the interference issues in tense and aspect in German learner English (Swan & Smith 2001: 42–43). The interference problems include: 1) German has forms similar to the English simple past, the present perfect, and the past perfect, but no progressive forms. 2) The German present perfect is not used in the same way as the formally corresponding English construction. 3) In indirect speech, German tends to use a present subjunctive where English uses a past tense after past reporting verbs. 4) German uses a simple present for saying how long a present state of affairs has been going on, whereas English uses a present perfect. 5) German has no equivalent of the *going to* future, only simple present or an auxiliary with non-finite verb. 6) In spoken German conditional sentences, the auxiliary *würde* may be used in both clauses, which causes L1 German learners to use *would* in both clauses. With certain common verbs, German may use the past subjunctive instead of the conditional. German subjunctives often resemble the related English past tense forms, which causes the confusion. Their work briefly lists the most common instances of interference in German learner English with examples and could be taken as a general guide for English teachers.

There are more corpus-based studies about the tense and aspect in German learner English and language transfer. Komaier (2013) investigates the use of tense and aspect in the writing of twelfth-grade Austrian learners of English, analyzing the errors and discussing the phenomena of transfer and interference due to the morphological similarities between German and English in the domain of tense and aspect.

Götz (2015) examines the spoken German learner English from the German component of Louvain International Database of Spoken English Interlanguage (LINDSEI). She analyzes the errors in the spoken English and points out that the tense-related errors are the most frequent ones among all the errors. According to her study, all proficiency levels of learners (from lower to advanced) have difficulty with the English tense-aspect forms that do not have an equivalent form in German, such as using ‘present progressive for simple present’(or vice versa), ‘present perfect instead of simple past’ (or vice versa), and ‘simple present for future tense’ (Götz 2015: 16). She finds that these three types of errors are ‘most likely due to negative transfer from the

L1' (Götz 2015: 17). Another high frequency error that even advanced learners also produce is the use of the simple present for the simple past in reported speech, which is also due to L1 transfer. She explains that 'spoken German does not have an obligatory change in the tense of the verb in the reported clause' (Götz 2015: 17). The other errors that the intermediate and lower proficiency levels of learners make involve the use of the conditional, the wrong use of *would* in the conditional clause, which can also be explained by L1 interference (Götz 2015: 18). She also points out that the use of the present progressive instead of the simple present (or vice versa) happens most frequently in the lowest proficiency level of learners (Götz 2015: 18).

Later, Dose-Heidelmayer and Götz (2016) find that advanced German learners significantly underuse the progressive in spoken English through corpus study, which contrasts with the findings of studies on written English.

Furthermore, Fuchs, Götz, and Werner (2016) investigate the use of the present perfect in spoken and written German learner English. Their corpus-based study confirms the late emergence of the present perfect in German learner English and their underuse of the present perfect .These two phenomena do not reflect the positive L1 transfer and they conclude that 'the access to L1 structures is blocked or delayed in the case of PP' (Fuchs, Götz & Werner 2016: 325). Alternatively, the present perfect is extremely challenging for learners and 'positive L1 transfer supports learners only at a later point' (Fuchs, Götz & Werner 2016: 325). Advanced learners rely less on temporal adverbials in present perfect contexts. Present perfect is used more frequently in written language than in spoken language (Fuchs, Götz & Werner 2016: 297).

Clearly, most research on the use of tense and aspect and language transfer in German learner English is corpus-based and systematic, ranging from written English to spoken English and from lower to advanced proficiency level, involving most tense/aspect-related errors, underuse and overuse, and interference errors. The findings of the research could be regarded as the baseline for further corpus-based research.

Besides, some researchers also work on the conceptual transfer through conducting experiments. Von Stutterheim (2003) researches conceptual transfer by using film narration as an elicitation device. She finds that native

German speakers tend to frame events with end points in English while native English speakers tend not to use endpoints. And native English speakers do not state an endpoint in German, while native German speakers often give an end point in German. She believes that the framing difference is related to the different importance of progressive aspect in these two languages. Progressive aspect is much more prominent in English than in German, which has cognitive implications. The pattern of framing in native language is transferable. As Odlin comments: 'The prominence of progressive aspect in English induces speakers to frame events more analytically, whereas German speakers represent such events more holistically.' (Odlin 2005: 14) The research on conceptual transfer will help understand language transfer in the perspective of cognitive science, though not the topic of this research.

In summary, the research about L1 German transfer in the use of tense and aspect in German learner English has been fruitful and laid a good foundation for further research.

### 2.8.3 Comparisons of learner Englishes and language transfer

While researching on language transfer in Chinese learner English and German learner English can point out some detailed acquisition features for specific learner groups respectively, comparing different learner Englishes, especially combining typologically different ones, will allow the researcher to distinguish between L1-specific and universal acquisition features on the basis of more cogent evidence.

As Chinese is a language without tense, the research on learner Englishes with tense and tenseless L1s will help to understand the basic and fundamental differences. Hinkel (1992) conducts a survey with 130 ESL students asking them to describe the meanings of English tenses in terms of time concepts used in ESL grammar texts. She finds that Chinese, Korean, and Japanese learners have difficulty identifying temporal meanings with English tense markers and appear to interpret time references in L2 differently from English native speakers and speakers of Spanish and Arabic, whose L1s have developed morphological tense systems. She indicates that speakers of

tenseless languages might view time spans and their divisions and measurements in a L2 according to their L1's conceptual paradigms. She proposes that 'because English, unlike some other languages, requires morphological reference to time deixis, NNSs' intuitions associated with deictic tense may not be based on linear temporality and morphological tense as fully as those of NSs are' (Hinkel 1992: 567). Later, Hinkel (2004) analyzed tense, aspect, and the passive voice in the English academic essays written by English native speaker students and university students with different L1s, including Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Indonesian, Vietnamese, and Arabic. The study finds out that the L2 speakers employ past-time narratives with the past tense far more frequently than English native speaker students. They avoid using complex verb phrase constructions, such as the passive voice, the perfect aspect, and the predictive/hypothetical *would*. It also shows that the students may not fully understand the functions of the future tense in academic writing. Specifically, Chinese and Indonesian students use the future tense much more frequently than native speakers do, while Japanese and Korean students use it significantly less frequently than native speakers do.

Apart from the problem caused by the tense and tenseless distinction in L1s, some researchers also focus on the different uses of the past tense, copula, morphology in learner Englishes. Eng (2012) conducts a grammaticality judgment test to investigate the acquisition of English non-past tense and agreement morphology by L1 Malay and L1 Chinese, and finds that the L1 Malay speakers have difficulty with ungrammatical items with omission of non-past third person singular morpheme with thematic verbs, and ungrammatical items with non-past third person singular morpheme with a plural subject. Both L1 Malay and L1 Chinese of the lower intermediate groups have difficulty with the ungrammatical omission of the copula and ungrammatical omission of the auxiliary. As both Malay and Chinese have a null copula for copula-like constructions, and neither of them has overt tense or agreement morphology, the findings of the study support the Failed Functional Features Hypothesis (Hawkins & Chan 1997) that post-childhood second language learners experience syntactic deficits in the L2 if parameterized features in the functional categories of the L2 are not specified in the L1, pointing out the syntactic deficit resulted from L1 influence affects

the grammaticality judgment. Furthermore, Tiittanen (2013) studies the types of errors that Tamil and Mandarin L1 ESL learners made in obligatory contexts for the use of the simple past tense. 21 native speakers of Tamil and 21 native speakers of Mandarin participated in the study, which included the grammar test of the Oxford Placement Test (multiple choice), a film retell task, interview questions and a fill-in-the-gap task. The study shows that although the types of errors that both L1 groups made are similar, the Mandarin speakers made more errors using the base form of the verb instead of the simple past tense, while the Tamil speakers made more errors using all 'verb-*ing*' forms (i.e. past progressive, verb-*ing* paricple, present progressive) and all '*be*+verb' supra-categories (*am/is/are*+verb base form, w*as/were*+verb base form, *am/is/are*+past tense, *was/were*+past tense, *am/is/are*+past participle) instead of the simple past tense. As Mandarin lacks grammatical tense but Tamil and English have grammatical tense with finite verbs marking tense, the study's findings suggest that there is L1 influence at work in some of the errors. The study concludes that the errors that both groups make are influenced by developmental factors as well as L1 influence.

It is clear that most comparative research involving Chinese-speaking learners tends to be survey, experiment or task-based research. The very limited numbers of comparable learner English corpora including many typologically different language backgrounds might be the partial reason. In addition, not many researchers have been engaged in this research area since it requires more co-operation among institutions from different countries and continents to create comparable learner English corpora and if not less to research.

However, there is abundant research, corpus-based or experiment-based, on comparisons of learner Englishes with European language backgrounds partially because comparable learner English corpora with European language backgrounds have been created and are accessible and partially because there is a long history of research on language comparison and language contact in Europe. Axelsson and Hahn (2001) study the use of the progressive in Swedish and German learner English from the Uppsala Student English corpus (USE) and the German subcorpus of ICLE. They find that both learner groups use the progressive in non-native ways and prove that its overuse is in small

numbers. Rogatcheva (2012) studies the misuse of tense-aspect forms in German and Bulgarian learner English based on ICLE, and finds that both learner groups have problems with the sequence of tenses, while their accuracy rates differ. With a self-paced reading experiment, Roberts and Liszka (2013) investigate whether advanced French and German learners of English as a second language are sensitive to tense/aspect mismatches between a fronted temporal adverbial and the following inflected verb in their on-line comprehension. The results show that only the French learners of English are sensitive to the mismatch conditions in both the past simple and the present perfect, while the German learners don't show a processing cost for either mismatch types. They argue that influence from the first language could explain the difference, and only those whose native language has grammaticalized aspect (French) are sensitive to the tense/aspect violations on-line, and they have implicit knowledge of English tense/aspect distinctions.

Nevertheless, the comparative research on learner Englishes, including both Chinese learner English and German learner English, the two learner Englishes with typologically greatly different language backgrounds, is rare. As these two are the focus of the present study, the following will review two representative works.

Liszka (2004) carries out a controlled experiment to explore the effects of L1 influence on second language pragmatic processes from a syntactic deficit perspective. The twelve Chinese, Japanese and German participants and five native English speakers were asked to complete a task testing production of the present perfect. The results show that there is no significant difference across the L2 groups when the present perfect forms are produced. However there are non-target-like forms used in present perfect environments. Among the forms used instead of present perfect forms, the Chinese group alternates between preterit (53.7%) and present forms (46.3%), the Japanese group shows a bias towards preterit use (54.9%), while the German group strikingly favors the preterit (80.9%) over the present (14.5%). This suggests that the German group has difficulty in establishing current reference time due to an overall absence of the prefect feature within the group, but no problem in establishing event time in the past, as all German dialects encode past and non-past. Japanese learners might overuse either the present or the preterit

forms in present perfect environments, as Japanese does not have a one-to-one mapping for perfect/resultative constructions. The lack of tense representation in Chinese affects Chinese learners' underlying representation and use of the English present perfect. The overuse of the present causes the under-generalization in the use of the present perfect. Therefore, she concludes that successful utterance interpretation and use would be more uncertain for the learners whose native language lacks logical forms for a certain property than for native speakers or L2 speakers who have the relevant feature specified in the grammars of their native languages. Due to the significant differences in tense-aspect system among Chinese, Japanese, and German, the comparisons of experiment results reveal clearly the acquisition features of the English present perfect in these three learner groups. Without the comparisons, the effect of native language influence in second language acquisition would not become obvious.

With the development of learner English corpora and research methods, some researchers conduct research based on comparable corpora, which can provide data and evidences systematically. Götz, Werner and Fuchs (Götz et al. 2019) investigate temporal adverbials in the acquisition of the alternation between the present perfect and the simple past in German learner English and Cantonese learner English based on four corpora (the International Corpus of Cross-Linguistic Interlanguage, LINDSEI, ICLE, and the Louvain Corpus of Native English Conversation). They try to differentiate between L1-specific and universal acquisition features. They find a higher incidence of past-time marking via time adverbials in the Chinese learner group. This is potentially caused by an avoidance strategy due to the lack of a morphologically similar structure in Cantonese (Götz et al. 2019: 61). There is a general trend showing an overall progression towards native usage patterns while German-speaking learners show more similar patterns to and an earlier progression towards the native usage patterns than the Cantonese-speaking learners do. Cantonese-speaking learners tend to combine definite temporal adverbials wrongly with the present tense, even among the advanced learners, which is caused by L1 negative transfer. In the spoken mode, German learners show a strong tendency to combine definite time adverbial with the present perfect, even among the advanced learners. This can be explained by negative transfer

from L1 German (Götz et al. 2019: 61–62). The corpus-based comparative study by Götz et al. demonstrates the L1-specific and universal features and general trends in Chinese learner English and German learner English through analyzing large comparable data sets, which is an advantage compared with experiment-based research.

### 2.8.4 Language transfer in other learner Englishes and in acquisition of other languages

Besides the research on language transfer in Chinese learner English, German learner English and comparisons of different learner Englishes, some researchers concentrate on the influence of other L1s on the acquisition of English as a second language. Lim (2003; 2007) demonstrates the impact of cross-linguistic differences and intralingual factors on the use of the simple present and the present perfect by Malay learners of English. Ayoun and Salaberry's study (2008) shows that there is influence of French as L1 on the use of the English present perfect, but only part of the learners show the effect. Collins' investigation (2002) shows that French-speaking learners of English achieve significant success in using simple past with telics, but struggle most with statives, prefer progressive for activities, and present for statives. L1 French influence plays a role in the learners' association of nontarget perfect with telics (Collins 2002). Polunenko's study (2004) shows that Russian-speaking learners' choices of tense and aspect in English are greatly influenced by their L1 aspectual distinctions (Polunenko 2004). Dragiev (2004) demonstrates that Bulgarian-speaking learners make a categorical distinction between witnessed and non-witnessed in tense and aspectual morphology in English based on the Bulgarian notions (Dragiev 2004).

Meanwhile, the research on language transfer in the acquisition of other languages has also been carried out actively. Sun (1993), Wen (1995) and Zhao (1996) find that the learners of Chinese with L1 English tend to overuse verb-final '*le*', which could be explained by the influence of the simple past tense marker *–ed* in English. However, Duff and Li (2002) prove that L1 transfer is one factor among some others that cause English-speaking learners'

production and omission of the perfective verb-final *–le* in Mandarin. Fan (2005) studies the use of tense and aspect in the acquisition of Chinese by English-speaking learners and shows the influence of lexical aspect in the Chinese acquisition data. Interestingly, Coppieters (1987) explores the use of the past tense in French by French native speakers and near-native speakers of French with different L1 backgrounds including American English, British English, Italian, Chinese, Spanish, Farsi, Portuguese, Japanese, Korean and German. He finds that the non-native speakers with Romance language backgrounds have different interpretations and intuitions about the two past tenses in French compared with the non-native speakers with Germanic, Chinese and Japanese language backgrounds. Izquierdo and Collins (2008) carry out research on the use of French perfective and imperfective by Spanish-speaking learners and English-speaking learners. Their study shows that the Spanish-speaking learners of French make effective use of L1-L2 similarities, whereas the English-speaking learners of French tend to rely on verb semantics and partially understand the rules. This study shows the facilitative role of L1 Spanish in acquiring tense-aspect marking in L2 French.

Although the research on different transferring directions and acquisition of other languages is not directly linked to the current study, it demonstrates the phenomenon of language transfer in second language acquisition generally and might be helpful in understanding it in the opposite direction or in other languages. It also gives some insights through investigating learner languages with typologically different language backgrounds.

In sum, I have reviewed the research on the use of tense and aspect in Chinese learner English, German learner English and language transfer, and comparison studies. In the domain of Chinese learner English, there are no adequate corpus-based studies on the use of tense and aspect, although research with other various methods exists and some yield interesting results (e.g., Yang & Huang 2004; Chen 2009; Yao & Chen 2017). Previous research has only focused on one or two tense-aspect form(s) in Chinese learner English but has not been systematically comprehensive and has not systematically explored the frequencies of the various types of errors in the use of tense and aspect, not given an overall view of transfer-related errors or

relevant convincing explanations of language transfer. In contrast, there are several corpus-based studies on tense and aspect in German learner English (e.g., Komaier 2013; Götz 2015; Dose-Heidelmayer & Götz 2016; Fuchs, Götz & Werner 2016) which are as systematic sometimes even co-operative in nature as they are based on the same or similar sets of corpora. They reveal a fairly reliable picture of the most common transfer errors in tense and aspect, the differences in error types and error frequencies between written and spoken German learner English, different errors among different proficiency levels and give solid and well-founded explanations of the observed language transfer phenomenon.

Meanwhile, many researchers show great interest in corpus-based research on language transfer and comparing learner Englishes in Europe (e.g., Axelsson & Hahn 2001; Rogatcheva 2012), probably due to the development of learner English corpora and the long history of research on language comparison and language contact. By contrast, the corpus-based comparisons of tense and aspect both in Chinese learner English and German learner English are only handful.

Therefore, the present study will fill this research gap, produce a comprehensive view of the tense and aspect in Chinese learner English and German learner English, link the research on Chinese learner English to that on German learner English, gain some further insights about L1-specific and universal acquisition features and make contributions to the research on language transfer and second language acquisition through answering the following research questions.

In language comparisons of Chinese, German and English:

- What are the similarities and differences among Chinese, German, and English in the grammatical domain of tense and aspect that lead to language transfer in acquiring English tense and aspect?

In corpus-based study:

- What are the general trends and distributions of uses of tense and aspect among learner Englishes, especially Chinese learner English and German learner English, compared with native English?
- Is there any underuse or overuse of tense-aspect forms in Chinese learner

English and German learner English?

- What are the most prominent tense/aspect-related errors in Chinese learner English and German learner English?
- Among them, which are intralingual errors and which are transfer errors?
- What are the L1-specific and universal acquisition features in Chinese learner English and German learner English?

In survey/experiment-based study:

- To validate the corpus findings to understand Chinese students' and German students' knowledge about tense and aspect, their perspectives on different actions or situations and the relation between L1 transfer and learners' perceptions, which will be illustrated in the relevant chapter.

# 3 Tense and aspect

This chapter will first introduce and review the general theories about tense and aspect, discuss and establish the comparability between English, Chinese and German in this grammatical domain, then analyze tense and aspect in English, Chinese and German respectively, finally compare Chinese with English, and German with English. The comparison will serve as theoretical foundation for the following chapters about language transfer in Chinese learner English and German learner English in the domain of tense and aspect.

## 3.1 Tense

Just as we need to locate things in space, we need to describe events in relation to time. Many linguists have discussed tense and aspect, the grammatical categories chiefly used to convey information about events in time and temporal relations among events. Comrie's, Dahl's and Timberlake's works on tense are considered as fundamental and important contributions to the general theory of tense, therefore a short introduction and review of their work will be given in this section.

Comrie defines tense as 'the grammaticalisation of location in time' (Comrie 1985: I). He explains that it is necessary to establish some arbitrary reference point to locate situations in time. Most typically, the speech situation is regarded as the reference point, for instance, the present moment as the reference point for time, the present spot for space. If in tense, the typical reference point is the present moment, the tenses locate situations at the same time as the present moment, prior to the present moment, or as subsequent to the present moment (Comrie 1985: 14). Comrie describes tense as follows,

> Tense relates the time of the situation referred to to some other time, usually to the moment of speaking. The commonest tenses found in languages – though not all languages

> distinguish these three tenses, or indeed distinguish tense at all – are present, past, and future: a situation described in the present tense is located temporally as simultaneous with the moment of speaking (e.g. John is singing); one described in the past as located prior to the moment of speaking (e.g. John sang, John was singing); one described in the future as located subsequent to the moment of speaking (e.g. John will sing, John will be singing). Since tense locates the time of a situation relative to the situation of the utterance, we may describe tense as deictic. (Comrie 1976: 1–2)

A deictic system is a set of expressions relating entities to a reference point (Comrie 1985: 14). Tense is deictic and aspect is non-deictic, as the internal temporal constituency of a situation defined by aspect is not related to any other time point (Comrie 1985: 14).

He also distinguishes the basic and secondary meanings of tenses. The basic meaning of past tense is past time reference, while the secondary meaning is politeness, e.g. *I just wanted to ask you if you could lend me a pound*. (Comrie 1985: 20). The future tense in English has two meanings. It is used to indicate future time reference, and it can also be used to make predictions about some other time (Comrie 1985: 21).

Tenses can be classified into absolute tense and relative tense. Absolute tense refers to tenses which take the present moment as their deictic centre[1] (Comrie 1985: 36). With relative tense, the reference point is some point in time given by the context, not necessarily the present moment (Comrie 1985: 56).

In absolute tense with the present moment as deictic centre, 'present tense means coincidence of the time of the situation and the present moment; past tense means location of the situation prior to the present moment; future tense means location of the situation after the present moment' (Comrie 1985: 36).

---

[1] Although the only way of locating a situation in time is relative to some other already established time point, the present moment is one of the possibilities (Comrie 1985: 36).

Present tense is not often used for a situation that coincides exactly with the present moment. Present tense can be used to refer to situations taking a much longer period of time than the present moment, even though they include the present moment. Present tense can refer to the states and processes which hold at the present moment, which began before the present moment, and might continue after the present moment (Comrie 1985: 37).

Comrie claims that grammatical expression of habituality is integrated into the aspectual or modal system rather than into the tense system (tense opposition) (Comrie 1985: 40). There can be no separate habitual tense, different from the present tense, and there can be no universal tense, which is used for truths holding at all time (Comrie 1985: 40).

Past tense only locates the situation in the past, without indicating whether it continues to the present moment or into the future. Quite often it implies that it does not continue to the present or beyond the present (Comrie 1985: 41).

The future is more speculative, and the past is more definite than the future. Based on this logic, some studies argue that the difference between the future and the past/present should be treated as a difference of mood not tense. Comrie argues that whether future time reference is subsumed under tense or mood, be it in general linguistic theory or in some specific language, is an empirical question which can only be answered based on research across a number of languages (Comrie 1985: 44).

The general theory defines a three-way distinction within absolute tense. Many languages have a basic two-way distinction, past and non-past, or future and non-future (Comrie 1985: 49). Comrie concludes that there are binary past/non-past and future/non-future distinctions, but there seem to be no clear-cut present/non-present distinctions in the languages of the world. He formulates a universal of tense systems: ‘In a tense system, the time reference of each tense is a continuity. If this universal can be maintained in general, then it would exclude the possibility of discontinuous tenses’ (Comrie 1985: 50).

In Comrie’s scheme of relative tense, there are pure relative tenses and absolute-relative tenses. In relative tenses, a situation is located at, before, or after a reference point given by the context, not necessarily the present

moment (Comrie 1985: 56, 65). 'English finite verb forms have absolute time reference in nearly all instance, English non-finite verb forms characteristically have relative time reference' (Comrie 1985: 56). The time adverbials locate a situation relative to the present moment, such as *today*, *yesterday*, are absolute time reference. The time adverbials locate a situation relative to some reference point given by the context, such as *on the next day*, *on the same day*, are relative time reference. The participles in relative clauses in English denote relative tense. He gives the example *The passengers awaiting flight 26 proceeded to departure gate 5*. The time reference of *awaiting* can be simultaneous with the time reference of the main verb *proceeded*. Or it can be the present moment, not simultaneous, depending on the context it built (Comrie 1985: 57).

The absolute-relative tense combines 'absolute time location of a reference point with relative time location of a situation' (Comrie 1985: 65). It has a reference point situated at, before, or after the present moment, and a situation located at, before, or after that reference point. Comrie states that the possible absolute-relative tenses are determined by a reference point before or after the present moment, and by the situation located before or after that reference point. When a reference point coincides with the present moment, it gives absolute time reference. When a situation is located at a reference point in the past or future, it is also not a case of absolute-relative tense, but absolute tense.

Comrie's work gives a clear explication of tenses in different languages in the world. It is one of the most influential and fundamental work on tenses. It differentiates absolute tense and relative tense, clarifies most confusing issues regarding tenses, and it certainly can serve as a general theoretical foundation to compare tenses of different languages in detail.

After reviewing the most fundamental work, it is necessary to turn to some recent works describing and discussing tense. Timberlake gives the following definition of tense, 'Tense locates an event with respect to the here-and-now of speech by tracing out a path from the now of speech to the contextual occasion' (Timberlake 2007: 315). He describes that tense in language starts from the here-and-now of speech and constructs a linkage to the contextual occasion. As a morphological category, the past tense is a time

earlier than the time of speech, the future tense is a time later than the time of speech, and the present tense is a time around the speech time (Timberlake 2007: 304). He summarizes the main tense operators, present tense, past tense, future tense and distal/remote/metrical tense, in the following table.

Table 3.1: The main temporal operators (Timberlake 2007: 315)

| **The main temporal operators** | |
|---|---|
| Present | Situation holds over an interval including the moment of speech, and potentially the immediately preceding and the immediately following time;<br>Situation can be known directly and coexists with other situations;<br>Natural with states and activities but not liminal predicates. |
| Past | Situation holds over an interval prior to the here-and-now of speech, and by implicature no longer at the here-and-now of speech;<br>Situation is known with certainty and is assumed to be responsible fore the here-and-now;<br>Most natural with liminal predicates. |
| Future | Situation holds over an interval later than the here-and-now of speech, and (ordinarily) not yet at the here-now-now of speech;<br>The situation can only be projected and anticipated from the here-and-now;<br>Natural with liminal predicates. |
| Distal/ remote/ metrical | Situation holds at a time that is separated from the here-and-now by some (long or measured) interval of time in which the world is qualitatively different from the here-and-now. |

He points out that the future tense is concerned not only with time but also with modality, and any statement about the future is an assessment of modality, the possibility of an event happening at some time later than speech time.

Tense can attend to the whole time range between now and not-now, including the intervening time. The metrical tense measures the length of the time interval between the here-and-now of speech and the reported situation (Timberlake 2007: 307; Dahl 1983).

Timberlake also discusses the tense in relative clauses and ordinary temporal clauses. European languages with well-developed tense systems make a distinction how the subordinate clause relates syntactically the matrix clause. Relative clauses and ordinary temporal clauses with conjunctions such as *when, until, at the same time as*, usually look directly to the speech event

for their temporal orientation (Timberlake 2007: 309).

The tense in indirect speech and historical present are also mentioned in his article. They will be discussed in detail in later section about tenses in English.

Timberlake's description of tense is concise and comprehensive. Although he uses some different terms or metaphors to describe tense, he expresses fundamentally similar ideas to Comrie's. To put it simply, as König and Gast (2012: 81) state, tense 'locates a situation (or event, eventuality) in time relative to (before, around, after) the moment of utterance'.

## 3.2 Aspect

Aspect is a grammatical category which many linguists have discussed for a long time. A general review of Comrie's, Dahl's and Timberlake's works on aspect will be presented in this section.

Comrie gives the definition of aspect based on the concept formulated by Holt (1943: 6) that 'aspects are different ways of viewing the internal temporal constituency of a situation' (Comrie 1976: 3).

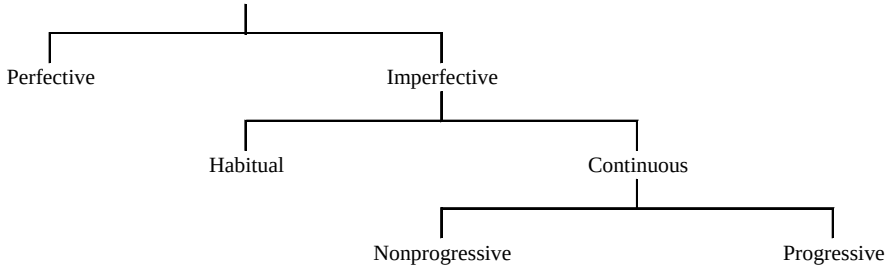
The distinction between tense and aspect is described in a great detail as well. According to his description, tense is deictic and relevant to the present moment and situation-external time whereas aspect is non-deictic, doesn't point out the time point of the situation but its internal temporal constituency, thus being relevant only to the situation-internal time, as he states:

> Although both aspect and tense are concerned with time, they are concerned with time in very different ways. […] tense is a deictic category, usually with reference to the present moment, though also with reference to other situations. Aspect is not concerned with relating the time of the situation to any other time-point, but rather with the internal temporal constituency of the one situation; one could state the difference as one between situation-internal time (aspect) and situation-external time (tense). (Comrie 1976: 5)

Comrie classifies aspects into perfectivity and imperfectivity. The difference between perfective and imperfective is based on whether the view focuses on the whole or the internal structures and phases. As he explains: 'Perfectivity indicates the view of a situation as a single whole, without distinction of the various separate phases that make up that situation; while the imperfective pays essential attention to the internal structure of the situation.' (Comrie 1976: 16).

According to traditional grammar, habituality and continuousness are the subdivisions of imperfectivity, nonprogressiveness and progressiveness are the subdivisions of continuousness (cf. Comrie 1976: 25), as Figure 1 shows. However, Comrie points out that this approach fails to realize that the imperfective form does not necessarily express a situation either in habitual viewpoint or in duration. These various subdivisions do join together to form a single category to express imperfectiveness (Comrie 1976: 26).

Figure 3.1: Classification of aspectual oppositions (Comrie 1976: 25)




Comrie discusses the following aspects: habitual, progressive, perfect and prospective. He defines habitual as 'describes a situation which is characteristic of an extended situation in fact that the situation referred to is viewed not as an incidental property of the moment but, precisely, as a characteristic feature of a whole period' (Comrie 1976: 28). He emphasizes that whether a situation is incidental or not does not depend on linguistic grammar but cognitive considerations. He explains that the habitual is combinable with any other aspectual values as long as the formal structure of a language permits it (Comrie 1976: 30).

He gives a general definition of progressiveness as the combination of

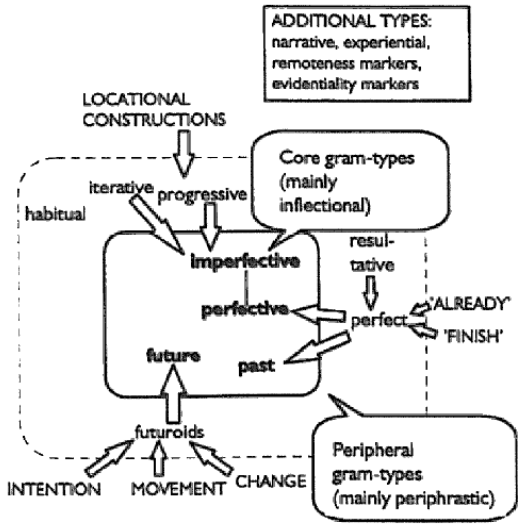
progressive meaning and nonstative meaning (Comrie 1976: 35).

In his scheme, perfect is defined 'the continuing relevance of a previous situation' (Comrie 1976: 56). It relates some state to a preceding situation, but not directly to the situation in itself. It expresses 'a relation between two time-points, on the one hand, the time of the state resulting from a prior situation, and on the other the time of that prior situation' (Comrie 1976: 52). He classifies perfect into the perfect of result, the experiential perfect, the perfect of persistent situation, and the perfect of recent past.

He states the perfect is retrospective, and there should be a prospective aspect if languages were completely symmetrical, where prospective aspect relates a state to some subsequent situation. In fact, some languages do have this, while there is no exact equivalent in others.

Departing from Comrie's traditional theory, let's move to Dahl's views of aspect and tense in the languages of Europe. Dahl (2000) puts forward major tense-aspect gram types. The following is the adapted figure.

Figure 3.2: Major tense-aspect gram types (Dahl 2000: 15)




Dahl divides the gram types in tense-aspect systems into core gram types and peripheral gram types depending on their typical degree of grammaticalization. The core gram types have morphological modes of

expression, and are usually obligatory in their central uses, while the peripheral types are mainly expressed periphrastically. Based on his studies, the most common inflectional tense-aspect gram types in all languages are imperfective, perfective, past and future.

Timberlake describes the unique features of language in terms of treating times and worlds by comparing it with painting. He points out that unlike painting, which portrays the events happening at one time in one world, language can report events in progress, events occurring prior to the contextual occasion, events repeating through an interval of time, and events completed; language can explicitly present the distinction between stasis and change by using aspect; language can show whether the contextual occasion and the reported event are earlier than or simultaneous with or later than the here-and-now by using tense, he puts it 'language allows one to locate events at a contextual occasion in relation to the here-and-now of speech (tense), to report change in states of the world in the vicinity of the contextual occasion (aspect)' (Timberlake 2007: 283).

Timberlake divides predicates into three types, stative predicates, process predicates, and liminal (or bounded, or telic) predicates. Liminal predicates include liminal process predicates and liminal states predicates (Timberlake 2007: 284–285).

In his view, aspect generally is about the relationship between situations, states of the world and time. It locates events in relation to an internal time. As he puts it 'Aspect locates events (and measures their progress or change or results or liminality) in relation to an internal time --- that is, a contextual occasion in the vicinity of the event itself' (Timberlake 2007: 315). The most frequent aspectual operators are progressive, iterative, perfect (and stative), and perfective (Timberlake 2007: 303).

He argues that progressive presents an ongoing process:

> The progressive presents the world as an activity. It establishes that a process exists – is going on – at the contextual occasion. Often the progressive implies that the activity is going on 'still' (longer than expected) or 'already' (sooner than expected) or that the activity is tenuous and about to cease. (Timberlake

2007: 287)

Timberlake also points out that 'the progressive establishes the fact that the process is ongoing at the contextual occasion, in contrast to the possibility that the process might not be going on.' (Timberlake 2007: 287). The progressive is used naturally with processes predicates, but usually not with stative predicates. If it is used with stative predicates, it might present a state as a kind of behavior creating a sense of activity, or indicate the temporariness and contingency. When it is used with liminal states, the state is actually understood as a process, which implies that the last phase of change is ongoing and change of state is approaching (Timberlake 2007: 287).

Iterative is defined as 'complex states composed of equivalent sub-situations in which activity alternates with the absence of activity' (Timberlake 2007: 289). Iterativity can be expressed by non-actual modality, usually with a hint of contingency, it can be expressed by the imperfective, and it can be expressed by its own distinct morphological means.

According to his description, the perfect presents a situation as a state. 'The contextual occasion of a (present) perfect includes the here-and-now of the speech event and extends back, as a continuous interval, to include the actual event reported by the predicate' (Timberlake 2007: 289). The difference between the past tense and the perfect is about orientation and continuity. In the past tense, the earlier situations are viewed from a past time and disconnected from the present. However, the perfect relates the present situation to a prior one which is embedded in an extended interval of the present and accessed from the present (Timberlake 2007: 290, 291).

He divides perfect into existential perfect and universal perfect. The existential perfect indicates that a state has been in effect or a liminal event has occurred at some anterior time. The universal perfect indicates that a situation holds continuously over all subintervals of an extended interval from the past up through the present (Timberlake 2007: 291).

The perfective 'imposes boundaries on situations at the contextual occasion' (Timberlake 2007: 292). It presupposes that a situation has three phases: a prior phase where there is no activity or no state holds, a phase of change and transition, and an ensuring phase after which no more change is

expected and the resulting static situation should remain in force for the foreseeable future (Timberlake 2007: 292). It 'reports a departure from the prior situation whose result can potentially endure' (Timberlake 2007: 293).

The imperfective is the opposite category to perfective. It is not perfective, and not liminal. Different languages might interpret perfective and boundedness differently. Imperfective can include progressive process, iterative process, delimited or durative process.

He summarizes the definitions and features of the four major aspectual operators, namely perfect, progressive, perfective and iterative, in the following table.

Table 3.2: The main aspectual operators (Timberlake 2007: 304)

| **The main aspectual operators** | |
|---|---|
| Perfect | Situation presented as a state extending back in time from the contextual occasion (commonly the here-and-now of speech) and projected to continue in the future;<br>Natural with liminal predicates;<br>Serves as the condition for other states or changes around the contextual occasion. |
| Progressive | Process ongoing at contextual occasion (commonly the here-and-now of speech) that is projected to continue in the immediate future, but could easily change or cease;<br>Natural with process predicates (not states);<br>Often in conflict with (or even interrupted by) other situations. |
| Perfective | Situation bounded around contextual occasion (not the here-and-now of speech), after which time no more activity is projected and the resulting state will continue;<br>Natural with liminal processes;<br>Means inception with stative predicates;<br>Sequences the given event with respect to other events. |
| Iterative | State consisting of subevents alternating in polarity over the contextual occasion (often the here-and-now of speech), a pattern that is projected to continue;<br>Natural with processes or liminal processes;<br>Either the whole state or the individual subevents can interact with other events. |

In short, aspects are different ways of viewing situations, and are about the relationships between situations, states and time.

## 3.3 Developmental paths of tense and aspect

Just as Timberlake states, 'aspect shades into tense' (Timberlake 2007: 298), and tense and aspect interact with each other. Bybee and Dahl (1989) create a term *gram* for both tense and aspect, so that the developmental path of tense and aspect can be seen and discussed clearly. Their study about the creation of tense and aspect systems in the languages of the world not only gives an insight into the diachronic development of tense and aspect system in general but also sheds light on the similarity among different languages in the world. This section will explain their study.

Bybee (1985) examined 50 languages to test hypotheses about the relation between the meaning of inflectional grams and the degree of fusion they exhibit with a lexical stem. Dahl investigated 64 languages through a questionnaire containing 150 sentences covering the tense-mood-aspect domain. They both found that about 70% to 80% of the grams marking tense or aspect notions in the languages studied belong to the six gram-types: perfective, imperfective, progressive, future, past and perfect. This is the list found in their study:

> a. **perfective**, indicating that a situation is viewed as bounded;
> b. **imperfective**, indicating that the situation is viewed as not bounded;
> c. **progressive**, (called continuous in Byee's study) indicating the situation is in progress at reference time;
> d. **future**, indicating that the speaker predicts a situation will occur subsequent to the speech event;
> e. **past**, indicating that the situation occurred before the speech event;
> f. **perfect** (called anterior in Bybee's study) indicating that a situation is being described as relevant at the moment of speech or another point of reference.
>
> […] Thus the six gram-types listed above are far and away the most common and the most widespread of grams marking

> notions of tense and aspect. (Bybee & Dahl 1989: 55)

They tried to generalize the semantic content of grams of tense and aspect and they found that the meanings expressed by grammatical morphemes are universally characterizable as a form-meaning correlation existing in the languages of the world (Bybee & Dahl 1989: 56). According to their study, perfect and progressive usually have periphrastic expression, while past, perfective and imperfective often have bound expression. The future has periphrastic and bound expression almost evenly. They consider the manner of gram development as a process such that, 'grams develop out of lexical material by a gradual generalization of meaning which is paralleled by a gradual reduction in form and fusion with the head (in this case the verb)' (Bybee & Dahl 1989: 56). They hold that perfect and progressive are less grammaticalized, have less general meanings, and show less grammaticalization of form. Past, perfective and imperfective are more abstract and general grammatical meanings, and show more grammaticalization of form. The form-meaning correlation suggests a universal theory of tense and aspect that the gram development paths may be the same or similar across languages. They identify three major paths of development in the domain of tense and aspect:

> a. expressions with a copula or possession verb plus a past participle, or verbs meaning 'finish', 'come from' or 'throw away', develop into grams marking anterior or perfect, which in turn develop into perfectives or pasts;
> b. expressions with a copula, locative or movement verb develop into progressives which in turn develop into imperfectives;
> c. expressions with a verb meaning 'desire', 'movement towards a goal' or 'obligation' develop into grams expressing intention and future. (Bybee & Dahl 1989: 57)

**Perfect**

There are four common types of periphrastic constructions derived from

common diachronic sources for the perfect: 1. copular + past participle; 2. possessive constructions + past participle; 3. main verb + particle meaning 'already'; 4.verbs meaning 'finish/throw away/come from' (Bybee & Dahl 1989: 68). The first two types present the development from resultative construction to perfect. In some Germanic languages, such as German, Dutch, and many dialects of Western Scandinavia, the perfect was formed from these two types. Bybee and Dahl also examined the development of perfect grams deriving from auxiliary plus past participle. Their semantic path goes from resultative to perfect to perfective or past. They summarize the common denominator along the development path as follows: the resultative views a past event according to its results, while the perfect de-emphasizes the present moment, but concentrates more on the past event which is related to the present moment. The change to past or perfective happens when the sense of relevance to the present moment disappears completely (Bybee & Dahl 1989: 77).

**Progressive**

Bybee and Dahl also identified locative phrases as the most common sources for the progressive aspect: copula + locative adposition + nominalized form of verb; verb meaning 'be in/ be at/ be located' + main verb; postural verbs; motion verbs as progressive auxiliaries; periphrasis meaning 'to keep on/ to continue';

The progressive in English can be traced to the construction *he is a working*. *a* is derived from the preposition *on*, and was deleted as the construction became more common (Bybee & Dahl 1989: 77).

The durativity or sense of 'on-going' activity derives from the stative sense of 'be located at' (Bybee & Dahl 1989: 81). Bybee and Dahl also explain the use of locative expressions for temporal notions, 'to be located spatially in an activity is to also be located temporally in an activity, so that from the beginning the meaning of such constructions has temporal implications. Gradually the locative meaning weakens while the temporal implications stabilize, giving rise eventually to the aspectual meaning of progressive' (Bybee & Dahl 1989: 79). When the progressive loses the special sense associated with its original semantics, including specifying a limit on the

period of time in which an activity is ongoing, and involvement of the subject, it begins to signal a situation that is ongoing at reference time, which may include repeated, habitual or continuous situations. In this path, the progressive becomes imperfective (Bybee & Dahl 1989: 82).

**Future**

The major lexical sources for future grams are listed as follows: 1. auxiliary verb meaning 'want' or 'desire'; 2. construction meaning 'movement towards a goal'; 3. verb meaning 'to owe' or 'to be obliged', or a construction with a copula or possession verb and a non-finite main verb (Bybee & Dahl 1989: 90).

Each of these sources has given rise to one future 'tense' in English. *Will* developed from a main verb meaning 'to want', *be going to* is a construction meaning movement toward a goal, and *shall* developed from a main verb meaning 'to owe'. In terms of the original lexical meaning, both *shall* and *will* express intention, but *shall* means an intention due to an external obligation or necessity and *will* means the intention coming out of an internal desire. *Be going to* implies 'an agent is on a path towards a goal' (Bybee & Dahl 1989: 91). The modal uses of future grams such as intention, volition or obligation are due to their historical lexical sources. The prediction sense of future grams also develops into two further modal uses: the imperative use and a use expressing probability (Bybee & Dahl 1989: 93).

Bybee and Dahl emphasize that both the mechanisms by which grammaticization is implemented and the actual semantic material that is molded by this process are very similar across languages. They found that there are a small number of possible lexical sources for each gram type in unrelated languages (Bybee & Dahl 1989: 96).

What is also pointed out is the diversity in tense and aspect across languages due to the particular properties of the grammaticalization progress. Bybee and Dahl summarize the diversity and variations: 1. the interaction of the gram types varies in a language at any given time due to the independence of development of each gram type; 2. a language may have grams that are close to one another semantically at any one stage; 3. the possible combinations of tense and aspect grams varies among languages; 4. the degree

of remoteness between the major grams and the less common grams varies among languages; 5. languages may have derivationally expressed meanings in the case of aspect; 6. grams differ cross-linguistically due to the original lexical source of the gram or where the gram stands on its particular path of grammaticalization (Bybee & Dahl 1989: 77).

They suggest that further study of tense and aspect should consider the universal paths of development as sources of similarity in grams of different languages, while referring to the particular properties of such development to understand the diversity across languages (Bybee & Dahl 1989: 77).

Although the diachronic analysis and study of tense and aspect is not the focus of this study, it contributes to general theories on tense and aspect and provides insights into the differences and similarities among different languages diachronically and synchronically as well.

## 3.4 The comparability of tense and aspect in English, Chinese and German

'Languages differ in the number of tense distinctions they express in morphology' (Timberlake 2007: 305). Even within the same language, different theories hold different views on how many tenses or aspects should be distinguished in a certain language.

Comrie concludes that there are binary past/non-past and future/non-future distinctions, but there seem to be no clear-cut present/non-present distinctions in the languages of the world. He points out a universal tendency of tense systems: 'In a tense system, the time reference of each tense is a continuity. If this universal can be maintained in general, then it would exclude the possibility of discontinuous tenses' (Comrie 1985: 50).

The number of tenses in English and German has been an interesting topic. König (1995: 154)summarizes that there are three ways to count the tenses in English. If tense is analyzed based on meaning or general common sense, there are three tenses: past, present, and future. If the structuralist view is adopted, there are two tenses in English: past and non-past. If tense in English is classified based on the traditional view, there are six tenses. There

are two morphological tenses: past and present, and there are four periphrastic tenses: future, present perfect, past perfect, future perfect. As for German, six tenses are usually differentiated: *Präsens, Präteritum, Futur I, Perfekt, Plusquamperfekt, Futur II* (Eisenberg 1999; König & Gast 2012: 83). As for Chinese, it is usually regarded as a tenseless language, a language without grammatical device to locate events in time, but with aspects taking different perspectives into the internal time of events.

Considering pedagogical grammars, and to put tenses and aspects in English Chinese, and German in one frame, the simplest way to distinguish tenses in these languages is to take the three-way distinction which is based on common sense and meaning: past, present, and future. Just as Augustine portrays time in a good way:

> There are three times. The present of things past, the present of things present, and the present of things future…The present of things past is in memory; the present of things present is in intuition; and the present of things future is in expectation.(Augustine 1960: xi)

This three-way distinction of tense conforms to a tradition of pedagogies and teaching. Therefore the comparison between languages based on it will help to explain the language transfer in language learning better. Besides, it is not necessary to discuss whether the perfect is a tense or an aspect, since all three languages have perfect forms, although English and German have different meanings and uses for the perfect. Moreover, the tense and aspect system in English is usually described as compositional for pedagogical purpose (present + perfect). Concerning the present research, it starts from the forms when searching tense and aspect in corpora to analyze learner Englishes. Thus it will be natural to consider the perfect as an aspect. Therefore, in this study, there are three tenses distinguished: past, present, and future. Perfect, progressive, perfect progressive, simple aspect and the others (which will be mentioned later in the section about aspects in Chinese) are considered to be in the aspect category in native English and learner Englishes.

## 3.5 Tense and aspect in English

### 3.5.1 Tense in English

Based on the traditions of pedagogical grammar, this study adopts three-way distinction of tense in English. The form-meaning comparisons between English and Chinese, and English and German can serve as a better base for explaining language transfer in Chinese learner English and German learner English. Comrie states that, 'English finite verb forms have absolute time reference in nearly all instances, English non-finite verb forms characteristically have relative time reference' (Comrie 1985: 56). This section is mainly about finite verbs and absolute tense.

#### 3.5.1.1 Present

Present tense is unmarked morphologically, except that the third person singular is marked with the suffix (e) s. The present tense typically refers to present time (Biber et al. 1999: 453).

The simple present tense referring to the present time can be used to describe a state existing at the present time, present habitual behavior or an action co-extensive with the moment of utterance (Biber et al. 1999: 453–454).

(3.1) I *want* a packet of crisps. (Biber et al. 1999: 453)
(3.2) This is on one of those hikes that we *go* on. (Biber et al. 1999: 453)
(3.3) Here *comes* your mother. (Biber et al. 1999: 453)

In example (3.1), the verb *want* in the present tense expresses a state existing at the present time. *Go on hikes* in example (3.2) is a present habitual. Example (3.3) means that *come* is an action simultaneous with the moment of speech.

**Historical present**
The simple present can also refer to past time. A sequential narrative is usually

expressed in the past tense in languages that have an unambiguous past tense. However, when the time of an episode or event has been located in the past, the speaker can 'choose to take for granted the linkage from the here-and-now of speech to the contextual occasion in the past and instead carry on the narrative in the present tense' (Timberlake 2007: 313). This is the historical present. By using the historical present, the speaker seems to witness the events without temporal distance, thus presenting the event immediately or vividly. Timberlake points out that this use has strong connotations of orality in English. In historical writing, it is used to report on timeless individuals whose activities are observable as if in the present, whereas the past tense regards individuals as bound to the historical time (Timberlake 2007: 314). Biber et al. (1999: 454) also explains the historical present as follows, 'The historical present tense, referring to past time, occasionally occurs in fiction (especially in colloquial narratives) to produce a more vivid description, as if the events were being enacted at the time of speech' (Biber et al. 1999: 454). His research shows that the historical present is strongly associated with conversational narratives (Biber et al. 1999: 455).

(3.4) And the daughter comes home from school one day and says, mum I want to be like you. And then the mum goes, okay dear, I'll go out and get some stuff (Biber et al. 1999: 455).

Example (3.4) illustrates a historical present used in a conversational narrative, describing a past conversation between a daughter and her mum in the present tense as if it is just happening vividly.

The simple present can refer to future time when it is accompanied by a time adverbial explicitly referring to the future, or in a conditional or temporal adverbial clause that refers to the future (Biber et al. 1999: 455).

(3.5) It'*s* open day on Wednesday.

#### 3.5.1.2 Past

The past tense is marked with suffix *-ed* for regular verbs (Biber et al. 1999: 453). Irregular verbs differ from regular verbs in their formation of the past tense and the past participle forms (Biber et al. 1999: 394). The past tense typically refers to past time through a definite past reference point (Biber et al. 1999: 453).

(3.6) Well I *rang* them up yesterday. (Biber et al. 1999: 453)

Example (3.6) is the typical past tense referring to past time, which is yesterday in the example. The past tense can indicate present time, with an added indication of stance. 'With verbs like *think*, *wonder*, and *want*, past tense can indicate a present time state of mind with a tentativeness that shows the speaker is being especially polite.' (Biber et al. 1999: 454). The past tense in example (3.7) shows the politeness.

(3.7) Did you want a cup of tea? (Biber et al. 1999: 454)

Simple past marks the hypothetical in some dependent clauses, as shown in example (3.8).

(3.8) And if you were in the mood we could at least go. (Biber et al. 1999: 454)

#### 3.5.1.3 Future / Future time reference

Although some theories on tense in English identify two tenses in English, past and non-past, it is reasonable to clarify whether a 'future tense' should have a place in a pedagogical grammar.

In Biber's classification, 'there is no formal future tense in English', modal or semi-modal verbs such as *will, shall, be going to* refer to future time (Biber et al. 1999: 456).

According to Comrie's claim (1985), many languages have a basic

two-way distinction, past and non-past, or future and non-future (Comrie 1985: 49). Most European languages have a past vs. non-past distinction, with sub-divisions within non-past, thus the present tense in these languages is often used for future time reference. There are two sub-types in these languages with a past vs. non-past distinction, which form the two endpoints of a continuum. One is a language in which present tense can always be used with future time reference, only constrained in the avoidance of interpretations as present time reference. The other one is a language where the present can be used with future time reference but with severe constraints. German and Finnish are instances of the former type, and English the latter (Comrie 1985: 49). To put it simply, in Comrie's theory English has past vs. non-past distinction with present and future as sub-divisions in the non-past.

However, Comrie also argues that English has a separate grammatical category of future time reference, even though it is controversial to regard *will + verb* primarily as future tense or primarily as modal expression. The future tense *will + verb* derives from a modal expression. *Will* can be used for future time reference, and volition with present time reference and prediction with present time reference as well. There are many other expressions with present tense that can indicate future time reference, such as *depart*. Therefore, the use of *will* is neither a necessary nor a sufficient condition for future time reference. On the other hand, in subordinate clauses (temporal or conditional clauses), the future time reference uses of *will* are grammatically different from the modal uses of *will*. Therefore 'English does have a separate grammatical category of future time reference' (Comrie 1985: 48).

'English requires overt grammatical representation of future time reference, for instance by means of the future tense, or close paraphrases such as *going to*.' (Comrie 1985: 117). Only when it is a scheduled event, can the present tense be used with the future time reference (Comrie 1985: 118), as in *the train leaves tomorrow at eight o'clock*.

There are several forms to express future / future time reference. According to König and Gast's (2012) summary, they are *will/shall* + infinitive, *will/shall* + progressive, *be going to* + infinitive. Besides, simple present and present progressive can also express future time (König & Gast 2012: 85–86). The following lists these uses and examples based on the König

and Gast's work.

***will/shall* + infinitive**
(3.9) Tomorrow's weather will be cold and cloudy.
(3.10) I shall look into this myself.

***will/shall* + progressive**
The meaning can be derived from *will/shall* and the progressive part, but sometimes the meaning is not compositional and it can indicate future as a matter of course.

(3.11) You can come with me. I'll be driving through Windermere anyway.

***be going to* + infinitive**
(3.12) It indicates future fulfillment of present intention or of present cause.
(3.13) It is going to rain.

**Simple present**
Simple present can indicate future time reference only when the situations are 'determined by schedules, regularities, habits, etc.' (König & Gast 2012: 85).

(3.14) When does the train leave?

**Present progressive**
The present progressive can also express future reference, implying that 'arrangement, plans or programmes have been made at the moment of speaking' (König & Gast 2012: 86).

(3.15) Are you playing tennis tomorrow?

#### 3.5.1.4 Sequence of tenses / Backshifting

Comrie argues that the sequence of tenses analysis rather than the deictic

centre analysis should be applied in indirect speech in English. He concludes that the tense of direct speech is retained in indirect speech, but when the main verb is in a past tense, the tense of original speech is shifted back into the past, or put it in another way, the verb in a non-past tense must be changed into corresponding past tense. It is possible to avoid invoking the shift to past sequence in the subordinate clause only when the content of the indirect speech still has validity (Comrie 1985: 114). When the verb in direct speech is already in the past tense, it can be replaced by the pluperfect in the indirect speech or remain in the simple past (Comrie 1985: 116).

Timberlake also discusses the sequence of tenses/backshifting in indirect speech. He explains that, in indirect speech, there is a main verb of speech, and there are two layers of speakers and two layers of speech time: the internal speaker whose words are reported, and the external speaker who absorbs and reports the words of the internal speaker. Languages have different preferences to locate the reported situation in time.

English has rules for the sequence of tenses (backshifting, or transposition). In a main clause with the verb in past-tense form, a past tense in the subordinate clause reports a situation that is simultaneous with the internal event of speech or knowledge; a pluperfect/past perfect in the subordinate clause reports a situation that held before the time of speech; a future-in-the-past reports an event imagined to occur after the time of speech (Timberlake 2007: 311). In a main clause with the verb in the future tense, the time of situation in the subordinate clause is normally evaluated according to the time of internal speech time.

Timberlake points out that the sequence of tenses is often avoided in informal English and occasionally in formal English. When the sequence of tense is not invoked, the world of the external speaker and the internal speaker are not distinguished. He points out that there are two reasons for that: the reported situation still holds in the here-and-now of the external speaker; the internal speech reports a universal truth that is viewed the same way by both internal and external speakers. He also comments that invoking the sequence of tense keeps the times and world of the internal speaker and the external speaker apart (Timberlake 2007: 312).

#### 3.5.1.5 Absolute tense, relative tense and absolute-relative tense

'English finite verb forms have absolute time reference in nearly all instances, English non-finite verb forms characteristically have relative time reference' (Comrie 1985: 56).

The pluperfect (past perfect) and future perfect in English are absolute-relative tense. In the pluperfect in English, there is a reference point in the past, and a situation is located before the reference point. It can be taken as 'past in the past'. In the future perfect of English, there is a reference point in the future, and the situation at issue is located before the reference point. Another example is future in the past in English. It locates a situation in the future relative to a contextually established reference point in the past, which can be established by the tense of verb in the main clause. 'He said he would leave' (Comrie 1985: 75). And more complex tenses with a chain of reference points are also possible. The conditional perfect (future perfect in the past) is a case in point in English (Comrie 1985: 76). However, he argues that the perfect is not absolute-relative tense (Comrie 1985: 78).

European languages with well-developed tense systems distinguish how the subordinate clause relates syntactically to the matrix clause. Relative clauses and ordinary temporal clauses with conjunctions such as *when, until, at the same time as* usually look directly to the speech event for their temporal orientation (Timberlake 2007: 309).

### 3.5.2 Aspect in English

According to Comrie, English has two aspectual oppositions in the whole verbal systems: the aspectual opposition between progressive and non-progressive, and the one between perfect and non-perfect. The progressive is expressed by the verb *to be* and the suffix *-ing* on the verb following, and perfect is expressed by the verb *to have* plus past participle (Comrie 1976: 124). The following section will review and discuss these aspectual distinctions in English: progressive, perfect, perfect progressive and simple.

#### 3.5.2.1 Progressive

The progressive in English has been attracting linguists' attentions for decades. Different researchers have different perspectives on the progressive. The following section will review the relevant sections on the progressive in several essential and influential books and articles, including Comrie's *Aspect* (1976), Leech's *Meaning and the English Verb* (1997), Biber, Johansson, Leech, Conrad, and Finegan's *Longman Grammar of Spoken and Written English* (Biber et al. 2007), Timberlake's 'Aspect, Tense, Mood' (2007), and Mair's 'Progressive and Continuous Aspect' (2012).

In Comrie's *Aspect* (1976), he clarifies the difference between progressiveness and imperfectivity and gives the general definition of progressiveness as 'the combination of progressive meaning and nonstative meaning' (Comrie 1976: 35). He points out that different languages have different rules regarding when progressive forms can be used (Comrie 1976: 35), and different languages are to some extend free to choose whether verbs are classified as stative or nonstative (Comrie 1976: 35). In English, there are many verbs that are regarded sometimes as stative, sometimes as nonstative, depending on the specific meaning they have in specific sentence. He gives examples such as the verb *be*. He points out the general rule about stative verbs and progressive that 'lexically stative verbs can be used nonstatively and appear in the Progressive, while lexically nonstative verbs do not lose their ability to be in the Progressive by being used statively' (Comrie 1976: 36). There are some special cases of nonstative uses of basically stative verbs, such as *live*, *stand*. Comrie points out the contrast between *I live at 6 Railway Cutting* and *I'm living at 6 Railway Cutting*. In this case, 'the non-Progressive refers to a more or less permanent state of affairs, whereas the Progressive refers to a more temporary state' (Comrie 1976: 37). Also in some cases progressive seems to add greater emotive effect than the simple aspect, for example, *she's always buying far more vegetables than they can possibly eat*, and *she always buys far more vegetables than they can possibly eat*. There are some idiosyncratic uses in progressive. Comrie holds that the English progressive has an unusually wide range of uses compared with progressive forms in other languages. It has extended its range of contexts well beyond the

original definition of progressivity as the combination of continuous meaning and nonstativity. Generally, the progressive is not interchangeable with the non-Progressive in English.

Comrie's work does not discuss all the uses of the progressive, but gives a sound overview of the progressive in languages, which could be a useful and inspiring reference point for research on the progressive.

In *Meaning and the English Verb* (1997), Leech discusses the progressive aspect. He uses the term 'progressive' to refer to verb constructions in which the *-ing* form of the verb is preceded by a form of the verb *to be*.
He considers that the most important function of the progressive aspect is to refer to temporary situations, activities, or goings-on (Leech 1997: 18). He emphasizes that the Progressive Present form stresses three separate aspects of meanings: 'duration', 'limited duration' and possible incompleteness (Leech 1997: 18).

Besides the major use of the progressive aspect for single temporary happenings, he also lists four other less important uses: 'habit in existence over a limited period', 'repetition of events of limited duration', 'anticipated happenings in the future' and 'persistent or continuous activity' (Leech 1997: 32–33).

He classifies the verbs used with the progressive aspect, as the progressive has different effects when it is used with different types of verbs. Two classes of 'event verbs', namely, 'momentary verbs' and 'transitional event verbs', can combine with the progressive aspect, which attributes duration to them. 'Activity verbs' and 'process verbs' are the two classes of verbs typically used with progressive form. There are three kinds of verbs which are normally not compatible with the progressive aspect: 'verbs of inert perception', 'verbs of inert cognition', and 'state verbs of having and being', and apparently there are some exceptions in these verbs. Lastly, 'verbs of bodily sensation' can occur either with or without the progressive. The following is a table summarizing the types of verbs in relation to the progressive, and relevant examples, explanations and exceptions based on his classification. (Please see Table 3.3.)

Table 3.3: Classes of verb with the progressive aspect

| Classes of Verb with the Progressive Aspect | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Classes of Verb** | **Examples** | **Explanations** | **Apparent Exceptions** |
| **Event Verbs with Progressive** | | | |
| A Momentary verbs | *hiccough, hit, jump, kick, knock, nod, tap, wink, etc.* | Progressive attributes duration to these verbs; they are taken as a series of events, rather than a single event. | |
| B Transitional event verbs | *arrive, die, fall, land, leave, lose, stop, etc.* | Event verbs denoting transition into a state are used with the Progressive to indicate an approach to the transition, rather than the transition itself. | |
| **Typically Going with Progressive** | | | |
| C Activity verbs | *drink, eat, play, rain, read, work, write, etc.* | They refer to a continuing, though bounded, activity. | |
| D Process verbs | *change, grow, mature, slow down, widen, deteriorate, etc.* | A process has duration (but not indefinite). | |
| **Normally Incompatible with Progressive** | | | |
| E Verbs of inert perception | *feel, hear, see, smell, taste* | | *Fell, taste, smell* can indicate 'active perception', belonging to 'activity' category (Class C) as well; *See* and *hear* can be interpreted as 'process verb' (Class D). |
| F Verbs of inert cognition | *believe, forget, hope, imagine, know, suppose, understand, etc.* | | The verbs can also function as 'activity verbs' (Class C); A special polite use of Progressive with certain verbs such as, *hope, want, forget, wonder* , etc. |
| G State verbs of having and being | *be, belong to, contain, consist of, cost, depend on, deserve, have, own, resemble, etc.* | | The verbs may combine with progressive, where an 'activity' meaning may be supplied. Some verbs can take progressive with *more and more* . |
| **With or without Progressive** | | | |
| H Verbs of bodily sensation | *ache, feel, hurt, itch, tingle, etc.* | A free choice between Progressive and Simple, without change of meaning. | |

Further uses of the progressive such as the perfect progressive, *be going to* + infinitive, the present progressive with future meaning, and *will/shall* + progressive infinitive are discussed as well:

**The perfect progressive**

All features of meaning associated with the perfect aspect and the progressive aspect also appear in the perfect progressive. The present perfect progressive means 'a temporary situation leading up to the present moment' (Leech 1997: 49). It demonstrates the features: the happening 'has duration', 'has limited duration', 'continues up to the present or recent past', 'need not be complete', 'may have effects which are still apparent' (Leech 1997: 52). Momentary event verbs are normally difficult to use with the perfect progressive. It is rarely used with the passive voice, and less commonly used in 'the iterative sense of temporary habit up to the present'. And the past perfect progressive can be used like the present perfect progressive with the definite past-in-the-past meaning.

***be going to* + infinitive**

The construction generally means 'future fulfillment of the present', which includes two meanings, 'the future of present intention' and 'the future of present cause'. 'The future of present intention' is used with human subjects and with 'doing' or agentive verbs which imply conscious exercise of the will, and 'the future of present cause' is used with animal, inanimate, and human subjects, and with 'agentive' and 'non-agentive' verbs. *Be going to* + infinitive usually refers to the immediate future (Leech 1997: 59–60). The anticipated happening may not materialize.

**The present progressive with future meaning**

The present progressive can refer to 'a future event anticipated by virtue of a present plan, programme or arrangement' (Leech 1997: 62). It points to the near future, and is mainly used with 'doing' verbs 'involving conscious human agency' (Leech 1997: 64).

***will/shall* + progressive infinitive**

This construction refers to 'temporary situations in the future', typically associated with a future point of time (Leech 1997: 67). It can also be used to refer to 'a single event viewed in its entirety' without 'framing effect', or put into the phrase 'future-as-a-matter-of-course' indicating that 'a predicted event

will happen independently of the will or intention of anyone concerned' (Leech 1997: 68). It seems to 'combine the future meaning of *will/shall* (prediction) with the future meaning of the progressive (arrangement)' (Leech 1997: 68). When it is combined with human subjects and agentive or doing verbs, it often 'combines prediction with overtones of volition' (Leech 1997: 68). It is 'a more polite and tactful alternative to the non-progressive form' (Leech 1997: 69).

Leech's discussion of the progressive is fundamental and comprehensive. He defines the progressive, illustrates the verbs usually used with the progressive, and the verbs rarely used with the progressive, and covers all the uses with different meanings. His work would be a very good basis for any further research about the progressive.

In the *Longman Grammar of Spoken and Witten English* (2007), Biber, Johansson, Leech, Conrad, and Finegan define the progressive aspect, present some results of corpus research and discuss the relevant linguistic phenomena. A clear definition is given:

> The progressive aspect designates an event or state of affairs which is in progress, or continuing, at the time indicated by the rest of the verb phrase… it is marked by the auxiliary verb be + ing-participle… it is typically used to report situations or activities that are in progress at some point in time. (Biber et al. 2007: 460–461)
>
> The progressive aspect is used to describe activities or events that are in progress at a particular time, usually for a limited duration. The present progressive aspect describes events that are currently in progress or are about to take place in the near future; the past progressive aspect describes events that were in progress or about to take place at some earlier time. (Biber et al. 2007: 470).

The corpus research shows that progressive aspect verb phrases are slightly less common than perfect aspect verb phrases and the majority occurs

in conversation, whereas new reportage and academic prose are in the simple present tense (Biber et al. 2007: 461). Perfect progressive verb phrases are rare in all registers (Biber et al. 2007: 462). Across varieties of English, the progressive aspect is much more common in American English conversation than in British English conversation (Biber et al. 2007: 462).

The corpus shows that 'the progressive aspect is most common in conversation and fiction. In conversation, most progressive verb phrases are in the present tense, while in fiction, most progressive verb phrases are in the past tense' (Biber et al. 2007: 471).

According to the corpus research presented in the book (Biber et al. 2007: 471), the common verbs with progressive aspect include different semantic domains: verbs referring to activities and physical events, verbs referring to communication acts, verbs referring to mental/attitudinal states or activities, verbs referring to perceptual states or activities, and verbs referring to static physical situations. The verbs referring to physical or communication activities have a strong lexical association with the progressive while those verbs that hardly ever occur in the progressive also come from these domains.

The book points out two features differentiating the verbs commonly used with progressive from the verbs that rarely occurs with the progressive. 'First, the common progressive aspect verbs typically take a human subject as agent, actively controlling the action expressed by the verb. In contrast, some of the verbs that rarely occur in the progressive take a human subject as experiencer, undergoing but not controlling the action or state expressed by the verb. Other verbs in this group do not usually take a human subject at all.'(Biber et al. 2007: 473). 'Second, the action, state or situation described by common progressive verbs can be prolonged. In contrast, the verbs that rarely occur in the progressive fall into two main groups: (a) those that refer to an action that is immediate, and (b) those that refer to a state that is not normally a continuing process.' (Biber et al. 2007: 473).

Biber et al.'s work is much more empirical than some previous works. A number of results of corpus research provide some new insights into the progressive. These results can serve as a good reference and solid basis for further corpus research and any relevant contrastive studies.

Timberlake argues in *Aspect, Tense, Mood* (2007) that the progressive

presents an ongoing process. As he states: 'The progressive presents the world as an activity. It establishes that a process exists – is going on – at the contextual occasion. Often the progressive implies that the activity is going on "still" (longer than expected) or "already" (sooner than expected) or that the activity is tenuous and about to cease.' He also points out that 'the progressive establishes the fact that the process is ongoing at the contextual occasion, in contrast to the possibility that the process might not be going on.' (Timberlake 2007: 287). The progressive is used naturally with predicates that express processes, but usually not with stative predicates. If it is used with stative predicates, it might take a state as a kind of behavior, or indicate the temporariness and contingency. When it is used with liminal states, the state is actually understood as a process, which implies that the last phase of change is ongoing (Timberlake 2007: 287).

Timberlake's work describes the progressive and different types of predicates with the progressive. His classification of predicates is different from that in Leech's and Biber et al.'s works, and he puts forward some new perspectives such as 'liminal states' etc.

Through cross-linguistic comparison in 'Progressive and Continuous Aspect' (2012), Mair demonstrates that the progressive and continuous aspect can be expressed morphologically and syntactically, and the degrees of grammaticalization of progressive and continuous aspect are quite different from one language to another. Moreover the progressive aspect interacts with other tense and aspect domains in a complex way.

His corpus-based research on progressives finds that the discourse frequency of progressives across most spoken and written genres is dramatically increasing in English and this increase isn't due to the new forms and functions but the long established uses, as the new uses show small impact statistically. They contribute to the entrenchment of progressives in present-day English. Pragmatic and extra-linguistic factors play an important role in the grammaticalization of progressives (Mair 2012: 803–827).

Mair's works combines theories and empirical research, reviewing the traditional theories, researching historical and present-day English statistically, and looking towards the future with enlightening analyses of cross-linguistic trends in progressives.

König and Gast (2012) discuss the use of the progressive aspect in English in comparison with German. They point out that there are several uses of the progressive. The core area use is described as follows: 'a more or less punctual event (a telephone call, an explosion, the speech event, etc.) is surrounded by a more extended situation, whose temporal bounds are not specified.'(König & Gast 2012: 94–95). The progressive is mainly used for current happenings, temporal frames, backgrounding, and possible incompleteness. The extended uses are the interpretative use, the emotive use, the futurate use, and the restricted habit (König & Gast 2012: 94–95).

Progressive can also be used with copula verb *be* plus adjective or noun.

(3.16) You are being polite.
(3.17) Johnny is being a policeman.

The use with adjective in (3.16) describes a temporary willful behaviour and the use with nominal predication as (3.17) implies play-acting.

**Progressive and narrative present**

In the narrative present, the present tense is used to refer to a past situation (Comrie 1976: 73). He gives an example,

(3.18) I'm sitting on the verandah when up comes Joe and says… I was sitting on the verandah when up comes Joe and says…

This use shifts the tense, using present for past. The distinction between progressive and non-progressive is retained in the narrative present (Comrie 1976: 73).

The distinction between progressive and non-progressive of the past tense is retained in the historic present.

The commentary use of the present is found when it provides a commentary for a film, a football match, or a horse-race. In such cases we find perfect simultaneity between events and their narration. In this use, the structure is the narrative one in present time, the distinction between progressive or non-progressive is optional. (In English, the non-Progressive

Present of nonstative verbs tends to be restricted to habitual actions, and Progressive Present can be used for all nonhabitual actions.) The non-progressive form is preferred when a rapid series of actions has to be commented on as they are happening. This use 'shifted the tense, e.g. present for past, and either shifted aspect in accordance with normal usage in the present, or retains aspect in accordance with the distinction between description and narration' (Comrie 1976: 77).

#### 3.5.2.2 Perfect

The perfect relates some state to a preceding situation. It expresses 'a relation between two time-points, on the one hand, the time of the state resulting from a prior situation, and on the other the time of that prior situation' (Comrie 1976: 52). The present perfect expresses a relation between present state and past situation. The past perfect (pluperfect) describes a relation between a past state and an even earlier situation. The future perfect states a relation between a future state and a situation prior to it. Comrie gives a general definition of perfect as 'the continuing relevance of a previous situation' (Comrie 1976: 56). He classifies the meaning of the perfect into the perfect of result, the experiential perfect, the perfect of persistent situation, and the perfect of recent past.

The perfect of result denotes that a present state is referred to as being the result of some past situation. *Tom has arrived* indicates persistence of the result of Tom's arrival and he's still here while *Tom arrived* does not highlight the result and even suggests that he may have left again.

The experiential perfect indicates a given situation has held at least once during some time in the past leading up to the present. In English, the use of *be* and *go* can illustrate the overt difference. *He has gone to America* is the perfect of result, indicating the he is now in America, which is the present result of his past action of going. However, *He has been to America* is the experiential perfect, indicating there is at least one occasion that he went to America. Nevertheless, English and most European languages don't make any systematic distinction between the perfect of result and the experiential perfect

(Comrie 1976: 59).

Perfect of persistent situation describes a situation that started in the past but continues into the present. The English perfect has this characteristic (Comrie 1976: 60). *They have lived here for five years* expresses that they started to live here five years ago and continue to live here till now.

The perfect of recent past indicates that the present relevance of the past situation referred to is simply one of temporal closeness, or very recent. The degree of recentness varies among languages which use the perfect to express recent past time reference. In English, only the adverb *recently* and its synonyms are allowed, and any other specification of past time or period is not allowed (Comrie 1976: 61). *Tom has just arrived* is perfect of recent past, with *just* indicating that the event happened few minutes ago.

Timberlake states that perfect presents a situation as a state. 'The contextual occasion of a (present) perfect includes the here-and-now of the speech event and extends back, as a continuous interval, to include the actual event reported by the predicate' (Timberlake 2007: 289).

The difference between the past tense and the perfect is about orientation and continuity. In the past tense, the earlier situations are viewed from a past reference point and disconnected from the present. However, the perfect relates the present situation to a prior one which is embedded in an extended interval of the present and accessed from the present (Timberlake 2007: 290, 291).

Timberlake divides the uses of the perfect into an existential perfect and a universal perfect. The existential perfect indicates that a state has been in effect or a liminal event has occurred at some anterior time, just as *I have been to England before*.

The universal perfect indicates that a situation holds continuously over all subintervals of an extended interval from the past up through the present (Timberlake 2007: 291). Examples are *You have known me for long. She has lived here all her life here.*

The existential perfect and the universal perfect are used with different kinds of durational intervals. One occasion falls within a continuous interval of possible occasions in an existential reading, while a continuous activity or state holds universally over all relevant subintervals in a universal reading

(Timberlake 2007: 291). The difference can be illustrated by *Since 1942, John has been to Boston only once* and *John has been in Boston since yesterday* (Timberlake 2007: 291).

Biber et al.'s work (1999) defines perfect aspect as 'designating events or states taking place during a period leading up to the specified time.' (Biber et al. 1999: 460). The perfect aspect is marked by the auxiliary verb *have* + *-ed* participle.

The past perfect refers to a time that is earlier than some specified past time. It is anchored by time adverbials or dependent clauses which overtly identify a time frame as time reference. (Biber et al. 1999: 470)

Biber et al. also discuss the difference between present perfect and simple past. Although both present perfect and simple past can refer to an event or a state in the past, and a state that existed for a period of time, they are different in whether the state still exists in the present time. 'The present perfect describes a situation that continues to exist up to the present time, while the past tense describes a situation that no longer exists or an event that took place at a particular time in the past.' (Biber et al. 1999: 467) The time adverbials that can be used with them are also quite different. The time adverbials with past tense include *then*, which marks a simple progression of past events, *in, during*, which delimit a period or duration of past time, thus marking a clear ending point before the present time (Biber et al. 1999: 467). The time adverbials with present perfect indicate duration or a time period, either marking the beginning point or the duration of the period, but not the ending time, such as *since, already* (Biber et al. 1999: 468).

The past perfect refers to a time before a past time. The time reference of the past perfect is often anchored by time adverbials and dependent clauses (Biber et al. 1999: 469).

König and Gast (2012) discuss the present perfect when comparing English and German. They summarize the use of present perfect as the following: universal use, existential use, resultative use, and hot-news perfect. They point out that different types of present perfect relate to different types of verbs or verb phrases and their aktionsart / actionality.

The universal use is usually used with state verbs and activity verbs, as in the example *John has worked for that company all his life*. It 'assert the

continuation of a state, a habit or activity up to the moment of speech' (König & Gast 2012: 90).

The existential use is often used with 'bounded events in the past that are not located in time', as in *Have you been to America?* (König & Gast 2012: 90)

Resultative perfect is mainly used with 'change-of-state verbs (i.e. achievements and accomplishments)' as in *Someone has taken my car* (König & Gast 2012: 91).

Hot-news perfect is used for 'an event in the very recent past that is unknown to the hearer', as in *Chancellor Schröder has resigned after all* (12 October 2005) (König & Gast 2012: 91).

#### 3.5.2.3 Perfect progressive

The perfect progressive is the combination of perfect and progressive with the form to *have* + *been* + v-*ing* participle.

Leech states that all features of meaning associated with the perfect aspect and the progressive aspect also appear in the perfect progressive somehow. The present perfect progressive means 'a temporary situation leading up to the present moment' (Leech 1997: 49). It demonstrates the features: the happening 'has duration', 'has limited duration', 'continues up to the present or recent past', 'need not be complete', 'may have effects which are still apparent' (Leech 1997: 52). Momentary event verbs are normally difficult to use with the perfect progressive. It is rarely used with the passive voice, and less commonly used in 'the iterative sense of temporary habit up to the present'. And the past perfect progressive can be used like the present perfect progressive with the definite past-in-the-past meaning.

## 3.6 Tense and aspect in Chinese

### 3.6.1 Tense in Chinese

Comrie mentions that different societies have different conceptualizations of

time. A general theory about tense valid for any language should not be based on culture-specific concepts of time, and it should be appropriate to all cultures and thus to all languages (Comrie 1985: 3). Many cultures lack conceptualization of progress. He illustrates that lack of concept of or interest in progress does not mean lack of concept of time. The same logic applies to tense and time. The lack of a grammatical device for expressing location in time does not mean the lack of a concept of time or having radically different concept of time (Comrie 1985: 4).

According to Comrie there are three kinds of expressions for locating in time:

a. Lexically composite expressions, such as ten minutes after he left. This is the largest set and potentially infinite.
b. Lexical items that express location in time, such as today, tomorrow, now etc.
c. Grammatical categories. English has grammaticalised expressions of location in time: the tenses present, past, future, etc. (Comrie 1985: 8)

However, Chinese does not have grammatical devices to express time. It is generally recognized as a tenseless language (cf. Comrie 1976; Comrie 1985; Smith 1990; Smith 1997: 32). Chinese uses lexical device such as adverb of time or phrases to express location of time without morphological/inflectional changes on the verbs, and time reference also depends largely on the contexts.

(3.19) a.
wǒ zuótiān qù běijīng le
我 昨 天 去 北 京 了。
I yesterday go Beijing AUX
'I went to Beijing yesterday.'

b.
wǒ jīntiān qù běijīng
我 今 天 去 北 京。
I today go Beijing
'I will go to Beijing today.'

wǒ míngtiān qù běijīng
c. 我 明 天 去 北 京。
I tomorrow go Beijing
'I will go to Beijing tomorrow.'

jīnnián zhěng gè xiàtiāndōu tèbié rè tā méiyǒuchūqù lǚyóu
(3.20) 今 年 整 个 夏 天 都 特别 热，他 没 有 出去 旅游。
This year whole CLF summer all very hot, he not go out travel
'The whole summer this year was especially hot, so he did not travel.'

From the examples (3.19a), (3.19b), and (3.19c), no matter what the time reference is, yesterday, today, or tomorrow, there is no inflectional change on the verbs, in other words, Chinese does not mark tense on verbs, as the time words in these examples already state the time clearly. In example (3.20), the context of *this whole summer was hot* shows that the summer passed, therefore, the time reference of the following sentence is implied by the context, and it should be some event in the past. Therefore, the time reference can be either identified through time words or phrases, or implied by the context, rather than through grammatical means (i.e. tense) in Chinese.

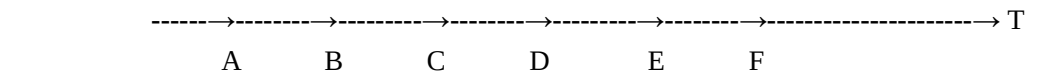
### 3.6.2 Aspect in Chinese

It was shown in the previous section that Chinese does not have tense. It does, however, have grammatical aspectual distinctions. The following section will review the research and theories on Chinese aspects and provide illustration for the use of aspects in Mandarin Chinese.

Lü Shuxiang (1942) explains that there are twelve forms to express aspects in Modern Mandarin Chinese. They are progressive aspect marked by 着 *zhe*, perfect aspect marked by 了 *le*, close past aspect marked by 来着 *laizhe*, inceptive aspect marked by 起来 *qǐlái*, continuative aspect marked by 下去 *xiàqu*, short durative aspect marked by overlapping verbs, predicting future action marked by 去 *qu*, 来 *lai*, an action which has happened marked by 一把 *yiba*, 一指头 *yizhitou*, an action which happened more times marked by 两下 *liangxia*, a short durative, trying or frequent action marked by

overlapping verbs, and repeated action marked by 又 *you*, …来 *lai*…去 *qu*.

Wang Li (1944) holds that there are six special aspects which are similar to the some aspects mentioned by Lü Shuxiang and another simple aspect without specific marking in Modern Mandarin Chinese. He summarizes them on a time line as below,




A is before the action, BE is an action, B is the starting point of the action, C means right after the starting-point, D is in the process of the action, E is the end of the action, F means right after the action. The six aspects are: progressive aspect 着 *zhe* (BE), perfect aspect 了 *le* (E), close past aspect 来着 *laizhe* (EF), inceptive aspect 起来 *qǐlái* (AB), continuative aspect 下去 *xiàqu* (DE), and short durative aspect by using overlapping verbs (BC).

According to Gao Mingkai (1948), there are six aspects in Modern Mandarin Chinese, namely, progressive aspect marked by 着 zhe, 在 *zài*, 正在 *zhengzai*, 正在…着 *zhengzai*…*zhe*; perfect aspect marked by 了 *le*, 过 *guo*, 好 *hao*; resultative aspect marked by 着 *zhe*, 住 *zhu*, 得 *de*, 到 *dao*, 中 *zhong*; inceptive aspect marked by 刚 *gang*, 才 *cai*, 恰 *qia*; overlapping aspect marked by overlapping verbs; emphasis aspect marked by combining synonymic verbs.

Zhao Yuanren (1968) distinguishes seven aspect forms, five of them are the same as the ones distinguished by Wang Li's idea except 来着 *laizhe*, and adds another two forms. The seven aspect forms are progressive aspect 着 *zhe*, perfect aspect 了 *le*, inceptive aspect 起来 *qǐlái*, continuative aspect 下去 *xiàqu*, short durative aspect by using overlapping verbs, infinitive past marked by 过 *guo*, and 法(子) *fa*(*zi*).

It can be seen that Lü Shuxiang, as one of the most famous grammarians in China, first put forward the aspect forms in Modern Chinese in the early 1940s and was followed by other scholars such as Wang Li, Gao Mingkai, and Zhao Yuanren, who suggested similar inventories with fewer categories or omission of some categories. They started the pioneering work on Modern Chinese grammar. Although their work might be not comprehensive, it laid a good foundation for Chinese grammar research.

Later from the perspective of typology and general linguistics, Comrie

discussed the aspects in Mandarin Chinese. Thereafter, Dai Yaojing gave a more detailed and comparatively comprehensive description about aspect system in Modern Chinese. Xiao and McEnery proposed a two-component model based on their corpus research on aspect in Chinese.

Comrie (1976) points out that there are two ways of formally expressing aspectual oppositions in languages, namely, morphological (synthetic) and syntactic (analytic) (Comrie 1976: 87). The progressive in English exemplifies the syntactic way. In the morphological means of expressing aspectual oppositions, there are two types: there is a clearly identifiable marker of aspect or of one member of an aspectual opposition in some languages, and there is no such marker in some other languages (Comrie 1976: 88). He takes the Chinese *-zhe* (Progressive marker) as the typical example of morphological means. He also mentions that Mandarin Chinese has a number of verbal suffixes with aspectual value, or combined aspectual and temporal value, for example progressive *-zhe*, perfective *-le* (Comrie 1976:128). Comrie holds that the verbal particle *-le* indicates perfective aspect and relative past time reference (Comrie 1976: 58). Used with stative predicates, it indicates a state resulting from some previous situation. He points out that the marker of the experiential perfect is the toneless suffix *-guo*.

Dai Yaojing (1997) argues that there are mainly two super-categories: an outside view and an inside view, and three sub-categories of each kind of view. The outside view describes a complete event and reveals the entirety of the event, which is not decomposed into parts. For the outside view, there are the actual aspect marked by 了 *le*, the experiential aspect marked by 过 *guo*, and the short duration aspect marked by overlapping verbs. The inside view describes an incomplete event which can be decomposed into several sections. For the inside view, there are the durative aspect marked by 着 *zhe*, the inceptive aspect marked by 起来 *qǐlái*, and the continuative aspect marked by 下去 *xiàqu*.

The actual aspect 了 *le* expresses three features of events: dynamic, complete and realized. The dynamism reflects that a certain change happens in some stages of the event (beginning, middle, or ending stage) but does not emphasize the movement or action in the process. The completeness reveals the entirety of the event, and points out that it cannot be decomposed and does

not emphasize the event's ending. The realization means that the event has happened, and it is realized before the reference time (past, present or future) (Dai 1997: 56–57).

The experiential aspect 过 *guo* expresses a dynamic and complete event in the past. The dynamism features the historical change, the completeness means the entirety in the past, the historicalness points out that the event happened in the past no matter what the reference time is (Dai 1997: 67).

The short-duration aspect marked by overlapping verbs with form 'VV' expresses a short-durative, complete and dynamic event. It indicates strong dynamism. There are some restrictions on the verbs. The overlapping form cannot be applied to most of the disyllable verbs. The overlapping verbs emphasize the short duration and non-continuousness, and are often used for future events. Short duration is actually an abstract concept and cannot be numerically measured through the length of time. The implication of trying, relaxing, and lightness derives from the short duration (Dai 1997: 79).

The durative aspect 着 *zhe* features incomplete, progressive, dynamic-stative meaning. It is incomplete as it is viewed from the inside of an event, therefore temporal phrases, measure words for verbs, and resultative phrases cannot coexist with progressive aspect. 'Durative' describes the continuous status of the event. Momentary verbs with durative aspect express repetition of the action or the plural meaning of the subject. The strength of dynamic or stative features is related to the semantic types of verbs. The durative aspect 着 *zhe* and the perfect aspect 了 *le* are not interchangeable (Dai 1997: 93–94).

The inceptive aspect 起来 *qǐlái* expresses that the event starts and will continue. The usage of 起来 *qǐlái* relates to the process of developing, and still carries obvious semantic meaning. It reflects the starting change with strong dynamism. It is often used with adjectives. 起来 *qǐlái* can be used separately in verb-object structures, with the form 'verb + 起 *qǐ* + object + 来 *lai'*, and the meaning remains the same. Therefore it is regarded as a variant of 起来 *qǐlái*. It can also be used with actual aspect 了 *le*, revealing the relative completeness of the beginning part (Dai 1997: 101).

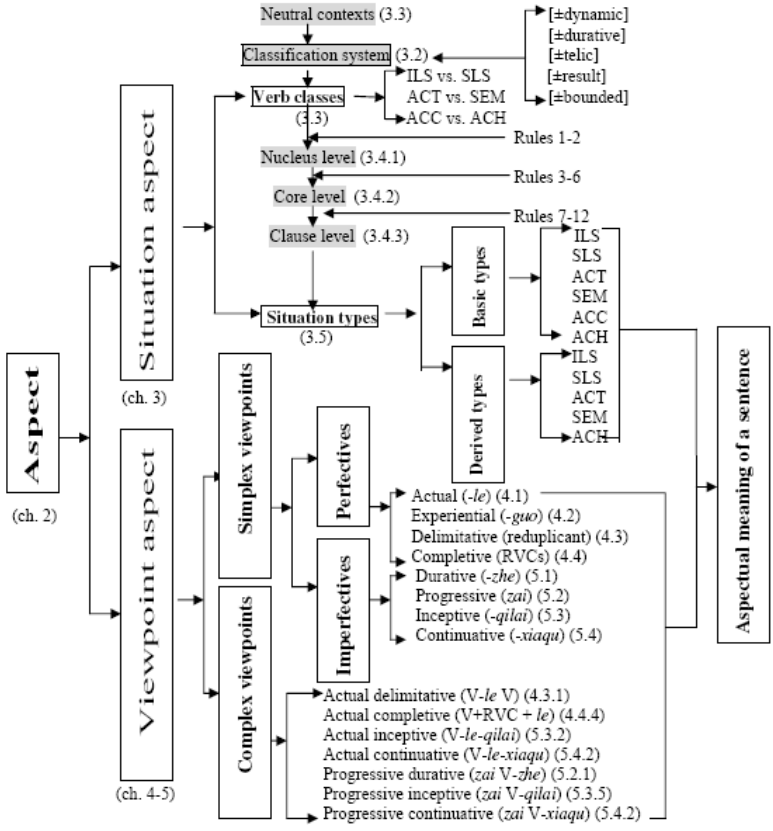
The continuative aspect 下去 *xiàqu* means that the event develops to a certain point and continues. It decomposes the event into sections, and they

can be connected or unconnected sections. The decomposed event can be regarded as an independent event, therefore 下去 *xiàqu* can be combined with 了 *le* to express a relatively complete realization of a continuing state (Dai 1997: 104–105).

In short, according to Dai Yaojing (1997), there are altogether six aspects in Modern Chinese, namely, actual aspect 了 le, experiential aspect 过 *guo*, short duration aspect marked by overlapping verbs, durative aspect 着 *zhe*, inceptive aspect 起来 *qǐlái*, and continuative aspect 下去 *xiàqu*.

Xiao and McEnery (2004: 10) refines and expands Smith's model of aspect (Smith 1991; Smith 1997) and proposes the two-component model of aspect in Mandarin Chinese (see Figure 3.3) base on corpus research.

Figure 3.3: The two-component model of aspect in Mandarin Chinese (Xiao & McEnery 2004: 10)



In this model, aspect is composed of situation aspect and viewpoint aspect. Situation aspect refers to the 'intrinsic aspectual properties of situations', modeled as 'verb classes' and 'situation types', operating at the semantic level, while viewpoint aspect refers to the 'speakers' choice of a perspective from which a situation is presented', operating at the grammatical level (Xiao & McEnery 2004: 10). And the difference of the operation levels 'determines that situation aspect is language independent whereas viewpoint aspect is language specific.' (Xiao & McEnery 2004: 31).

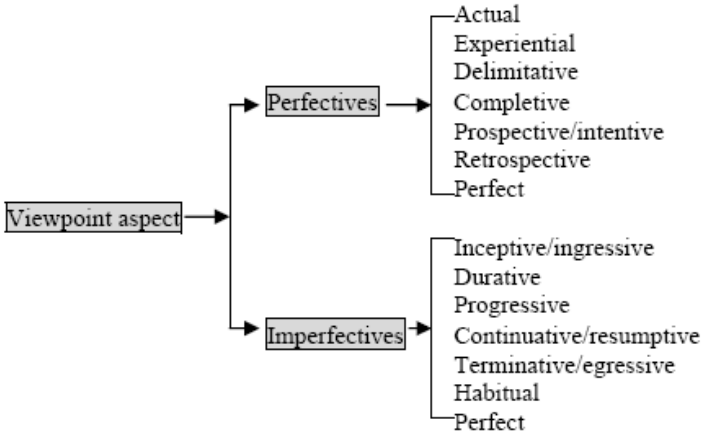
Situation aspect is modeled as 'verb classes' at the lexical level and as 'situation types' at the sentential level (Xiao & McEnery 2004: 10). It is the aspectual classification of verbs and situations based on their temporal features. The aspectual classification is concerned with how people describe the world not what the world itself is. Different interpretations can be given to the same object in the world, and the situation may be presented with more than one viewpoint and situation type (Xiao & McEnery 2004: 22).

Situation aspect is modeled as 'verb classes' at the lexical level and as 'situation types' at the sentential level. At the lexical level, the classification system for verb classes is based on five feature parameters: [ ±dynamic ], [ ±durative ], [ ±telic ], [ ±result ], and [ ±bounded ]. It classifies verbs into six classes: activities vs. semelfactive, accomplishments vs. achievements, and individual-level states (ILSs) vs. stage-level states (SLSs) (Xiao & McEnery 2004: 54). At the sentential level, situation aspect is 'a composite result of the interaction between a basic verb class and its complements, NP-arguments, PP-arguments and non-arguments such as adjuncts and viewpoint aspect' (Xiao & McEnery 2004: 54). There are three syntactic units at the sentential level: nucleus, core and clause. This model proposes 12 rules for the composition of situation aspect at the nucleus level, at the core level and at the clause level.

Viewpoint aspect is divided into simplex viewpoints and complex viewpoints. The simplex viewpoints include the perfectives and the imperfectives. 'The perfective/imperfective dichotomy is a central opposition in viewpoint aspect.' (Xiao & McEnery 2004: 22). Perfectives view a situation as a whole while imperfectives focus on a portion of its internal constituency (Xiao & McEnery 2004: 23) and view a situation from within (Comrie 1976:

24). According to Xiao and McEnery's definition, in perfectives, there are actual, experiential, delimitative, completive, prospective, retrospective / intentive and perfect viewpoints. In imperfectives, there are inceptive / ingressive, durative, progressive, continuative / resumptive, terminative / egressive, habitual and perfect viewpoints (see Figure 3.4, Xiao & McEnery 2004: 24).

Figure 3.4: Viewpoint aspect (Xiao & McEnery 2004: 24)




Among perfectives, the actual aspect reveals 'the actualisation or realisation of a situation and presents it in its entirety'; the experiential aspect stresses that 'something has been experienced prior to a particular reference time'; the delimitative aspect points out that 'a situation lasts for a brief period'; the completive aspect emphasizes that 'an event has come to its completion'; the prospective aspect 'encodes a point just prior to the beginning of a situation and signals that the situation itself is yet to come with no reference to its internal structure'; the retrospective aspect 'encodes a point immediately subsequent to the final endpoint of a situation and signals that the situation has ended' (Xiao & McEnery 2004: 25).

In imperfectives, the inceptive aspect focuses on 'the initial endpoint of a situation'; the durative aspect concentrates on 'the durative segment of a situation'; the terminative aspect focuses on 'the final endpoint of a situation'; the continuative aspect concentrates on 'the continuative stage following a

definite temporal point between the initial and final endpoints of a situation'; the progressive aspect points out 'ongoing nature of the situation'; the habitual aspect refers to 'a situation that is protracted over a long period, or a situation that occurs so frequently during an extended period that the situation becomes characteristic of the whole period' (Xiao & McEnery 2004: 25).

The perfect aspect can be subcategorized into four types according to Comrie (1976: 56). The perfect of result, the perfect of experience, the perfect of recent past are perfective, and the perfect of persistent situation is imperfective. Therefore, the perfect aspect appears in both perfective and imperfective categories in the figure.

Based on Xiao and McEnery's definition of viewpoint aspect, there are four perfective viewpoints and four imperfective viewpoints in Mandarin Chinese. According to this model, perfective aspects include the actual aspect marked by 了 *le*, the experiential aspect marked by 过 *guo*, the delimitative aspect marked by verb reduplication, and the completive aspect marked by resultative verb complements. As they state, the actual viewpoint 'signals the actualisation or realisation of a situation and presents it in its entirety'. The experiential aspect points out that 'something has been experienced prior to a particular reference time'. The delimitative aspect means that 'a situation lasts for a brief period'. The completive aspect stresses that 'an event has come to its completion' (Xiao & McEnery 2004:25). Imperfective aspects are the durative aspect marked by 着 *zhe*, the progressive aspect marked by 在 *zài*, the inceptive aspect marked by 起来 *qǐlái*, and the continuative aspect marked by 下去 *xiàqu* (McEnery & Xiao 2010: 10–11). The durative aspect focuses on 'the durative segment of a situation'. The progressive aspect reveals the 'ongoing nature of the situation'. The inceptive aspect focuses on the initial point of a situation. The continuative aspect focuses on 'the continuative stage following a definite temporal point between the initial and final endpoints of a situation' (Xiao & McEnery 2004: 25).

As Xiao and McEnery's theory on aspects in Mandarin Chinese is more systematic in structure, comprehensive in content, and covers the most historically discussed issues, this study will mainly take their theory (2004) as a basic framework for describing and explaining aspects in Chinese. In addition, it will refer to theoretical concepts and ideas from Lü Shuxiang's

*Eight Hundred Words in Contemporary Chinese* (现代汉语八百词 *Xiàndài Hànyǔ Bābǎi Cí*) (Lü 1999), Liu Yuehua's *Practical Contemporary Chinese Grammar* (实用现代汉语语法 *Shíyòng Xiàndài Hànyǔ Yǔfǎ*) (Liu 2001), and Dai Yaojing's *Research on Aspect System in Modern Chinese* (Dai 1997). All these theories will contribute to the systematic description of aspects in Chinese in the subsequent comparison with English. The following part will introduce the eight aspect markers in Mandarin Chinese and summarize the views of Xiao and McEnery, Lü Shuxiang, Liu Yuehua, and Dai Yaojing.

The four perfective aspects are: the actual aspect marked by 了 *le*, the experiential aspect marked by 过 *guo*, the delimitative aspect marked by verb reduplication, and the completive aspect marked by resultative verb complements. The four imperfective aspects are: the durative aspect marked by 着 *zhe*, the progressive aspect marked by 在 *zài*, the inceptive aspect marked by 起来 *qǐlái*, and the continuative aspect marked by 下去 *xiàqu*.

#### 3.6.2.1 The actual aspect 了 *le*

*Eight Hundred Words in Contemporary Chinese* (Lü 1999: 351) states that there are two types of *le*, $le_1$ is used after verbs, indicating the completion of an action. $Le_2$ is used at the end of a sentence, confirming that a certain change happens, or will happen, and has a function of composing a sentence.

Liu Yuehua's *Practical Contemporary Chinese Grammar* (实用现代汉语语法 *Shíyòng Xiàndài Hànyǔ Yǔfǎ*) (Liu 2001: 362–392) argues that there are two types of 了 *le*: 1) as a verb auxiliary, used after a verb 2) as a particle auxiliary, used at the end of sentence. As a verb auxiliary, it indicates that the action has happened when the verb is an action verb such as 跑 *run*, 跳 *jump*, 搬 *move*, 看 *read* etc, as in example (3.21). When the verb is a state verb such as 生气 *angry*, 醉 *drunk* etc. as in example (3.22), it indicates that the state has appeared. Whether the action continues or is completed depends on the verb and the context. Whether the state continues or stopped depends also on the context. When the verb is terminative verb which means it is completed as soon as it happens, such as 死 *die*, 丢 *lost*, 扔 *throw*, etc, it indicates that the action has happened and stopped, as in example (3.23).

wǒ kàn le nǐ delùnwén
(3.21) 我 看 了你的论 文。
I read AUX your essay
'I have read your essay.'

tā bìng le sì tiān le
(3.22) 她 病 了 四 天 了。
She sick AUX four days AUX
'She has been ill for four days.'

tā diū le yī běn shū
(3.23) 他 丢 了 一 本 书。
He lost AUX one CLF book
'He has lost a book.'

*Le* does not indicate the time of the event, but there is usually a time phrase showing the time that the action or the state happens. If there is no time phrase, it means the time is the speaking time, the present. As *le* indicates the event or the state has happened, the time phrases in the sentence with *le* are usually the past time. Only when *le* is used after the first verb in the two verb structures or conditional sentence, the time is possible the future, as in example (3.24).

míngtiān wǒ xià le bān jiù lái zhǎo nǐ
(3.24) 明 天 我 下了 班 就 来 找 你。
Tomorrow I offAUX work just come find you
'As soon as I get off work tomorrow, I will come to find you.'

The particle *le* used in the end of sentence indicates a change, some new situation happens. Neither does it denote the time. It is often used in the sentence about past actions or states, but the present time is also possible. It can be used in the following situations: 1) from 'not happen' to 'happen'; 2) from 'not completed' to 'completed'; 3) from 'in progress' to 'stop'; 4) the state or the characteristic of things changes; 5) willing or ability changes; 6) time, season, age or number changes. When using the particle *le* to indicate that some new situation comes into being, the speaker has a special purpose in

mind, such as to attract attentions, to remind, to suggest (example 3.25), to persuade (example 3.26), to question (example 3.27), or to comment etc.

bù zǎo le wǒmen gǎnkuài huí qù ba
(3.25) 不 早 了，我 们 赶 快 回 去 吧。(suggestion)
Not early AUX, we quickly back AUX
'It is not early now, let's go back quickly.'

tiān hēi le bié chūqùsànbù le
(3.26) 天 黑 了， 别 出 去 散 步 了。(persuading)
Sky dark AUX, don't out go walk AUX
'It's getting dark, don't go out to have a walk.'

nǐ mǎshàngjiù bìyè le yǒushénme dǎsuàn
(3.27) 你 马 上 就 毕业 了，有 什 么 打 算 ？(question)
You soon just graduate AUX, have what plan
'You are going to graduate soon, what do you plan to do?'

It also completes a sentence. Without it, the sentence seems to be incomplete. It indicates where a sentence, or a passage ends, through its function of separating sentences or passages. However, if the subject or the topic does not change (stays the same) and the clause or the sentence is completed, *le* cannot be used at the end of clauses or sentences.

The actual aspect 了 *le* shows the temporal features of actuality, holisticity and dynamicity (Xiao & McEnery 2004: 89).

As Xiao and McEnery state, the actual aspect 了 *le* is different from the Change of State 了 *le* syntactically, semantically, historically, and empirically although they have the same character in Chinese. The actual aspect 了 *le* occurs in verb-final position signaling the actuality with higher productivity, while the Change of State 了 *le* appears in sentence-final position expressing a change of state and is less productive. They developed at different stages historically (Xiao & McEnery 2004: 93).

Their corpus findings show that whether *le* signals completion or termination depends on whether the situation is telic or atelic. Telic situations are completed while atelic situations are terminated when they interact with *le* (Xiao & McEnery 2004: 95). They explain that 'when a telic situation is

presented perfectively as a single unanalyzable whole, its inherent final spatial endpoint is naturally included, thus resulting in a completive reading. On the other hand, an atelic situation does not have an inherent final spatial endpoint, so when it is presented perfectively, only an arbitrary final temporal endpoint is included. Thus a terminated reading is appropriate.' (Xiao & McEnery 2004: 97)

The actual aspect *le* interacts with all situation types in Chinese. *Le* tends to co-occur with spatially or temporally bounded situations. When it is used with unbounded situations, it demonstrates the feature of ingressive dynamicity and coerces these situations into derived activities at the clause level. *Le*, as a perfective marker, only indicates the actualization and focuses on the totality of a situation but does not indicate any final endpoint (Xiao & McEnery 2004: 113).

#### 3.6.2.2 The experiential aspect marked by 过 *guo*

As one of the perfective viewpoints in Chinese, the experiential aspect 过 *guo* presents a situation or an event as a whole, and focuses on experientiality. It is not the same as the English perfect as '过 *guo* can only be identified with the perfect of experience' (Xiao & McEnery 2004: 150). Nor is it the same as the RVC (Resultative Verb Complements) 过 *guo*. The completive RVC 过 *guo* signals completiveness, while the aspect marker 过 *guo* focuses on experientiality (Xiao & McEnery 2004: 153). It interacts with all types of situation, dynamicity, telicity and boundedness, though with unbalanced distribution (Xiao & McEnery 2004: 154). It denotes experientiality, holisticity, and dynamicity of a situation (Xiao & McEnery 2004: 150).

The experiential aspect 过 *guo* indicates that a situation is experienced before a certain reference time. Its feature of experientiality means that it rarely co-occurs with future situations or with imperatives (Xiao & McEnery 2004: 155). On the other hand, it often co-occurs with the adverb 曾 *ceng* and 曾经 *cengjing* (once), emphasizing the experientiality (Xiao & McEnery 2004: 157).

It presents a situation as an experienced whole, featuring holisticity (Xiao

and McEnery 2004: 157). Although it occurs mostly with repeatable situations, it can also be used with some nonrepeatable situations. No matter whether a situation is repeatable, countable, logically decomposable or not, the situation becomes a holistic whole when the speaker chooses experiential viewpoint (Xiao & McEnery 2004: 159).

It also indicates experiential change, which is the dynamicity.

According to Liu Yuehua's *Practical Contemporary Chinese Grammar* (2001), auxiliary 过 *guo* indicates that an action happened or a state existed in the past, but it does not exist anymore now. The action or state relates to the matter in discussion at the present, or has an impact on it. It is a grammatical expression of experience.

(3.28) A: tā dào déguó yǐ hòu xíguàn ma
他 到 德国 以后 习 惯 吗？(Liu 2001: 399)
He arrive Germany after accustomed AUX
'Does he get accustomed to Germany after arriving there?'

B: tā xué guò déwén,
他 学 过 德文，
He learn AUX German
'He has learnt German,'

suǒyǐ dào déguó yǐ hòuhěn kuài jiù shìyìng le
所以到 德国 以后 很 快 就 适 应 了。
so arrive Germany after very quick just accustomed AUX
'therefore he gets accustomed to the life in Germany very quickly after arriving.'

The 过 *guo* in example (3.28) explains that he has experiences of learning German, and that is why he can get accustomed to the life there fast. It indicates the impact of learning German on the matter under current discussion.

The sentence containing experiential 过 *guo* does not convey the ultimate information, which another sentence sometimes may contain. The listeners can get the ultimate meaning/implication even when sometimes this sentence does not exist. The function of experiential 过 *guo* is explanatory, often explaining

certain reason, certain relation between people or events.

nǐ qù guò xiānggǎng ma
(3.29) A: 你 去 过 香 港 吗? (Liu 2001: 400)
You go AUX Hong Kong AUX
'Have you been to Hong Kong?'
qù guò shénme shì
B: 去 过。什 么 事?
Go AUX what thing
'Yes, I have. Anything (you want to know)?'
wǒxīngqīrì qù xiānggǎng xūyào dài máoyī ma
A: 我 星 期日 去 香 港，需要 带 毛 衣 吗?
I Sunday go Hong Kong, need take sweater AUX
'I am going to Hong Kong this Sunday. Should I take my sweaters?'
bù xūyào nàer yǐjīng rè le
B: 不 需 要，那儿 已 经 热 了。
No need there already warm AUX
'No, it is not necessary. It is warm there.'

In example (3.29), A wants to know not only whether B has been to Hong Kong, but actually the weather there. The question about necessity of taking sweaters is the ultimate concern.

míngtiān yìqǐ qù kàn diànyǐng hǎo ma
(3.30) A: 明 天 一起 去 看 电 影 "***" 好 吗?
Tomorrow together go see film ok AUX
'Shall we go to see the film '***' tomorrow?'
zhèdiànyǐng wǒshàngzhōukàn guò le
B: 这 电 影 我 上 周 看 过 了。
This film I last week see AUX AUX
'I saw it last week.'
ò nà wǒmen qù gōngyuán ba
A: 哦，那 我 们 去 公 园 吧。
Ok, then we go park AUX

'Ok, how about going to a park then?'

In example (3.30), 过 *guo* indicates that B has seen the film, and A can get the implication that she does not want to go to see this film again even though B only uses 过 *guo*, without uttering that she would not want to see it. 过 *guo* is used to give a reason for that.

It can be used after action verbs, stative verbs, copular verbs, and adjectives. It cannot be used with actions that only occur once and cannot be repeated, or cognitive verbs such as 知道 *know*, 忘 *forget*, 认识 *recognize* etc, but it can be used with these verbs in sentences with negation. It is often used with some time phrases, such as 以前 *before*, 过去 *in the past*, 从前 *once upon a time*, 刚才 *just now*, 昨天 *yesterday* etc. as in the example (3.31).

(3.31)
zhè gè diànyǐng wǒ yǐ qián kàn guò dànshì xiànzài jì bùqīng le
这 个 电 影 我 以 前 看 过 ，但 是 现 在 记 不 清 了。
This CLF film I before see AUX but now remember not AUX
'I watched this movie before, but I cannot remember it clearly now.'

### 3.6.2.3 The delimitative aspect marked by verb reduplication

According to *Practical Contemporary Chinese Grammar* (Liu 2001: 160–164), verb reduplication, monosyllable verb as AA, disyllable verb as ABAB, has a special grammatical meaning and functions. The basic grammatical meaning is to indicate a short duration or a low frequency of an action. When the verb denotes a durative action, verb reduplication signals a short duration. When the verb indicates a non-durative but repeatable action, verb reduplication signals the low frequency of the action (Liu 2001: 160). Its function relates to the time frame of the action. When it is used with an action that has not yet happened, it softens the tone to express a wish. As verb reduplication conveys a meaning of 'a little bit', when the speakers use it to express their requirement, command, and wish, it seems that they don't need a great effort, and are not very difficult to accomplish. Thus the listener can accept that more easily. The neutral tone of the second verb in verb reduplication also makes

the tone softer.

Besides, it can also used for a casual action. When verb reduplication is used with 看 *kan*, it has tentative meaning.

When it is used with an action that has happened, sometimes combined with 了 *le* , it indicates that the duration of the action is short, or not long. The action that needs time for completing cannot be used in the form of verb reduplication. When it is used with a regular action or an action with no specific time, it delivers a meaning of 'relaxing' and 'casual'.

The verbs that can be used in reduplication are mainly durative and volitional, but when expressing tentativeness, some non-durative and non-volitional verbs may also occur. Besides, some psychological verbs or adjectives can also apply reduplication.

Verb reduplication cannot be used with the progressive aspect. It is usually functions as the predicate, sometimes as the subject or as the object as well. The negative form is rarely used, only in a rhetorical question with a tone of complaining, or a conditional contracted sentence.

Dai (1997), Xiao and McEnery (2004) regard verb reduplication as the delimitative aspect marker. Xiao and McEnery (2004: 149) state that the delimitative aspect presents a holistic transitory situation, which is marked by verb reduplication in Chinese. Verb reduplication is a verb plus its reduplicant, usually with a tonal modification (Xiao & McEnery 2004: 149). They also point out that it typically means doing something a little bit, or for a short period of time. Just as Liu (2001), they hold that reduplication of durative verbs shortens the duration of events, and reduplication of non-durative verbs lowers the frequency of events. They argue that verb reduplication is the delimitative aspect marker rather than a certain form of verbs because its central meaning is delimitativeness or transitoriness, and all the other meanings such as tentativeness, slightness, casualness, and mildness are only pragmatic extensions of its core meaning according to their corpus findings (Xiao & McEnery 2004: 152, 154). The delimitative aspect demonstrates the features of transitoriness, holisticity, and dynamicity (Xiao & McEnery 2004: 150).

wǒ xiǎngchū qù zǒuzǒu
(3.32) 我 想 出 去 走 走。
I want out go walk
'I want to go out and take a walk.'

### 3.6.2.4 The completive aspect marked by resultative verb complements

According to *Practical Contemporary Chinese Grammar* (Liu 2001: 534–544), a resultative complement indicates the results of an action or a state, which causes the state of the agent or the patient change. The resultative complement can be expressed by adjectives or verbs. It is necessary and unavoidable to use resultative complements in Chinese when narrating a concrete result due to an action or a state.

tā dǎ pò le nà gè bēizi
(3.33) a. 他 打 破 了 那 个 杯子。
He hit break AUX that CLF cup
'He hit and broke that cup.'
tā dǎ le nà gè bēizi
b. 他 打 了 那 个 杯子。
He hit AUX that CLF cup
'He hit that cup.'

Without the complement, the meaning of the sentence will not be clear. '破 broken' in example (3.33a) is the resultative verb complement.

The resultative verb complement can be used for the patient, mainly the object, such as '干净 clean' in the example (3.34).

tā cā gānjìng le zhuōzi
(3.34) 她 擦 干 净 了 桌 子。
She wipe clean AUX table
'She (wiped) cleaned the table.'

The resultative verb complement can also be used for the agent, mainly the subject, or in existence sentence, such as '懂 understand' in example (3.35).

wǒ tīng dǒng le tā de huà
(3.35) 我 听 懂 了 他 的 话。
I listen understand AUX his word
'I (listened) understood his words.'

Sometimes, the resultative verb complement can only relate to the verb, describing, commenting or explaining the action. There are two usages here: 1) describe the action 2) comment that the action does not meet certain criteria, when the resultative verb complement is adjective such as '大 big', '小 small', '快 fast', '慢 slow', '肥 fat', '瘦 slim', '轻 light', '重 heavy' etc.

tāmenshāngliáng hǎo le
(3.36) 他 们 商 量 好 了。
They discuss finish AUX
'They finished discussing.'

duìbuqǐ wǒ lái wǎnle
(3.37) 对不起，我 来 晚 了。
Sorry, I come late AUX
'Sorry, I came late.'

A verb-object structure can be used as a resultative verb complement as well.

When a verb used as a complement, it changes the original meaning. The most common cases are: 见 *jian*, 住 *zhu*, 着 *zhao*, 好 *hao*, 掉 *diao*, 在 *zai*. 见 Jian originally means 'look and see'. When used as a complement, it is only used for sensational verbs such as '看 look', '听 listen', '闻 smell' etc, indicating the result of the action. 住 *zhu* originally means 'reside'. Used as a complement, it means 'make things or people's position fixed'. 着 *zhao* originally means touch. As a complement, it means 1) arrive at the destination 2) have some bad influence on something or certain people 3) go into sleep 4)

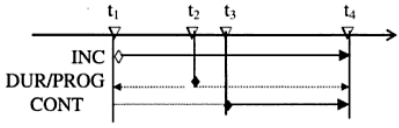
burning 5) have the qualification or responsibility. 好 *hao* as a complement, indicates that the action is finished well. 掉 *diao* as a verb means 'lose'. As a complement, it indicates 'fall off' or 'disappear'. 在 *zai* originally means 'locate'. As a complement, it indicates a location of something or some people due to an action, or indicates the time when an event happens.

Much research has overlooked the aspectual values of resultative verb complements in Chinese. Xiao and McEnery (2004: 160) hold that RVC indicating perfectivity in Chinese is the most productive grammatical method. According to their corpus findings (cf. Xiao & McEnery 2004: 159) RVC as perfective marker takes a large proportion among the others such as 了 *le*, 过 *guo*, and verb reduplication. They divide RVCs into three types: completive RVCs, result-state RVCs and directional RVCs. Based on their definition, 'completive RVCs indicate the completion while result-state RVCs denote the result-state of a situation. As a result-state only comes about when an event is completed, completion is also implied by result-state RVCs.' (Xiao & McEnery 2004: 161). They argue that *wan*, *hao, guo* are completive RVCs, and *zhao, dao, jian, zhu, cheng* are result-state RVCs. Result-state RVCs are basically adjectives, and they retain their lexical meanings. Directional RVCs have a function similar to that of result-state RVCs. They 'indicate a result-state by localizing situations with spatial specifications and by indicating resultant states' (Xiao & McEnery 2004: 165). Half of the occurrences of directional RVCs in their corpus research are aspectually related (Xiao & McEnery 2004: 165). Therefore, they conclude that an RVC indicates completion no matter which RVC type it is. The completive aspect marked by RVCs demonstrates the features of completiveness, holisticity, and dynamicity.

However, some RVCs such as adjectives (*kai*, *po*) still carry the concrete lexical meanings and cannot be analyzed as completive aspect markers, some of RVCs such as 见 *jian*, 住 *zhu*, 着 *zhao* and 好 *hao* are strong candidates for an analysis as aspectual markers, but still in the inventories of concrete lexical entries. Therefore it is not quite adequate to claim all the RVCs as completive aspect markers in Chinese. To put it specific, this research regards these complements as lexical candidates in the development of aspect markers rather than grammatical device to express aspects.

In Figure 3.5, which is adapted from Xiao and McEnery (2004: 181), $t_1$ is the initial point of a situation, $t_2$ is an indefinite point, $t_3$ is a definite point and $t_4$ is the final point. The focus of the inceptive viewpoint 起来-*qǐlái* is on $t_1$ and its following part; the focus of the durative viewpoint 着-*zhe* and the progressive viewpoint 在 *zài* are on $t_2$ and its preceding and following parts; the focus of the continuative viewpoint 下去-*xiàqu* is on $t_3$ and its following part:

Figure 3.5: Imperfective viewpoints in Chinese (Xiao & McEnery 2004: 181).




### 3.6.2.5 The durative aspect marked by 着 *zhe*

According to *Eight Hundred Words in Contemporary Chinese* (现代汉语八百词 *Xiàndài Hànyǔ Bābǎi Cí*) (Lü 1999), 着 *zhe* denotes that 1) an action is ongoing (used after a verb, the adverbs, *zheng*, *zheng*, and *zhengzai*, can be used before the verb, often with an auxiliary word *ne* at the end of sentences); 2) a durative state (usually used after verbs or adjectives); 3) existence of certain postures in existential sentences; 4) in '$V_1$ –着 *zhe* $V_2$' structure for overlapping actions; 5) in 'adj. + *zhe* + number' structure; 6) in 'verb/adj. + *zhe* + 点儿 *dianer*' structure, as a command or a reminder (Lü 1999: 665–667).

*The Practical Contemporary Chinese Grammar* (Liu 2001) states that 着 *zhe* is used to describe 'durativity' of an action or a state, or the 'ongoingness' of an action (Liu 2001: 392–399).

The main function of *着zhe* is descriptive, no matter whether it describes durativity of an action or a state (Liu 2001: 392–399).

**1.** When used to describe 'durativity' of a state, it can be used in the following situations:

a. In $V_1$-*zhe* $V_2$ structure, *zhe* indicates the state or the manner of the

second action ($V_2$), the action ($V_2$) is accompanied by the action ($V_1$).

tā wēixiào zhe shuōdào
(3.38) 她 微 笑 着 说 道。
She smile AUX say
'She said with a smile.'

In example (3.38), *zhe* indicates that the action of saying something is accompanied by a smile.

b. In $V_1$-*zhe* $V_2$ structure, $V_1$ indicates the manner or state with *zhe*, and $V_2$ expresses the reason or the purpose.

tā jí zhe gǎn chē zàijiàn yě méi láide jíshuō
(3.39) 他 急 着 赶 车，再 见 也 没 来得及 说 。
He hurry AUX catch bus goodbye yet not has time say
'He was hurrying to catch the bus, and had no time to say goodbye.'

*Zhe* in example (3.39) also indicates the hurry manner, and the reason is that he was trying to catch a bus.

c. In the existential sentences, *zhe* is used to describe a location or a person's apparel.

tā fángjiān de qiángshàng guà zhe yī fú huà
(3.40) 他 房 间 的 墙 上 挂 着 一 幅 画。
He room of wall on hang AUX one CLF picture
'There hangs a picture on the wall of his room.'

tā chuānzhe xù hé niúzǎikù
(3.41) 她 穿 着 T恤 和 牛 仔裤。
She wear AUX t-shirt and jeans
'She wears a T-shirt and a pair of jeans.'

*Zhe* in example (3.40) describes his room, pointing out that there is a picture on the wall. *Zhe* in example (3.41) portrays her apparel.

**2.** When used to describe 'durativity' of an action, it can be used in the following situations:

a. In imperative sentence, *zhe* indicates the injunction to maintain a certain state

nǐ dài zhe bié dòng wǒ guòlái
(3.42) 你 待 着， 别 动 ，我 过 来。
You stay AUX not move I come
'Please stay there, don't move, I am coming there.'

*Zhe* in example (3.42) expresses the requirement of staying there.

b. *zhe* describes that an action is going on. It is different from *zài*, as *zài* gives a narrative of an ongoing action, while *zhe* is used to describe the durative/ongoing action.

tā jìngjìng dì tīng zhe méiyǒu shuōhuà
(3.43) 他 静 静 地 听 着，没 有 说 话。
He quietly AUX listen AUX not say words
'He listened quietly, without saying anything.'

tā zài gànshénme
(3.44) A: 他 在 干 什 么？
He AUX do what
'What is he doing?'

tā zài tī zúqiú
B: 他 在 踢 足球。
He AUX play football
'He is playing football.'

tā tī zhe zúqiú
vs. 他 踢 着 足球。
He play AUX football
'He is playing football.' (same translation, as there is no such usage difference in English)

In example (3.44), one can only use *zai*, because it is a narration

answering the question ‘what is he doing’, while *zhe* describes the state.

c. In $V_1$-*zhe* $V_2$ structures, *zhe* indicates that the $V_1$ and $V_2$ almost happen at the same time. Usually it is used in the 说着就 $V_2$, providing some background information.

tā shuō zhe jiù pǎo le chūqù
(3.45) 他 说 着 就 跑 了 出 去。
He say AUX just run AUX go out
‘Just saying this, he ran out.’

*Zhe* in example (3.45) signifies that saying this is the background information of running out.

d. In ‘$V_1$ zhe $V_1$ zhe + $V_2$’ structure, zhe indicates that the action $V_1$ first happens, and the action $V_2$ happens unconsciously afterwards, meanwhile the action $V_1$ stops.

tā shuō zhe shuō zhe kū le qǐ lái
(3.46) 她 说 着 说 着 哭 了 起来。
She say AUX say AUX cry AUX begin
‘She talked about this and started to cry.’

In example (3.46), *zhe* indicates that she started to cry after she talked, and that when she cried, stopped talking.

Sometimes, a sentence expresses the same meaning with or without *zhe*. However, it makes the tone softer when using *zhe*.

tā de yǎnshén chōngmǎn zhe guānhuái
(3.47) 他的 眼 神 充 满 着 关 怀。
His eye expression full AUX care
‘The expression in his eyes is full of care.’

With *zhe*, (3.47)’s tone becomes softer.

*Zhe* is rarely used with negation, only when asking or negating a question with *zhe*.着呢 *Zhene* is used after adjectives, indicating a high degree of the

relevant property, usually containing certain emotions and exaggerations to convince the listener in colloquial sentences.

wǒmen de xiàoyuán dà zhene
(3.48) 我 们 的 校 园 大 着呢。
Our AUX campus big AUX
'Our campus is very big.'

*Zhene* in example (3.48) is used to convince the listener that the campus is big.

Xiao and McEnery argue that the durative aspect marker 着-*zhe* indicates the durative nature of a situation. It has three major functions: to express 'durativity', 'overlapping actions', and 'locative inversion and existential status', as it is stated,

> -zhe has three basic functions:
> (i) to occur with a verb or adjective to indicate the durativity of a continued dynamic or static situation;
> (ii) to serve with a verb as an adverbial modifier (i.e. the V1-zhe V2 structure) to express overlapping actions and provide background information;
> (iii) to occur in locative inversion and indicate existential status.
> (Xiao & McEnery 2004: 182).

Xiao and McEnery's classification actually is similar to Liu's, but more concise. Their (i) usage is in Liu's 2a, 2b. Their (ii) is similar to Liu' 1a, 1b, 2c, 2d, Their (iii) is Liu's 1c. Therefore their summaries of *zhe* usage are actually same.

#### 3.6.2.6 The progressive aspect marked by 在 *zài*

According to *Eight Hundred Words in Contemporary Chinese*, 在 *zài* and (正)在*(zhèng) zài* refer to ongoing activities or durative states and they are used in

front of verbs or adjectives (Lü 1999: 645, 672). The example (3.49) illustrates the typical use.

(3.49)
tāmen zài kàn shū
他 们 在 看 书。
They AUX read book
'They are reading.'

*The Practical Contemporary Chinese Grammar* explains: 在 *zài* refers to the 'ongoingness' of actions, and it can be used with 呢 *ne* and 着 *zhe* (Liu 2001: 232). 着 *zhe* is used to describe 'durativity' of an action or a state, or 'ongoingness' of an action (Liu 2001: 392–399). When both refer to the ongoing character of an action, the difference between 着 *zhe* and 在 *zài* is that 着 *zhe* is more often used in novels (Liu 2001: 396).

The progressive aspect marker 在 *zài* signals progressiveness, featured with 'progressiveness', 'non-holisticity' and 'dynamicity' (Xiao & McEnery 2004: 205). Although both 着-*zhe* and 在 *zài* 'present the same medial part of a situation and involve no endpoints', semantically, *zài* focuses on progressiveness while *zhe* on durativity. Besides, syntactically, *zài* precedes a verb while *zhe* follows a verb (Xiao & McEnery 2004: 206).

#### 3.6.2.7 The inceptive aspect marked by 起来 *qǐlái*

According to *Eight Hundred Words in Contemporary Chinese* (Lü 1999: 441, 442), 起来 *qǐlái* can be used as a verb and as a directional complement, or resultative complement. As a verb, it means 1) move from sitting to standing, from lying to sitting, or get up 2) move from stillness to active action. As a verb complement, it means 1) as directional complement, moving from lower place to higher place; 2) resultative complement, connecting or reaching a certain purpose or result; 3) indicating that an action begins and continues; 4) used as a parenthesis, estimating or considering something; 5) used as an adjective complement, indicating a state starts to develop and continues. It is often used with positive adjectives.

*Practical Contemporary Chinese Grammar* (Liu 2001: 566, 567) summarizes that *qǐlái* has four usages as a complement: 1) directional complement, moving from lower to higher; 2) resultative complement, connecting to fasten; 3) resultative complement, indicating protruding; 4) stative meaning, indicating entering a new state. When used after a verb, it indicates that an action starts. When used after an adjective, it indicates a new state begins.

Both Lü and Liu regard *qǐlái* as a complement in their book when it is used to indicate that an action or a state begins. However, Liu (2001: 548) points out that this usage is much more grammaticalized than its other usages, it extends the spatial meaning into temporal meaning, no longer carrying a directional meaning in this usage. Therefore, some other grammars classify this usage as an auxiliary. Dai Yaojing (1997), Xiao and McEnery (2004) classify this usage of *qǐlái* as an aspectual marker. Xiao and McEnery (2004: 216) state that morphological forms expressing aspectual meanings in Chinese have different stages of development, some developed earlier, such as *–zhe*, *-le*, have been fully grammaticalised and have become dedicated aspect markers. Some such as *–qǐlái* and *–xiàqu* have gradually begun to denote aspectual meanings. They also clarify that '*–qǐlái* functions as an aspect marker only when it signals inceptiveness' (2004: 218). Following the aspect system established by Xiao and McEnery (2004), this study considers *qǐlái* as an inceptive aspect marker, as in the example (3.50). The aspect marker *–qǐlái* has features of inceptiveness, non-holisticity, and dynamicity (Xiao & McEnery 2004: 216).

(3.50)
wǒmendōu xiào le qǐ lái
我 们 都 笑 了 起来。
We all laugh AUX AUX
'We all start to laugh.'

### 3.6.2.8 The continuative aspect marked by 下去 *xiàqu*

According to *Eight Hundred Words in Contemporary Chinese* (Lü 1999: 569,

570), 下去 *xiàqu* can be used as a verb which always means moving away from the speaker 1) moving from higher place to lower place; 2) moving from superior department to lower department; 3) moving from frontline to back, from stage to background/behind the curtain; 4) indicating that the food is digested, the lump is flattened, or the mood has calmed down. *Xiàqu* can also be used as a complement with the meaning 1) moving from higher place to lower place; 2) moving from superior department to lower department, or leaving; 3) indicating that the action continues; 4) adjective + *xiàqu* indicates the existent state will continue to develop. Usually, it is used with negative adjectives.

*The Practical Contemporary Chinese Grammar* (Liu 2001: 556, 557) explains the use of *xiàqu* as a complement: 1) the directional complement, indicates moving from higher place to lower place; 2) the directional complement, indicating moving away from the reference point where the speaker stands; 3) resultative complement, indicating separate to fasten, with a focus on the subject or the whole object; 4) resultative complement, indicating sunken; 5) stative meaning, indicating moving from active state to stillness; 6) stative meaning, indicating the action which started continues happening or existing.

Same as *qǐlái*, both Lü (1999) and Liu (2001) take *xiàqu* as a complement when it denotes that an existent action or state continues. Liu (2001: 548) , Xiao and McEnery (2004: 227) state that *xiàqu* extends the spatial meaning into a temporal meaning functioning as a complement indicating continuation and no longer carrying directional meaning in this usage. Dai Yaojing (1997), Xiao and McEnery (2004) consider its complement usage as an aspect marker. Xiao and McEnery (2004: 227) hold that although *xiàqu* may function as a main verb and a complement indicating spatial direction or resultativeness, it 'started to function as an aspect marker when it was gradually generalized to map a spatially downward movement onto the temporal domain' as in the example (3.51) shows. Its continuative meaning occurs much more frequently than its other meanings in their corpus findings (Xiao & McEnery 2004: 228). They also point out its three important features: continuativeness, non-holisticity and dynamicity.

zhèyàngxiě xiàqu ba
(3.51) 这 样 写 下去 吧。
This write AUX AUX
'Keep writing please.'

When comparing *qǐlái* and *xiàqu*, Lü (1999: 442) points out that *qǐlái* indicates that an action starts and continues and the focus is on the inceptiveness, while *xiàqu* denotes that an action has already happened and will continue, and the focus is on the continuativeness. When they are used with adjectives, *qǐlái* is often accompanied by positive adjectives, whereas *xiàqu* is usually used with negative adjectives.

Almost all the aspect markers in Chinese derive originally from verbs with spatial meanings experiencing similar grammarticalization processes, and these lexical meanings and usages nowadays coexist with the grammatical function of aspect markers. Therefore, these Chinese lexemes can be used as lexical words as well as grammatical markers depending on the contexts. These aspect markers are in different stages of grammarticalization process, some fully grammarticalized, some still in progress, and some carrying strong lexical meanings, which deserves further research. This, however, is not the core issue of this study.

## 3.7 Comparison between English and Chinese

### 3.7.1 Tense in English – Chinese 0

The preceding discussion of tense has shown that Chinese has no grammatical devices to express temporal reference and is therefore considered as a tenseless language. English, by contrast, does have grammatical devices to locate events in time and – depending on the criteria used – manifests a distinction between two (present, past) or three tenses (present, past, future). To express location in time, Chinese mainly relies on lexical expressions, temporal phrases or the narrative, sequential context.

While English expresses the present time in episodic and non-episodic

statements grammatically through the inflectional change at the end of verbs (with *-s*/*-es* for third person singular) as in example (3.52a), Chinese uses the lexical expressions '每天九点 9 o'clock every day' to indicate the time without any inflectional changes on the verbs as in example (3.52b). Moreover, in English, scheduled events in the future can also be expressed in the present tense, and the historical present tense can be used for the past events to increase the vividness in narration. These two uses of the English present tense are realized simply by lexical devices in Chinese.

(3.52) a. He goes to university at 9 o'clock every day.

tā měitiān jiǔdiǎn qù dàxué
b. 他 每 天 九 点 去 大 学 。
He everyday 9 o'clock go university
'He goes to university at 9 o'clock every day.'

Just as the present time, the past time in Chinese is also expressed by lexical expressions or the context instead of the past tense which is marked with suffix *-ed* in regular verbs and by vowel gradation in irregular verbs in English. As the examples (3.53a) and (3.53b) show, the inflectional change on the verb *watch* is used to express past time, while there is no inflectional change on the verb in Chinese, where the time phrase 昨天 *yesterday* conveys past time. Moreover, English past tense has a politeness use and a hypothetical use for the present time, whereas lexical expressions are used for these functions in Chinese.

(3.53) a. I watched a movie yesterday.

wǒ zuótiān kàn le yī bù diànyǐng
b. 我 昨 天 看 了 一 部 电 影 。
I yesterday watch AUX one CLF movie
'I watched a movie yesterday.'

The future tense in English is composed of the auxiliaries *will/shall* and a main verb or of the form '*be going to* + verb' while, again, time phrases or contexts are used in Chinese. In examples (3.54a) and (3.54b), '*will* + verb'

indicates the future tense in English, whereas only the time phrase 明天 *tomorrow* indicates the future time in Chinese.

(3.54) a. I will tell you tomorrow.

wǒ míngtiān gàosù nǐ

b. 我 明 天 告 诉 你。

I tomorrow tell you

'I will tell you tomorrow.'

The following table illustrates the major contrasts of tense between English and Chinese.

Table 3.4: Comparison of tense between English and Chinese

| Tense | English | Chinese | Tense |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Present** | | | |
| present time | *He goes to university at 9 o'clock every day.* | tā měitiānjiǔdiǎn qù dà xué<br>他 每天 九点 去 大学。<br>He everyday 9 o'clock go university | |
| futurate | Future tense (present tense only for scheduled events) | | No tenses. Mandarin Chinese uses lexical expressions (time words/ phrases), contexts to express time. |
| historical present | *And the daughter comes home from school one day and says, mum I want to be like you.* | Lexical expressions | |
| **Past** | | | |
| past time | *I watched a movie yesterday.* | wǒ zuótiān kàn le yī bùdiànyǐng<br>我 昨天 看 了 一 部 电影。<br>I yesterday watch AUX one CLF movie | |
| present time (politeness use) | *Did you want a cup of tea?* | Lexical expressions | |
| hypothetical | *If you were in the mood we could at least go.* | | |
| **Future** | | | |
| future time | *I will/shall tell you tomorrow.*<br>*I am going to tell you tomorrow.* | wǒ míngtiāngàosù nǐ<br>我 明 天 告 诉 你。<br>I tomorrow tell you. | |

## 3.7.2 Aspect in English and Chinese

As far as aspect is concerned, relevant systems can be found in both languages. In English, we find the opposition between perfect and non-perfect aspect and that between progressive and non-progressive aspect. Members of these two systems may or may not combine, so that we get the following four aspectual forms: the perfect, the progressive, the perfect progressive, and aspectual

unmarked (simple) forms. And all these aspects can be combined with the three tenses. In Chinese, there are four perfective aspects: the actual aspect marked by 了 *le*, the experiential aspect marked by 过 *guo*, the delimitative aspect marked by verb reduplication, and the completive aspect marked by resultative verb complements. And there are four imperfective aspects: the durative aspect marked by 着 *zhe*, the progressive aspect marked by 在 *zài*, the inceptive aspect marked by 起来 *qǐlái*, and the continuative aspect marked by 下去 *xiàqu*. The following comparison will be unidirectional, looking for the Chinese counterparts of the categories and use types found in English, just as the natural process of foreign/second language acquisition.

**The English perfect – The Chinese actual aspect marker 了 *le* and the experiential aspect marker 过 *guo***

Different scholars use different labels for the use types of the perfect in English. Generally, there are four types of uses distinguished for the perfect in English: resultative perfect/perfect of result, hot-news perfect/perfect of recent past, universal perfect/perfect of persistent situation, and existential perfect/experiential perfect. In these four use types of the English perfect, the first three types can be expressed by the actual aspect 了 *le* in Chinese.

(3.55) a. He has arrived.

tā dào le

b. 他 到 了。

He arrive AUX

'He has arrived.'

(3.56) a. The Present has resigned.

zǒngtǒng cízhí le

b. 总 统 辞职 了。

Present resign AUX

'The Present has resigned.'

(3.57) a. They have lived here for five years.

tāmenzài zhèlǐ zhù le wǔ nián le

b. 他 们 在 这 里 住 了 五 年 了。

They at here live AUX five years AUX

'They have lived here for five years.'

As the examples (3.55), (3.56) and (3.57) show, actual 了 *le* in Chinese can function as perfect of result (3.55), as perfect of recent past (3.56) and as perfect of persistent situation (3.57) in English.

However, the experiential perfect in English cannot be translated by the actual 了 *le* in Chinese. It can only be expressed by the experiential aspect marker 过 *guo* in Chinese, as in example (3.58).

(3.58) a. I have played tennis (before).

wǒ dǎ guò wǎngqiú

b. 我 打 过 网 球。

I play AUX tennis

'I have played tennis.'

**The English progressive – The Chinese progressive marker 在 *zài* and the durative marker 着 *zhe***

The English progressive has a very wide range of uses. In addition to its core meaning of current temporary happenings (3.59a), it can be used as a time frame (3.59b), for habits in existence over a limited period (3.59c), for repetition of events of limited duration (3.59d), for anticipated happenings in the future (3.59e), for persistent or continuous activity without 'temporary element' (3.59f) and other extended uses such as an interpretative use (3.59g), an emotive use (3.59h) and a use with non-verbal predications, such as adjectives or nouns (3.59i).

(3.59) a. He is working.

b. She was cleaning the table when the phone rang.

c. I am taking dancing lessons this winter.

d. Don't call on them at 7.30 - they're normally having dinner.

e. He is coming for lunch on Sunday.

f. I'm continually forgetting people's name.

g. If you fail to plan you are planning to fail. (König & Gast 2012)

h. He is always doing stupid dance moves. (König & Gast 2012)

i. You are being polite.

Since there is no convincing analysis that subsumes all of those uses under a univocal meaning, this study will use the different use types distinguished above for the subsequent comparison.

The progressive marker 在 *zài* in Chinese can only be used for ongoing actions, and this corresponds to the core use of progressive in English, as in example (3.60a). 'Time frame' uses and use the for 'repetition of events of limited duration' are also possible for the progressive 在 *zài*, as in example (3.60b) and (3.60c).

(3.60) a. 他 在 工 作。
tā zài gōngzuò
He AUX work
'He is working.'

b. 电 话 响 的 时 候 她 在 擦 桌 子。
diàn huà xiǎng de shíhou tā zài cā zhuōzi
Telephone ring AUX time she AUX clean table
'She was cleaning the table when the phone rang.'

c. 他 们 通 常 这 时 候 在 吃 饭。
tā men tōngchángzhè shíhòu zài chīfàn
They normally this time AUX eat dinner
'They're normally having dinner at this moment.'

All the other uses of the English progressive cannot be expressed by the Chinese progressive marker 在 *zài* in analogous contexts. They need to be expressed through non-grammatical, i.e. lexical devices, such as words, phrases etc. in Chinese.

Although the durative aspect marker 着 *zhe* in Chinese can also express temporary goings-on, it is mostly for describing stative events. 在 *zài* gives a narrative of an ongoing dynamic action, while 着 *zhe* is used to describe an durative/ongoing stative state. In the example (3.61), 在 *zài* in (3.61a) shows a dynamic action of putting on a coat, while 着 *zhe* in (3.61b) describes a state of being in a red coat. Although both sentences use the same verb 穿 *chuan*,

穿 *chuan* with 在 *zài* demonstrates a dynamic ongoing scene and 穿 *chuan* with 着 *zhe* presents a state. In English, there is no such aspectual distinction.

(3.61) a.
tā zài chuānwàitào
他 在 穿 外套。
He AUX wear coat.
'He is putting on his coat.'

b.
tā chuānzhehóngsèwàitào
她 穿 着 红色外套。
She wear AUX red coat.
'She wears a red coat.'

Moreover, the durative 着 *zhe* can be used for postures where English would use the existential 'there be' structure, as in example (3.62); Finally, the durative 着 *zhe* can be used in '$v_1$ –着 *zhe* $v_2$' structures for concomitant / overlapping actions to provide background information, while English would use adverbial participles or prepositional phrases, as in examples (3.63) and (3.64).

(3.62) a. There is/hangs a picture on the wall.

b.
qiáng shàng guà zhe yī fú huà
墙 上 挂 着 一 幅 画。
Wall on hang AUX a CLF picture
'There is a picture on the wall.'

(3.63) a. The little dog ran away, wagging its tail.

b.
xiǎo gǒu yáo zhe wěiba pǎo zǒu le
小 狗 摇 着 尾巴 跑 走 了。
Little dog wag AUX tail run away AUX
'The little dog ran away, wagging its tail.'

(3.64) a. She walked in with a book.

b.
tā ná zhe yī běn shū zǒu jìn lái
她 拿 着 一 本 书 走 进 来。
She take AUX a CLF book walk enter come
'She walked in with a book.'

**The English perfect progressive – The Chinese progressive 在 *zài* and the actual 了 *le***

There is also a combined grammatical form of perfect and progressive in English, namely the perfect progressive. It denotes the result of the part of an event or development at the moment of utterance.

(3.65) a. The baby has been eating its porridge.
b. The baby has been falling out of its bed.
c. John has been leaving for an hour.

(3.65a) shows the result of a part of the baby's porridge eating that the plate is not empty, and the baby's face is messy (concomitant effect). (3.65b) points out that the baby fall out of its bed several times in a period starting before and going up to the present moment. (3.65c) means that the leave-taking has taken up an hour and indicates the result of the development that John is not gone.

Although Chinese has similar aspectual combinations, actual 了 *le* and progressive 在 *zài*, these two aspectual meanings tend to be expressed in two sentences, rather than combined in one sentence, as example (3.66b) shows.

(3.66) a. I have been reading for two hours.

wǒ kàn le liǎngxiǎoshí le hái zài kàn
b. 我 看 了 两 小 时 了，还 在 看。
I read AUX two hour AUX, still AUX read
'I have been reading for two hours.'

wǒ zài kàn le liǎngxiǎoshíle
c. * 我 在 看 了 两 小 时了。
I AUX read AUX two hour AUX
'I have been reading for two hours.'

The English example (3.66a) *I have been reading for two hours* tends to be expressed in Chinese as 我 看 了 两 小 时 了，还 在 看 (3.66b), literally meaning 'I have read for two hours, and I am still reading'. As the

wǒ kàn le liǎngxiǎoshí le hái zài kàn

example (3.66b) shows, the actual 了*le* and progressive在*zài* are not used in
wǒzàikàn
the same sentence. If they are put in the same sentence, in this case, 我在看
leliǎngxiǎoshíle
了 两 小 时了(3.66c), the sentence becomes ungrammatical.

To a certain degree, the perfect, the progressive and the perfect progressive in English can be compared to the actual aspect marker 了 *le*, the progressive aspect marker 在 *zài* and the durative aspect marker 着 *zhe* in Chinese. However, as the completive aspect RVCs in Chinese still carry strong concrete lexical meanings and are much less grammaticalized.

There is no delimitative aspect in English whereas Chinese uses verb reduplication to indicate that an event lasts for a brief period.

(3.67) a. She often takes a walk in the afternoon every day.
měitiān xiàwǔ tājīngcháng chūqù zǒuzǒu
b. 每 天 下午 她 经 常 出 去 走 走。
Everyday afternoon she often out go walk walk
'She often takes a walk for a while in the afternoon every day.'

The verb reduplication 走走 *zouzou* (walk) in example (3.67b) implies that the walking takes a short time, and it is expressed by phrase *take a walk / have a stroll* and/or with a time phrase afterwards in English.

In Chinese, there are the inceptive aspect 起来 *qǐlái*, and the continuative aspect 下去 *xiàqu*, while English uses lexical items such as *begin* and *continue/go on* to express beginning and continuation.

(3.68) a. They began to laugh.
tāmen xiào le qǐlái
b. 她 们 笑 了 起来。
They laugh AUX AUX
'They began to laugh / burst out laughing .'

(3.69) a. Please continue/go on talking.

qǐng shuōxiàqu
b. 请 说 下去。
Please talk AUX.
'Please continue talking.'

起来 *qǐlái* in example (3.68b) shows that they start to laugh, and 下去 *xiàqu* in example (3.69b) indicates the continuation of talking. In English, the 'inceptive aspect' is expressed by word *begin* or *start* and the continuation is expressed by *continue*/*keep* + *doing*, rather than by aspect markers.

In summary, the English perfect is similar to the Chinese actual marker 了 *le*, except that the experiential perfect can only be expressed by the Chinese experiential marker 过 *guo*. Chinese progressive 在 *zài* is a dedicated marker for current temporary happenings while English progressive has much wider uses. Besides, Chinese makes a distinction between progressive 在 *zài* and durative 着 *zhe*, while English does not. The perfect progressive in English is compositional, while Chinese tends to use two sentences to express these two aspectual meanings. Chinese has delimitative, inceptive and continuative aspects whereas English uses lexical devices rather than grammatical ones for these situations. The contrasts of aspects between English and Chinese are illustrated in the following tables.

Table 3.5: Comparison of aspect between English and Chinese

| **Aspect** | **English** | **Chinese** | **Aspect** | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Perfect**: to have+past participle | | | **Actual** 了le: v-了le | **Completive** RVC |
| Resultative/perfect of result | *He has arrived*. | tā dào le<br>他 到 了。<br>He arrive AUX | Actualisation/realisation of a situation | Completion of an event |
| Existential/experiential perfect | *I have played tennis.* | wǒdǎ guòwǎngqiú<br>我打 过 网 球。<br>I play AUX tennis | | **Experiential** 过guo: v-过guo<br>Experienced prior to a particular reference time |
| Hot news/perfect of recent past | *The present has resigned*. | zǒngtǒng cí zhí le<br>总 统 辞职 了。<br>Present resign AUX | | |
| Universal/perfect of persistent situation | *They have lived here for five years.* | tāmenzài zhèlǐ zhù le wǔnián le<br>他们 在 这 里 住 了 五年 了。<br>They at here live AUX five years AUX | | |
| | I want to go out and take a walk for a while. | wǒxiǎngchūqù zǒuzǒu<br>我 想 出 去 走 走。<br>I want go out walk walk | | **Delimitative** verb reduplication<br>An event lasts for a brief period |

| Aspect | English | Chinese | Aspect | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Progressive**: to be+v-ing participle | | | **Progressive** 在zai: 在zai +v | **Durative** 着zhe: v-着zhe |
| Current, temporary happings or goings-on | *He is working.* | tā zài gōngzuò<br>他 在 工 作。<br>He AUX work | Ongoing actions | Goings-on of an action |
| Time frame | *She was cleaning the table when the phone rang.* | diànhuà xiǎngde shíhou tā zài cā zhuōzi<br>电 话 响 的 时候 她 在 擦 桌 子。<br>Telephone ring AUX time she AUX clean table | | Durativity of an action or a state<br>In 'v$_1$ –着zhe v$_2$' structure for overlapping actions<br>Existence of postures |
| Habit in existence over a limited period | *I am taking dance lessons this winter.* | / | | |
| Repetition of events of limited duration | *Don't call on them at 7.30-they 're normally having dinner.* | tā mentōngcháng zhè shíhòu zài chī fàn<br>他 们 通 常 这 时 候 在 吃 饭。<br>They normally this time AUX eat dinner | | |
| Anticipated happenings in the future | *He is coming for lunch on Sunday.* | / | | |
| Persistent or continuous activity without 'temporary element' | *I'm continually forgetting people's nam* | / | | |
| Other extended uses | *You are being polite.* | / | | |
| | We all start to laugh. | wǒmen dōu xiào le qǐ lái<br>我们 都 笑 了 起来<br>We all laugh AUX AUX | | **Inceptive** 起来qilai: v-起来qilai<br>The initial point of a situation |
| | Keep writing in this way please. | zhèyàng xiě xiàqu ba<br>这 样 写 下去 吧。<br>This way write AUX AUX | | **Continuative** 下去xiequ: v-下去xiequ<br>The continuative stage between the initial and final endpoint of a situation |
| **Perfect progressive**: to have been+v-ing participle | | / | | |
| Temporary situation leading up to the present moment | *I have been reading for 2 hours.* | wǒkàn le liǎngxiǎoshí le hái zài kàn<br>我 看 了 两 小 时 了, 还 在 看。<br>I read AUX two hour AUX, still AUX read | | |
| **Simple** | | | | |

## 3.8 Tense and aspect in German

Six tenses are usually differentiated in German: *Präsens*, *Präteritum*, *Futur I*, *Perfekt*, *Plusquamperfekt*, and *Futur II* (Eisenberg 1999: 196; König & Gast 2012: 83). They are almost in parallel forms to the English's present, past, future, present perfect, past perfect, and future perfect (König & Gast 2012: 83). Although *Perfekt* is considered as a tense in German, the perfect is considered as an aspect in English for the purpose of comparing different learner Englishes. Since the forms are similar in two languages and the research starts from forms as well, whether perfect should be regarded as aspect or tense is not crucially important or relevant in this comparison between English and German. The following session will introduce tenses (aspects) in German.

***Präsens* and *Futur I***

*Präsens* refers to present, habitual actions or events, general truths, an action or state which begins in the past and is still going on at the moment of speech. It can refer to the past as well, the historical present (Durrell 1991: 278–291; Thieroff 1992).

*Präsens* also can be used for future reference in most contexts and it is most frequently used for future reference (König & Gast 2012: 84). The difference between *Präsens* and *Futur I* is the degree of certainty. 'Sometimes Präsens seems to convey more certainty than Futur I' (König & Gast 2012: 84).

(3.70) Morgen beginnen die Vorlesungen. (*Präsens*)
(3.71) Im nächsten Jahr werde ich mein Studium abschließen. (*Futur I*) (König and Gast 2012: 83-84)

***Perfekt* and *Präteritum***

There are two major uses in *Perfekt*: '(i) a resultative use with respect to the moment of utterance and (ii) a narrative use (König & Gast 2012: 87).

(3.72) Schau mal, es hat geschneit.
(3.73) Gestern sind wir ins Kino gegangen. Wir haben uns den neusten Film von Wim Wenders angesehen. Anschließend haben wir bei einem Italiener gegessen. (König & Gast 2012: 87)

The example (3.72) is the resultative use, which is related to the moment of utterance, while example (3.73) is a narrative use, where there is 'definite moments in the past' (König & Gast 2012: 88) and they are separated from the moment of utterance, which can also be replaced by *Präteritum*.

*Perfekt* and *Präteritum* are interchangeable when it is the narrative use of *Perfekt*. In these contexts, the difference between *Perfekt* and *Präteritum* is stylistic. The *Präteritum* is more formal and more frequent in the written language (König & Gast 2012: 88). The following examples illustrate the stylistic difference.

(3.74) a. Karl arbeitete gestern den ganzen Tag.
b. Karl hat gestern den ganzen Tag gearbeitet. (König & Gast 2012: 88)

However, the resultative use of *Perfekt* is not interchangeable with *Präteritum*.

(3.75) Unser Hund ist weggelaufen. Wir müssen schnell etwas tun. (König & Gast 2012: 88)

In example (3.75), the use of *Präteritum* 'Unser Hund life weg.' is not possible.

Besides, as *Präsens* can be used to indicate future time reference, the *Perfekt* with resultative use can refer to some event in the future as well. The function is similar to that of *Futur II*, but *Futur II* has less certainty than the *Perfekt* (König & Gast 2012: 87).

(3.76) a. Wenn du das nächste Mal kommst, sind wir schon umgezogen.
b. Wenn du das nächste Mal kommst, werden wir schon umgezogen

sein. (König & Gast 2012: 88)

The example (3.76a) illustrates the future reference of *Perfekt*, and (3.76b) shows the use of *Futur II* with similar function but less certainty.

**Progressive**

There is no grammatical device to express progressive in German, however, there are lexical expressions for the similar meaning as the progressive in English.

(3.77) Charles is working.

(3.78) a. Karl arbeitet gerade.
b. Karl ist am Arbeiten.
c. Karl ist beim Arbeiten.
d. Karl ist arbeiten.

(3.79) a. I was just taking a walk when the bomb exploded.
b. Ich war gerade dabei, spazieren zu gehen, als die Bombe explodierte. (König & Gast 2012: 93)

The lexical expressions for progressive are: *gerade* (adv.), *am* + Vnom, *dabei* + inf., *beim* + Vnom, *im* + Vnom. König and Gast (2012: 93) point out that different expressions are not equally permissible in all contexts. Adverb *gerade* is often used together with other expressions. The prepositions are used with intransitive verb, or a complex predicate consisting a verb and an incorporated object. The infinitive with *zu* is used with transitive verbs and verbs meaning events (changes) (König & Gast 2012: 93). These expressions also do not denote exact the same meaning. The copula with plain verb and the use of *bei* imply a person has gone somewhere and is doing something at an appropriate place, but the use of *am* does not. *Beim* + Vnom tends to be used with agentive subjects. The use frequencies of these expressions are also summarized: *am* + Vnom > *dabei* + inf. > *beim* + Vnom > *im* + Vnom (König & Gast 2012: 94).

## 3.9 Comparison between English and German

If we adopt the analysis of six tenses, which is the usual way to distinguish tenses in German, English and German seem to have perfect 'parallel formal distinctions': Present-*Präsens*, Past-*Präteritum*, Future-*Futur I*, Present perfect-*Perfekt*, Past perfect-*Plusquamperfekt*, Future perfect-*Futur II* (König & Gast 2012: 83). However, they actually have different meanings and uses. As König and Gast (2012) have discussed, the major differences are in present and future, present perfect, and progressive aspect.

**Present, *Präsens* and future time reference**

*Präsens* in German can be used for future time reference in most contexts, while English present can be used with future time reference only for scheduled events (König & Gast 2012: 84).

(3.80) a. The train leaves at 8 o'clock tomorrow.
b. Der Zug fährt morgen um 8 Uhr ab.

*Präsens* and *werden* + infinitive express future in German, while English has other grammatical structures to express future, such as *will/shall* + infinitive/progressive, *be going to* + infinitive, and present progressive.

**Present perfect and *Perfekt***

The universal use of perfect (perfect of persistent situation) indicates state or habit persists up to the present, mainly used with state and activity verbs. While this persistent situation is expressed with present perfect in English, both *Präsens* and *Perfekt* can be used in German. However, 'only the *Perfekt* implies that the situation does not extend beyond the moment of speech' (König & Gast 2012: 90). Moreover, the universal present perfect with state verbs in English is usually translated by *Präsens* in German.

(3.81) a. I have lived here for many years.
b. Ich lebe hier seit vielen Jahren. (König & Gast 2012: 90)

The existential use (experiential perfect), the resultative use (perfect of result) and hot-news use (perfect of recent past) of present perfect in English are expressed in *Perfekt* in German.

*Perfekt* in German has narrative use while present perfect in English does not. The narrative use of *perfekt* in German refers to a definite moment in the past, and in such context it is admissible to use past tense rather than present perfect in English (König & Gast 2012: 88).

The time interval in English present prefect includes the moment of utterance. As the situation in present perfect continues to the moment of utterance, the time adverbials usually include the recent present, such as *so far*, *recently*, *until now*, *as yet*, *to this day*, *this morning*, *this year* etc.(König & Gast 2012: 89). Adverbials that locate time at a definite point in the past cannot be used with present perfect in English. However, *perfekt* in German can be used with time reference of definite moments in the past which is separated from the moment of utterance, since there is narrative use in German *perfekt*.

**Progressive aspect**

English progressive has been fully grammaticalized, and there is aspectual contrast between progressive and non-progressive, while there are only modest beginnings of a progressive aspect in German (König & Gast 2012: 93). The use of progressive in English extends to a wide range, including for current happenings, temporal frames, backgrounding, possible incompleteness, and some secondary use, such as interpretative use, emotive use, futurate use, and for restricted habit. Whereas, German progressive lexical expressions can only be used in the contexts of current happenings or temporal frames (König & Gast 2012: 93).

The following table summarizes and presents the major contrasts above mentioned in tense and aspect between English and German, which is based on König and Gast's work (2012).

Table3.6: Major contrasts of tense and aspect between English and German (adapted from König & Gast 2012: 92)

| Tense and Aspect | English | German |
|---|---|---|
| **Present/Präsens** | | |
| non-past/present time | *I go to university at 9 o'clock.* | *Ich gehe um 9 Uhr zur Universität.* |
| futurate | Future tense (present tense only for scheduled events) | *Morgen weiß ich das.* |
| historical present | *And the daughter comes home from school one day and says, mum I want to be like you.* | *Und die Tochter kommt eines Tages von der Schule nach Hause und sagt, Mama, ich möchte wie du sein.* |
| **Past/Präteritum** | | |
| past time | *I was at home yesterday.* | *Ich war gestern zuhause.* |
| **Future/Futur I** | | |
| future time | *I will tell you tomorrow.*<br>*I am going to tell you tomorrow.* | *Ich werde morgen dir Bescheid sagen.* |
| **Present perfect/Perfekt** | | |
| resultative/perfect of result | *Tom has arrived.* | *Tom ist angekommen.* |
| existential/experiential perfect | *I have played tennis.* | *Ich habe (schon mal) Tennis gespielt.* |
| hot news/perfect of recent past | *Chancellor Schröder has resigned.* | *Kanzler Schröder ist zurückgetreten.* |
| universal/perfect of persistent situation | *They have lived here for five years.* | Präsens |
| narrative | Past tense | *Ich bin gestern im Theater gewesen.* |
| **Past perfect/Plusquamperfekt** | | |
| pre-past | *I had read it.* | *Ich hatte es gelesen.* |
| **Future perfect/Futur II** | | |
| future result | *I will have done it by tomorrow.* | *Ich werde das bis morgen erledigt haben.* |
| **Progressive** | | |
| current happings | *He is working.* | lexical expressions |
| time frame | *She was cleaning the table when the phone rang.* | lexical expressions |
| extended uses | *He is always doing unrhythmic dance moves.*<br>*You are being polite.* | |
| **Perfect progressive (perfect+progressive)** | | |
| temporary situation leading up to the present moment | *I have been standing here for 2 hours.* | Perfekt |

## 3.10 Tense, aspect, contrastive analysis hypothesis and language transfer

In strongest form of contrastive analysis hypothesis, the difference between the learners' native language and the target language could predict all L2 errors. In a weaker form, only some errors could be explained by the contrastive analysis rather than predict. As Ellis wrote, 'only some errors were traceable to transfer, and contrastive analysis could be used only a posteriori to explain rather than predict. In other words, contrastive analysis needed to be used in hand in hand with error analysis.'(Wardhaugh 1970; Ellis 1994: 308)

In the 1970s, contrastive analysis lost ground to error analysis. Besides differences between native language and target language, there are many other possible elements making learning a linguistic structure difficult, such as the saliency, the communicative value, the markedness, and the difficulty of production or comprehension processing. Ellis claims, 'The problem with the CAH was its failure to acknowledge sources of difficulty other than the learner's L1. While it has been shown to be clearly incorrect to claim that L1/L2 differences will lead to difficulty, it has also become clear that they might do. The trick is to show when they do and when they do not.' (Ellis 1994: 309) He also suggests that researchers continue to make use of contrastive analysis, but just as a tool for identifying potential difficulty.

Therefore, this research agrees that there are sources of difficulty other than the learners' L1. Contrastive analysis between Chinese and English, between German and English will be used as a method to identify potential difficulty and errors in this research. Some errors in this study are traceable to L1 transfer and contrastive analysis can explain them.

'The past, the present, and the future walked into a bar.
It was tense.'[2]

[2] A joke about tense written by an anonymous linguist.

# 4 Methodology

This chapter focuses on the methodology adopted for the present study. The first part reviews the methods used in previous research on language transfer, including Ellis' overview of comparisons in transfer research, Granger's Integrated Contrastive Model, Jarvis' unified framework, and Gilquin's Detection-Explanation-Evaluation transfer model. The second part explains the methods used in this research, namely corpus-based analysis and comparisons complemented with experiment/survey data.

## 4.1 Methodology review

Selinker (1969) identifies three linguistic variables, which have an impact on outcome in second language acquisition: the learner's interlanguage (IL), the learner's first language (L1), and the target language (TL) (Selinker 1969). Ellis (2009) classifies the comparison of linguistic variables for investigating language transfer into five types and points out their limitations. Three of them might lead to overestimation of negative transfer. Incorporating different types of comparisons can solve the problem but the design of comparisons might be complex. The following table (Table 4.1) summarizes these five types and limitations, adapted from Ellis' work.

According to Ellis' classification and analysis, the Type 4 in table 4.1, comparisons of the use of a particular feature in the IL of learners who have two L1s, can produce good evidence of L1 transfer. However, it depends on whether these two L1s are completely different in the use of the specific feature. Ellis' classification and summary gives an overview of comparisons for indentifying language transfer.

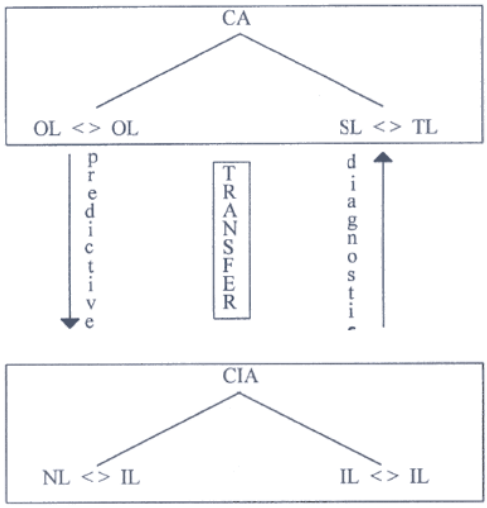
Table 4.1：Types of comparisons (adapted from Ellis 2009: 353)

| **Types of Comparisons** | |
|---|---|
| **Type** | **Limitations** |
| Type 1<br>Comparisons of the use of a particular feature in IL and L1 | 1 Overestimation of transfer effects.<br>2 Only serves to identify incidences of negative transfer. |
| Type 2<br>Comparisons of the use of a particular feature in IL, L1 and TL | Overestimation of negative transfer effects |
| Type 3<br>Comparisons of the use of a particular feature in IL of learners from two or more different L1 | Differences other than the differences in the learners' L1s may account for the differences in their IL features. |
| Type 4<br>Comparisons of the use of a particular feature in the IL of learners who have two L1s | No obvious limitation; provides clear evidence of L1 transfer. |
| Type 5<br>Two-way comparisons involving learners with different L1s each learning the other's language as a L2 | Unless this design incorporates a Type3 comparison, it will face the same limitations as Type1 and 2 comparisons. However, incorporating a Type 3 comparison will necessitate a very complicated design. |

Granger (1996) proposed the 'Integrated Contrastive Model' (ICM), which comprises computer-based Contrastive Analysis (CA) and Contrastive Interlanguage Analysis (CIA). Comparable and/or parallel corpora are used to find out the similarity between L1 and TL, and contrastive interlanguage analysis compares ILs of learners from different L1, and with TL. The model is presented in Figure 4.1 (Granger 1996: 47). It involves 'constant to-ing and fro-ing between CA and CIA' (Granger 1996: 46). In ICM, 'transfer' is placed in the center. The predictive hypothesis starts from the comparisons of original languages (named as OL in the model) or source language and translated language (abbreviated as SL and TL in the model). These CA data can help make predictions about interlanguage and the predictions can be checked in the CIA data. On the other side, the diagnostic hypothesis starts from CIA and goes toward CA. Comparing interlanguage, native language and interlanguage with different L1 (as IL and NL in the model), L1-specific features can be

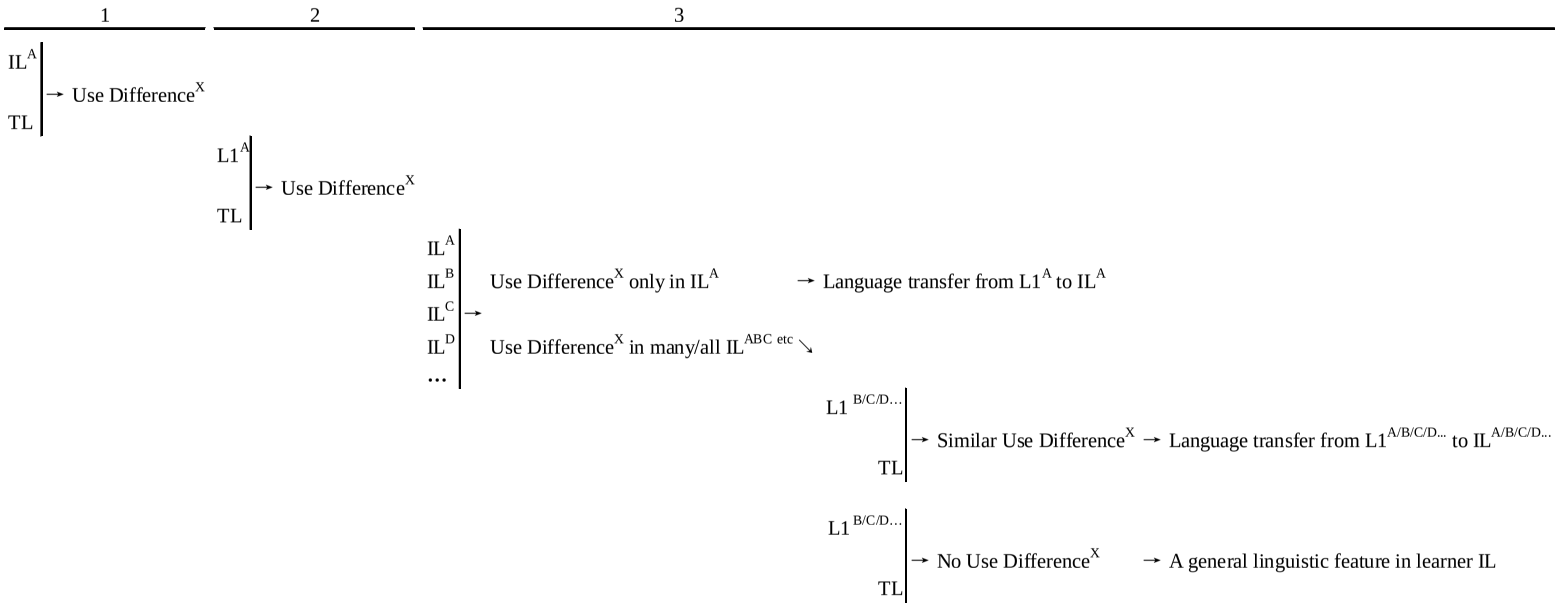
found and then contrastive analysis can be used for explanations. As she states, 'CIA results can only be reliably interpreted as being evidence of transfer if supported by clear CA descriptions' (Granger 1996: 46).

Figure 4.1: Granger's Integrated Contrastive Model (Granger 1996: 47)




According to this model, the procedures of identifying language transfer are as following: first, comparison of $IL^A$ of learners from $L1^A$ and TL shows a certain linguistic use in $IL^A$ which is different in usage, frequency etc. from TL. This use difference is a candidate evidence for language transfer. Secondly, comparable and/or parallel corpora are used to confirm whether the difference is also true between $L1^A$ and TL. Thirdly, if it is, comparing $IL^A$ with IL from different L1, e.g. $IL^B$, $IL^C$, etc., will show whether this use feature is specific to speakers of language A, or is just a feature that other learner ILs also have. The former result suggests a language transfer. In the later case, $IL^{B/C/D\ldots}$ also demonstrate the same use feature. When there is the same use difference between $IL^{B/C/D\ldots}$ and TL, it can still be an evidence for language transfer. When there is no such use difference, it tends to be a universal and general feature of interlanguage. The following figure visualizes the procedures of indentifying language transfer in Granger's Integrated Contrastive Model.

Figure 4.2: Visualized procedures in Granger's Integrated Contrastive Model



Jarvis (2000) puts forward three types of evidence for identifying cross-linguistic influence, namely, intragroup homogeneity, intergroup heterogeneity, cross-language congruity. Later, he adds the fourth type, intralingual contrasts, and renames them by using simpler and heuristic terms, which are within-group similarities, between-group differences, between-language similarities, and within-language differences (Jarvis 2010).

Table 4.2 summarizes the four types of evidence for cross-linguistic transfer and what each type compares.

Table 4.2: Jarvis' unified framework (2000, 2010)

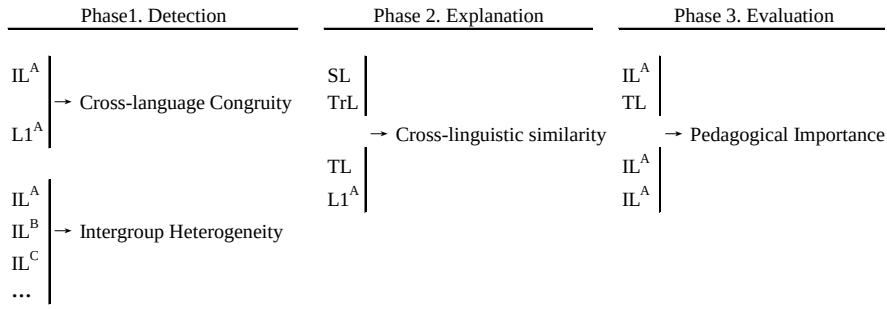
| Type | Original terms | Heuristic terms | Comparisons |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Intragroup homogeneity | Within-group similarities | Performances within $IL^A$ |
| 2 | Intergroup heterogeneity | Between-group differences | $IL^A$,$IL^B$, $IL^C$... |
| 3 | Cross-language congruity | Between-language similarities | $IL^A$-$L1^A$; $IL^B$-$L1^B$; $IL^C$-$L1^C$... |
| 4 | Intralingual contrasts | Within-language differences | TL-$L1^A$, $IL^A$ |

'Intragroup homogeneity' is to find out whether learners with the same $L1^A$ perform the same in $IL^A$ by comparing individual performances within $IL^A$. 'Intergroup heterogeneity' is to understand whether learners with different L1s perform differently when using the same IL by comparing the interlanguage data $IL^A$,$IL^B$, $IL^C$, etc. 'Cross-language congruity' is to figure out whether learners perform IL corresponding to certain feature in L1 by comparing IL and L1. 'Intralingual contrasts' is to figure out the differences in learners' performance on features of TL that vary with respect to how they correspond to features of L1. The simple method is to compare TL and L1 to divide features of the target language into those that are congruent and those that are not with L1, and then to check whether learners' performances on these two types of features differs significantly when using them.

Based on Granger's Integrated Contrastive Model and Jarvis' unified framework for language transfer, Gilquin proposes a Detection-Explanation-Evaluation (DEE) transfer model (Gilquin 2008). In the detection phase, there are two kinds of comparisons. One is the comparison of learners' interlanguage with their native language (IL - L1), which is made to test

cross-language congruity. The other is the comparison of the learners' interlanguages with different L1s. The comparisons of $IL^A$, $IL^B$, $IL^C$ etc. will test intergroup heterogeneity. Combination of the two types of comparisons can detect 'the (potential) presence of transfer' (Gilquin 2008: 11). In the explanation phase, comparisons of source language and translated language in parallel corpora, supplemented by comparisons of original L1 and target language (TL) in comparable corpora, point out the degree of similarity between two linguistic items cross-linguistically, and thus 'may provide an explanation for the presence or absence of transfer among learners' (Gilquin 2008: 15). In the evaluation phase, comparison of learners' interlanguage and target language is used to distinguish positive and negative transfer. Comparison within interlanguage is made to find out to what extent transfer is. Combining both comparisons serve for pedagogical purposes, 'as a way of evaluating whether the presence of transfer should affect foreign language teaching or not' (Gilquin 2008: 15). Figure 4.3 illustrates the three phases in the model.

Figure 4.3: Gilquin's Detection-Explanation-Evaluation Transfer Model




All in all, there are 8 types of comparisons for identifying transfer effects. Different approaches adopt slightly different orders and different combinations of comparisons. Here all the possible comparisons are listed in a summary table.

Table 4.3: Comparisons of IL, TL, L1, SL, and TrL for identifying transfer

| Abbr. | Comparisons |
|---|---|
| IL-TL | Comparison of IL and TL |
| L1-TL | Comparison of L1 and TL |
| $IL^A$-$IL^B$-$IL^C$… | Comparison of IL with different L1 |
| $IL^A$-$IL^A$ | Comparison within IL |
| IL-L1 | Comparison of IL and L1 |
| SL-TrL | Comparison of Source Language and Translated Language |
| IL(2L1) | Comparison of IL from those who have two L1 |
| L1<=>TL | Two-way comparisons involving learners with different L1s each learning the other's language as a TL |

As Osborne summarizes, ‘There is a continuum of methodological approaches to learner corpus data, from corpus-based or hypothesis-driven approaches to those which are corpus-driven or hypothesis-finding.’ (Granger 1998: 15–16; Barlow 2005: 344; Osborne 2015: 342)

## 4.2 Research method

Spoken and written productive data or listening and reading comprehension can be investigated for language transfer research. As Ellis writes, ‘transfer effect can be examined in terms of either reception (listening and reading) or production (speaking and writing)’ (Ellis 2009: 352). Different types of data will certainly make research more convincing since language transfer takes many forms. Odlin summarizes that ‘When possible, the most convincing evidence will come from multiple sources: spoken and written performances as well as responses to measures of perception, comprehension, or intuition’(Odlin 2003: 452).

In terms of data, a computer-based learner corpus is a reliable resource to examine the phenomenon systematically and comprehensively. As Leech suggests that developments in learner corpora will be helpful to figure out the areas of error and the proportion of non-target-like behavior peculiar to native speakers of a language A, as opposed to that which is shared by all learners of a target language T, irrespective of their first language (Leech 1998; Osborne 2015: 337).

The present study is based on two corpora, the International Corpus of Learner English (ICLE) and the Louvain Corpus of Native English Essays (LOCNESS), to analyze the usage and L1-specific features in the grammatical domain of tense and aspect in Chinese learner English and German learner English through combined comparisons of learner English corpora data with different L1 backgrounds, thus to identify language transfer, its statistical weight among some other factors, and the relevant linguistic contexts.

The second part of the research is an experiment/survey, covering the same phenomena as the corpus study and complementing the corpus findings. The detailed method of experiment/survey will be explained in Chapter 6.

### 4.2.1 Corpus analysis

The learner English corpora, the International Corpus of Learner English –Version 2 (Granger et al. 2009), and its comparable counterpart, the Louvain Corpus of Native English Essays (Granger 1998), are designed in a similar framework and have comparable sample sizes and linguistic variables.

#### 4.2.1.1 Corpora

**ICLE**

The International Corpus of Learner English (Version 2) is composed of 3.7-million-word argumentative writing by higher intermediate to advanced learners of English. The corpus contains 16 sub-corpora representing 16 mother tongue backgrounds of learners, namely, Bulgarian, Chinese, Czech, Dutch, Finnish, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Norwegian, Polish, Russian, Spanish, Swedish, Turkish and Tswana.

91% of all learner productions collected in the corpus are argumentative essays, and 9% are literary essays, with the proportion of argumentative essays ranging from 79% to 100% in different sub-corpora. The average length of all essays is 617 words. The essays cover a wide range of topics, including: science, technology and industrialization vs. dreaming and imagination; university degrees; poverty and HIV/AIDS epidemic; religion and television;

prison system and rehabilitation; banning smoking in restaurants; credit cards; feminism; money; and equality. 62% essays are untimed, 61% are not written under exam conditions, 48% were produced with support of reference tools.

The learners are university undergraduates in their twenties, representing 16 different mother tongue backgrounds. 76% of the data are produced by female learners. Beside English, 32% of learners have knowledge of German, 27% French. 45% learners have no experience in an English-speaking country, 19% have a stay less than 3 months, and 23% have a stay of 3 months or more. The learners' English proficiency level ranges from higher intermediate to advanced (B2-C2).

The corpus is composed of 6,085 essays with a total number of 3,753,030 words in 16 national sub-corpora with each containing about 200,000 words. The Chinese subcorpus consists of 982 essays with 490,617 words, and the German subcorpus comprises 437 essays with 229,698 words.

**LOCNESS**

The Louvain Corpus of Native English Essays consists of 324,304-word native English essays, including 60,209-word British pupils' A level essays, 95,695-word British university students' essays, and 168,400-word American university students' essays. Most of the texts are argumentative essays with a small portion of literary-mixed essays. The essays have a wide range of topics: French intellectual tradition, French education, Europe and Britain, transport, boxing, parliamentary system, fox hunting, euthanasia, controversy in classroom, capital punishment yoga, nuclear power etc.

#### 4.2.1.2 Data retrieval

Three general ideas about data retrieval need to be addressed here. First, the data retrieved are divided into three groups, 'Tense', 'Aspect', 'Tense and Aspect'. On the one hand, Group 'Tense' and Group 'Aspect' are general categories and include all sub-categories no matter they are in simple or compound forms to give an overall picture of the uses of the present, the past and the future tense, and the uses of the simple, the perfect, the progressive

and the perfect progressive aspect. On the other hand, Group 'Tense and Aspect' are specific categories containing forms specifying both tense and aspect to find out the uses of expressions combining tense and aspect in all possible ways. Secondly, all forms are counted once. Although the present/past/future perfect progressive can belong to the perfect aspect and the progressive aspect, they are counted respectively into the present/past/future perfect progressive aspect. The present perfect progressive is not included in the present perfect nor in the present progressive; the past perfect progressive is not included in the past perfect nor in the past progressive; the future perfect progressive is not included in the future perfect nor in the future progressive. In other words, the perfect progressive is not counted in the perfect aspect nor in the progressive aspect, but only counted in the perfect progressive aspect. Thirdly, the searching expressions are tested several times to get high recall with high precision. They are created based on regular expressions in linguistic queries, tested, adjusted, retested and readjusted so that it can make sure to reach the optimal balance between precision and recall. The irrelevant data, such as noun phrases, non-finite verbs, adjective phrases, etc. are filtered out manually from the retrieved data. The following parts will explain data retrieval in ICLE, LINDSEI and LOCNESS, the searching expressions, what they retrieve in terms of forms, and the logic of forming these expressions in detail.

**Data retrieval in ICLE**

The data in ICLE are POS-tagged with CLAWS7. The forms of tenses and aspects are retrieved from ICLE with regular expressions and further manual filtering of unnecessary or mismatched items. All the forms are retrieved according to tenses (the present, the past, and the future), aspects (the simple, the perfect, the progressive, and the perfect progressive), tenses and aspects (the present perfect, the past perfect, the future perfect, the present progressive, the past progressive, the future progressive, the present perfect progressive, the past perfect progressive, the future perfect progressive, the present simple, the past simple, and the future simple). The expressions used for retrieval in ICLE are listed in the following table.

Table 4.4: The searching expressions (ICLE)

| | Expressions |
|---|---|
| Tense | Present:<br><VBM>+<VBR>+<VBZ>+<VD0>+<VDZ>+<VH0>+<VHZ>+<VV0>+<VVZ><br>Past:<br><VVD>+<VBDR>+<VBDZ>+<VDD>+<VHD><br>Future:<br><will.Vmod>+<shall.Vmod> |
| Aspect | Simple:<br>Present simple+past simple+future simple<br>Perfect:<br>Present perfect+past perfect+future perfect<br>Progressive:<br>Present progressive+past progressive+future progressive<br>Perfect progressive:<br>present perfect progressive+past perfect progressive+future perfect progressive |
| Tense and Aspect | Present perfect:<br>(<VH0>+<VHZ>)(<WORD>+<E>)(<WORD>+<E>)(<WORD>+<E>)(<VBN>+<VDN>+<VHN>+<VVN>)<br>Past perfect:<br><VHD>(<WORD>+<E>)(<WORD>+<E>)(<WORD>+<E>)(<VBN>+<VDN>+<VHN>+<VVN>)<br>Future perfect:<br>(<shall.Vmod>+<will.Vmod>)(<WORD>+<E>)(<WORD>+<E>)<VHI>(<WORD>+<E>)(<VBN>+<VDN>+<VHN>+<VVN>) |
| | Present progressive:<br>(<VBM>+<VBR>+<VBZ>)(<WORD>+<E>)(<WORD>+<E>)(<VBG>+<VDG>+<VHG>+<VVG>); Plus <VVGK>present<br>Past progressive:<br>(<VBDR>+<VBDZ>)(<WORD>+<E>)(<WORD>+<E>)(<VBG>+<VDG>+<VHG>+<VVG>); Plus <VVGK>past<br>Future progressive:<br>(<shall.Vmod>+<will.Vmod>)(<WORD>+<E>)(<WORD>+<E>)<VBI>(<WORD>+<E>)(<VBG>+<VDG>+<VHG>+<VVG>) |
| | Present perfect progressive:<br>(<VH0>+<VHZ>)(<WORD>+<E>)(<WORD>+<E>)<VBN>(<WORD>+<E>)(<VBG>+<VDG>+<VHG>+<VVG>)<br>Past perfect progressive:<br><VHD>(<WORD>+<E>)(<WORD>+<E>)<VBN>(<WORD>+<E>)(<VBG>+<VDG>+<VHG>+<VVG>)<br>Future perfect progressive:<br>(<shall.Vmod>+<will.Vmod>)(<WORD>+<E>)<VH0>(<WORD>+<E>)<VBN>(<WORD>+<E>)(<VBG>+<VDG>+<VHG>+<VVG>) |
| | Present simple:<br>Present tense-present perfect-present progressive-present perfect progressive<br>Past simple:<br>Past tense-past perfect-past progressive-past perfect progressive<br>Future simple:<br>Future tense-future perfect-future progressive-future perfect progressive |

In Group 'Tense', the searching expression for the present tense retrieves all the forms containing *am* (<VBM>), *are* (<VBR>), *is* (<VBZ>), *do*, base form and finite (<VD0>), *does* (<VDZ>), *have* (<VH0>), *has* (<VHZ>), base form of lexical verb (<VV0>) and *-s* form of lexical verbs (<VVZ>). Therefore, the present tense includes the present simple, the present perfect, the present progressive, and the present perfect progressive. The searching expression for the past tense retrieves all the forms containing lexical verb in past tense (<VVD>), *were* (<VBDR>), *was* (<VBDZ>), *did* (<VDD>), and *had*, in past tense (<VHD>). The past tense includes the past simple, the past perfect, the past progressive, and the past perfect progressive. The searching

expression for the future tense retrieves all the forms containing modal verb *will*, *Will*, *'ll* (<will.Vmod>), and modal verb *shall*, *Shall* (<shall.Vmod>). The future tense includes the future simple, the future perfect, the future progressive, and the future perfect progressive.

In Group 'Tense and Aspect', the searching expression for the present perfect retrieves the form '*have/has* (<VH0>+<VHZ>) + any word or no word (<WORD>+<E>) + any word or no word + any word or no word + *been*/*done* /*had*/past participle of lexical verb (<VBN>+<VDN>+<VHN>+<VVN>)'. '<WORD>+<E>' stands for 'any word or no word'. With two words between *have*/*has* and past participle of verb, the expression can retrieve most target cases, however it will miss out some cases in interrogative sentences where the subject might be two or more than two words (e.g. Has a bully ever tormented you? - ICLE-BG-SUN-0211.1; Have the dreamers ever been in charge of…? - ICLE-BG-SUN-0296.1), or some cases with more adverbs or long phrases (e.g. Violence in animal nature has still not quite reached this point. - ICLE-FSW-ABO-0021.1; Music has through the ages been used to criticize society. - ICLE-DN-NIJ-014.4.). Whereas it will retrieve more irrelevant cases with four words in between (e.g. The reasons why many professionals have such thought may be caused by the…- ICLE-CN-HKU-0742.1). Therefore, three words in between are used to get higher recall and higher precision, and some irrelevant cases are filtered manually afterwards (e.g. The only thing has to be added to it is experience. - ICLE-BG-SUN-0133.1). The searching expression for the past perfect retrieves the form '*had* (<VHD>) + any word or no word + any word or no word + any word or no word +*been*/*done*/*had*/past participle of lexical verb (<VBN>+<VDN>+<VHN>+<VVN>)'. Three words between *had* and past participle of verb are used for the same reason as the expression for the present perfect, and the same procedure to filter irrelevant cases is followed. The searching expression for the future perfect retrieves the form '*will*/*Will*/*'ll*/*shall*/*Shall* (<shall.Vmod>+<will.Vmod>) + any word or no word + any word or no word + *have* + any word or no word + *been*/*done*/*had*/past participle of lexical verb (<VBN>+<VDN>+<VHN>+<VVN>)'. With three words between *will*/*Will*/*'ll*/*shall*/*Shall* and *have*, and two words between *have* and past participle of verb, the expression retrieves many more irrelevant

cases (e.g. Some new things will have to be prepared and thought. - ICLE-CZ-PRAG-0020.2). With one word between *will*/*Will*/*'ll*/*shall*/*Shall* and *have*, and no word between *have* and past participle of verb, it will miss out some cases with adverbs or phrases (e.g. she will at least have tried. - ICLE-FR-UCL-0035.1; it will have completely disappeared. - ICLE-GE-BAS-0017.1). Hence two words between *will*/*Will*/*'ll*/*shall*/*Shall* and *have*, and one word between *have* and past participle of verb is the most appropriate searching expression. The irrelevant cases in retrieved data are filtered manually (e.g. If the work had to be done by people…- ICLE-BG-SUN-0086.1; I will have it checked by two or three censors…- ICLE-CZ-PRAG-0060.2).

The searching expression for the present progressive retrieves the form '*am*/*are*/*is* (<VBM>+<VBR>+<VBZ>) + any word or no word + any word or no word + *being*/*doing*/*having*/*-ing* participle of lexical verb (<VBG>+<VDG> +<VHG>+<VVG>)' and the present tense form '*-ing* participle of go (<VVGK>)'. The expression with three words between *am*/*are*/*is* and *-ing* participle of verb retrieves more irrelevant cases (e.g. They are still capable of creating new imaginary worlds. – ICLE-BG-SUN-0001.1), while the expression with one word between them leaves out cases with negation, adverbs or phrases (e.g. Comrie is in fact skating on thin ice. – ICLE-GE-SAL-0001.2). For that reason, two words between *am*/*are*/*is* and *-ing* participle of verb is chosen for the balance between precision and recall. The unfitting cases are filtered manually (e.g. It is true that today people are preoccupied with making progress. - ICLE-BG-SUN-0034.1). The searching expression for the past progressive retrieves the form '*was*/*were* (<VBDR>+<VBDZ>) + any word or no word + any word or no word + *being*/*doing*/*having*/*-ing* participle of lexical verb (<VBG>+<VDG>+ <VHG>+<VVG>)' and the past tense form of '*-ing* participle of go(<VVGK>)'. The searching expression for the future progressive retrieves the form '*will*/*Will*/*'ll*/*shall*/*Shall* (<shall.Vmod>+<will.Vmod>) + any word or no word + any word or no word + *be* + any word or no word + *being*/*doing*/*having*/*-ing* participle of lexical verb (<VBG>+<VDG>+ <VHG>+<VVG>)'. Two words in between are used in the searching expressions for the past progressive and the future progressive for the same

reason as the expression for the present progressive.

The searching expression for the present perfect progressive retrieves the form '*has*/*have* (<VH0>+<VHZ>) + any word or no word + any word or no word + been (<VBN>) + any word or no word + *being*/*doing*/*having*/*-ing* participle of lexical verb (<VBG>+<VDG>+<VHG>+<VVG>)'. The expression with one word between *has*/*have* and *been* leaves out some cases with negation or adverbs (e.g. I have not here been trying to exhaust the topic. – ICLE-BG-SUN-0193.1), and the expression with three words in between retrieve more unfitting cases. The expression with two words between *been* and *-ing* participle of verb retrieve more irrelevant cases (e.g. Science, too, has constantly been an engine giving birth to miracles… - ICLE-BG-SUN-0147.1), but the expression with no word in between miss out cases with adverb (e.g. I've been always wandering about the world… - ICLE-BG-SUN-0226.1). Therefore, the expression with two words between *has*/*have* and *been*, and one word between *been* and *-ing* participle of verb is the most appropriate one, and manual filtering of irrelevant cases is followed (e.g. It has been argued using credit card for students as a paying medium can make feel independent. - ICLE-CN-HKU-0516.1). The searching expression for the past perfect progressive retrieves the form '*had* (<VHD>) + any word or no word + any words or no word + been(<VBN>) + any word or no word + *being*/*doing*/*having*/*-ing* participle of lexical verb (<VBG>+<VDG>+<VHG>+<VVG>)', with the same logic as the one for present perfect progressive. The searching expression for the future perfect progressive retrieves the form '*will*/*Will*/*'ll*/*shall*/*Shall* (<shall.Vmod>+<will.Vmod>) + any word or no word + *have* + any word or no word + *been* (<VBN>) + any word or no word + *being*/*doing*/*having*/*-ing* participle of lexical verb (<VBG>+<VDG>+<VHG> +<VVG>)'. The future perfect progressive is rare in the corpus, and the expression with one word between *will*/*Will*/*'ll*/*shall*/*Shall* and *have*, one word between *have* and *been*, and one word between *been* and *-ing* participle of verb reaches high precision and high recall.

The present simple is equal to 'Present tense minus present perfect minus present progressive minus present perfect progressive'. The past simple is equal to 'Past tense minus past perfect minus past progressive minus past perfect progressive'. The future simple is equal to 'Future tense minus future

perfect minus future progressive minus future perfect progressive'.

In Group 'Aspect', the simple aspect retrieved includes the present simple, the past simple and the future simple. The perfect aspect retrieved includes the present perfect, the past perfect, and the future perfect (the present/past/future perfect progressive are not included). The progressive aspect retrieved includes the present progressive, the past progressive, and the future progressive. The perfect progressive aspect retrieved includes the present perfect progressive, the past perfect progressive and the future perfect progressive.

**Data retrieval in LOCNESS**

The data in LOCNESS are not POS-tagged originally. Therefore they were tagged with CLAWS7 through the web-based CLAWS tagger (http://ucrel.lancs.ac.uk/claws/trial.html) in this research, and then forms of all tenses and aspects were retrieved in the corpus analysis toolkit 'AntConc' with its 'advanced search' function based on the same retrieving logic as mentioned above and used in ICLE. The following is the table listing the searching expressions used in AntConc for LOCNESS data.

Table 4.5: The searching expressions (LOCNESS)

| | **Expressions** |
|---|---|
| Tense | Present:<br>Search terms: VBM; VBR; VBZ; VD0; VDZ; VH0; VHZ; VV0; VVZ.<br>Past:<br>Search terms: VVD; VBDR; VBDZ; VDD; VHD.<br>Future:<br>Search terms: will_VM; shall_VM; 'll_VM; won't_VM; Will_VM; Shall_VM. |
| Aspect | Simple:<br>Present simple+past simple+future simple<br>Perfect:<br>Present perfect+past perfect+future perfect<br>Progressive:<br>Present progressive+past progressive+future progressive<br>Perfect progressive:<br>Present perfect progressive+past perfect progressive+future perfect progressive |
| Tense and Aspect | Present perfect:<br>Search terms: VH0;VHZ. Context words: VBN; VDN; VHN; VVN. Context horizon: 0-8R.<br>Past perfect:<br>Search terms: VHD. Context words: VBN; VDN; VHN; VVN. Context horizon: 0-8R.<br>Future perfect:<br>Search terms: will_VM; shall_VM; 'll_VM; won't_VM; Will_VM; Shall_VM. Context words: have.<br>Context horizon:0-6R. |
| | Present progressive:<br>Search terms: VBM;VBR;VBZ. Context words: VBG; VDG; VHG; VVG; VVGK. Context horizon: 0-8R<br>Past progressive:<br>Search terms: VBDR; VBDZ. Context words: VBG; VDG; VHG; VVG; VVGK. Context horizon: 0-8R.<br>Future progressive:<br>Search terms: be_VBI. Context words: VBG; VDG; VHG; VVG; VVGK. Context horizon:0-6R. |
| | Present perfect progressive:<br>Filtered from present perfect.<br>Past perfect progressive:<br>Filtered from past perfect.<br>Future perfect progressive:<br>Filtered from future perfect. |
| | Present simple:<br>Present tense-present perfect-present progressive-present perfect progressive<br>Past simple:<br>Past tense-past perfect-past progressive-past perfect progressive<br>Future simple:<br>Future tense-future perfect-future progressive-future perfect progressive |

The ‘advanced search’ function in AntConc provides three specific search levels: search terms, context words, and context horizon. Using one level or combining the three levels can identify all the tenses and aspects in the corpus data.

In Group ‘Tense’, using function ‘search terms’ to search ‘VBM; VBR; VBZ; VD0; VDZ; VH0; VHZ; VV0; VVZ’ can retrieve all forms of the present tense including the present simple, the present perfect, the present progressive, and the present perfect progressive. The search terms ‘VVD; VBDR; VBDZ; VDD; VHD’ retrieve all forms of the past tense including the past simple, the past perfect, the past progressive, and the past perfect progressive. The search terms ‘will_VM; shall_VM; 'll_VM; won't_VM; Will_VM; Shall_VM’ search all forms of the future tense, namely, the future simple, the future perfect, the future progressive, and the future perfect progressive.

In Group ‘Tense and Aspect’, combining function ‘search terms’, ‘context words’ and ‘context horizon’ retrieves the specific form with both tense and aspect. The auxiliary verbs are specified in ‘search terms’, *-ing* participle and past participle in ‘context words’. ‘Context horizon’ is a context window within which the search terms must appear. The context horizon is set as ‘0-8R’ ( from 0 to 8 words to the right of the search terms) for present and past tenses, and ‘0-6R’ (from 0 to 6 words to the right of the search terms) for future tenses, as *-ing* participle and past participle always appear right to the auxiliary verbs. The context window for future tenses is smaller because the bigger context window retrieves much more irrelevant forms. To search the present perfect, ‘VH0;VHZ’ (*have*, *has*) are specified in ‘search terms’, and ‘VBN; VDN; VHN; VVN’ (*been*, *done*, *had*, past participle of lexical verbs) are specified in ‘context words’ with context horizon of 0-8R. To search past perfect, ‘VHD’ (had) is specified in ‘search terms’, and ‘VBN; VDN; VHN; VVN’ (*been*, *done*, *had*, past participle of lexical verbs) are specified in ‘context words’ with context horizon of 0-8R. To search the future perfect, ‘will_VM; shall_VM; 'll_VM; won't_VM; Will_VM; Shall_VM’ (will, shall, ’ll, won’t, Will, Shall) are specified in ‘search terms’ and *have* is specified in ‘context words’ with context horizon of 0-6R. To retrieve the present progressive, ‘VBM;VBR;VBZ’ (*am*, *are*, *is*) are specified in ‘search

terms', and 'VBG; VDG; VHG; VVG; VVGK' (*being*, *doing*, *having*, *-ing* participle of lexical verbs, *-ing* participle catenative/*going*) are specified in 'context words' with context horizon of 0-8R. To retrieve the past progressive, 'VBDR; VBDZ' (*were*, *was*) are specified in 'search terms' and 'VBG; VDG; VHG; VVG; VVGK' (*being*, *doing*, *having*, *-ing* participle of lexical verbs, *-ing* participle catenative/*going*) are specified in 'context words' with context horizon of 0-8R. To retrieve the future progressive, 'be_VBI' (*be*, infinitive) is specified in 'search terms', and 'VBG; VDG; VHG; VVG; VVGK' (*being*, *doing*, *having*, *-ing* participle of lexical verbs, -ing participle catenative/*going*) are specified in 'context words' with context horizon of 0-6R. The irrelevant forms retrieved in searching all these tenses and aspects are manually deleted.

The perfect progressive aspect is filtered out from the perfect aspect, as the number of such cases is small, and it is more accurate to retrieve in this way. Same as the retrieved data from ICLE, the perfect progressive is not counted in the perfect aspect nor in the progressive aspect. Neither the present perfect nor the present progressive includes the present perfect progressive. It is the same case with the past perfect progressive and the future perfect progressive. The perfect progressive aspect is counted separately, only in the perfect progressive.

The present simple is equal to 'Present tense minus present perfect minus present progressive minus present perfect progressive'. The past simple is equal to 'Past tense minus past perfect minus past progressive minus past perfect progressive'. The future simple is equal to 'Future tense minus future perfect minus future progressive minus future perfect progressive'.

In Group 'Aspect', same as the retrieving logic used in ICLE, the simple aspect equals 'present simple' plus 'past simple' plus 'future simple'. The perfect aspect equals 'present perfect' plus 'past perfect' plus 'future perfect' (present/past/future perfect progressive are not included). The progressive aspect is equal to 'present progressive' plus 'past progressive' plus 'future progressive'. The perfect progressive aspect is equal to 'present perfect progressive' plus 'past perfect progressive' plus 'future perfect progressive'.

#### 4.2.1.3 Statistical and linguistic analysis

With the groups of data from ICLE, and LOCNESS, several comparisons among different groups of learner Englishes and native English will be conducted. The L1 specific features of Chinese learner English and German learner English will be analyzed and the role played by L1 will be demonstrated.

### 4.2.2 Experiment/survey

Based on the findings of the corpus study, an experiment/survey in the form of rating, blank filling and answering questions is designed to validate the findings and provide statistical analysis results. The details are described and explained in Chapter 6 on the experiment/survey.

> 'In that same tense bar, the auxiliary *have* was sitting in a booth with a past participle. That's perfect.'[1]

[1] A joke about aspect written by an anonymous linguist.

# 5 Corpus-based study of tense and aspect in learner Englishes and native English

This chapter will demonstrate the corpus findings about tense and aspect in learner Englishes and native English from a comparison of ICLE and LOCNESS. It describes the data and the general trends of learner Englishes and native English, lists and explains the learner errors, most prevalent errors, the possible transfer errors in Chinese learner English and German learner English and compares the two learner Englishes with native English, in order to understand language transfer in acquiring English tense and aspect.

## 5.1 Descriptive data of learner Englishes (ICLE) and native English (LOCNESS)

The occurrences of tenses and aspects in 16 sub-corpora of ICLE and LOCNESS are summarized in the appendix A. The data are arranged in the same way as they are retrieved. There are three tenses: present, past, and future; four aspects: perfect, progressive, perfect progressive, and simple; 12 combinations of tense and aspect: present perfect, past perfect, future perfect, present progressive, past progressive, future progressive, present perfect progressive, past perfect progressive, future perfect progressive, simple present, simple past and simple future. Native English data are retrieved from LOCNESS. 'All' in the table refers to the data of all learner Englishes from 16 subcorpora in ICLE including Bulgarian, Chinese, Czech, Dutch, Finnish, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Norwegian, Polish, Russian, Spanish, Swedish, Tswana, and Turkish subcorpora. As the Finnish subcorpus includes the Swedish speakers in Finland, Finnish learner English data are retrieved from the Finnish subcorpus, while Swedish learner English data are retrieved from the Swedish subcorpus, Swedish speakers in Finland and Swedish-Finnish bilinguals from the Finnish subcorpus according to their

native language rather than the country. The other learner Englishes are retrieved from respective subcorpora.

The relative frequencies per 100, 000 words of tense and aspect in ICLE and LOCNESS are calculated and summarized in the following table 5.1. The data are also arranged in the same format as the occurrence table.

Table 5.1: Relative frequency per 100,000 words of tenses and aspects in ICLE and LOCNESS

**Tense and Aspect (Rel. freq. per 100,000 words)**

| | | Native English | All | Chinese | German | Bulgarian | Czech | Dutch | Finnish | French |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Tense | Present | 7054.5 | 7851.0 | 7120.8 | 6938.7 | 8447.8 | 7964.3 | 7182.1 | 7915.7 | 7591.6 |
| | Past | 1849.2 | 1334.6 | 756.6 | 2222.9 | 945.1 | 1973.9 | 2010.9 | 1214.2 | 1045.7 |
| | Future | 337.0 | 437.6 | 630.6 | 300.0 | 445.6 | 255.3 | 489.9 | 248.6 | 733.3 |
| Aspect | Perfect | 669.4 | 491.1 | 323.3 | 510.2 | 589.4 | 370.9 | 580.3 | 801.3 | 556.6 |
| | Progressive | 326.5 | 284.6 | 217.9 | 283.4 | 218.8 | 286.1 | 251.8 | 267.9 | 256.9 |
| | Perfect progressive | 15.4 | 15.5 | 12.6 | 19.6 | 18.0 | 18.3 | 14.9 | 11.7 | 18.9 |
| | Simple | 8229.3 | 8832.0 | 7954.3 | 8648.3 | 9012.3 | 9518.2 | 8835.9 | 8297.7 | 8538.2 |
| Tense and Aspect | Present perfect | 581.9 | 434.4 | 299.2 | 370.9 | 544.5 | 306.9 | 469.9 | 730.5 | 499.3 |
| | Past perfect | 83.3 | 55.0 | 23.8 | 135.4 | 42.5 | 61.5 | 105.7 | 70.2 | 54.6 |
| | Future perfect | 4.3 | 1.8 | 0.2 | 3.9 | 2.5 | 2.5 | 4.7 | 0.6 | 2.6 |
| | Present progressive | 271.0 | 248.8 | 204.2 | 203.3 | 192.8 | 226.6 | 207.9 | 239.2 | 226.5 |
| | Past progressive | 52.1 | 31.5 | 13.0 | 74.4 | 17.0 | 58.5 | 39.6 | 23.4 | 26.9 |
| | Future progressive | 3.4 | 4.3 | 0.6 | 5.7 | 9.0 | 1.0 | 4.3 | 5.3 | 3.5 |
| | Present perfect progressive | 12.0 | 13.3 | 12.0 | 11.3 | 16.5 | 17.4 | 10.2 | 9.4 | 18.1 |
| | Past perfect progressive | 3.4 | 2.2 | 0.6 | 8.3 | 1.5 | 1.0 | 4.7 | 2.3 | 0.9 |
| | Future perfect progressive | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| | Present simple | 6189.6 | 7154.6 | 6605.4 | 6353.1 | 7694.0 | 7413.5 | 6494.0 | 6936.6 | 6847.7 |
| | Past simple | 1710.4 | 1245.9 | 719.1 | 2004.8 | 884.1 | 1852.9 | 1860.9 | 1118.3 | 963.3 |
| | Future simple | 329.3 | 431.5 | 629.8 | 290.4 | 434.1 | 251.9 | 481.0 | 242.7 | 727.1 |

| | | Italian | Japanese | Norwegian | Polish | Russian | Spanish | Swedish | Tswana | Turkish |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Tense | Present | 7574.6 | 8840.8 | 8169.6 | 7776.6 | 7647.7 | 8376.8 | 7851.6 | 8838.5 | 8811.6 |
| | Past | 984.3 | 2021.3 | 1502.4 | 808.4 | 1772.3 | 1509.1 | 1319.1 | 1099.5 | 846.0 |
| | Future | 221.7 | 370.8 | 423.7 | 294.1 | 330.6 | 340.2 | 441.2 | 803.3 | 402.4 |
| Aspect | Perfect | 551.7 | 328.4 | 698.5 | 409.5 | 453.9 | 541.6 | 662.5 | 317.3 | 334.8 |
| | Progressive | 214.5 | 299.1 | 314.6 | 156.9 | 251.3 | 370.5 | 314.5 | 681.8 | 292.2 |
| | Perfect progressive | 9.4 | 19.7 | 17.0 | 19.2 | 20.9 | 13.6 | 13.5 | 8.5 | 14.5 |
| | Simple | 8005.0 | 10585.6 | 9065.5 | 8293.4 | 9024.6 | 9300.4 | 8621.4 | 9733.7 | 9418.5 |
| Tense and Aspect | Present perfect | 512.9 | 249.7 | 638.6 | 380.9 | 401.2 | 498.2 | 601.6 | 291.2 | 293.2 |
| | Past perfect | 38.4 | 78.2 | 56.7 | 28.2 | 52.3 | 43.4 | 57.0 | 24.6 | 40.6 |
| | Future perfect | 0.4 | 0.5 | 3.3 | 0.4 | 0.4 | 0.0 | 4.0 | 1.5 | 1.0 |
| | Present progressive | 192.7 | 256.8 | 274.4 | 142.4 | 205.6 | 341.2 | 283.8 | 606.5 | 270.6 |
| | Past progressive | 21.9 | 38.8 | 36.4 | 12.8 | 43.6 | 27.8 | 28.6 | 43.7 | 20.0 |
| | Future progressive | 0.0 | 3.5 | 3.8 | 1.7 | 2.2 | 1.5 | 2.0 | 31.6 | 1.5 |
| | Present perfect progressive | 8.5 | 16.1 | 12.3 | 19.2 | 17.4 | 12.6 | 10.5 | 8.5 | 14.0 |
| | Past perfect progressive | 0.9 | 3.0 | 4.7 | 0.0 | 3.5 | 1.0 | 3.0 | 0.0 | 0.5 |
| | Future perfect progressive | 0.0 | 0.5 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| | Present simple | 6860.6 | 8318.2 | 7244.3 | 7234.1 | 7023.6 | 7524.8 | 6955.6 | 7932.3 | 8233.8 |
| | Past simple | 923.2 | 1901.2 | 1404.7 | 767.4 | 1673.0 | 1436.9 | 1230.6 | 1031.3 | 784.8 |
| | Future simple | 221.2 | 366.2 | 416.6 | 292.0 | 328.0 | 338.7 | 435.3 | 770.2 | 399.9 |

Sentence lengths might be different from one learner English to another, and some learners might use more non-verb words. Therefore, the proportions of occurrences (tenses and aspects) in total verbs including finite verbs and infinitive verbs after *will/shall* in ICLE and LOCNESS are calculated and summarized in table 5.2. The proportion = occurrence/finite verbs[1] (including infinitive after *will/shall*) *100. It shows the proportion of different tenses and aspects in total verbs. The data are also arranged in the same format as the occurrence table. The numbers in three tenses added up will be 100. It is the same with the numbers in four aspects, and those in 12 combinations of tense and aspect.

Table 5.2: Occurrence/finite verbs *100 of tenses and aspects in ICLE and LOCNESS

**Tense and Aspect (Occurence/Finite verbs*100)**

| | | Native English | All | Chinese | German | Bulgarian | Czech | Dutch | Finnish | French |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Tense | Present | 76.34 | 81.58 | 83.70 | 73.34 | 85.87 | 78.13 | 74.17 | 84.40 | 81.01 |
| | Past | 20.01 | 13.87 | 8.89 | 23.49 | 9.61 | 19.36 | 20.77 | 12.95 | 11.16 |
| | Future | 3.65 | 4.55 | 7.41 | 3.17 | 4.53 | 2.50 | 5.06 | 2.65 | 7.83 |
| Aspect | Perfect | 7.24 | 5.10 | 3.80 | 5.39 | 5.99 | 3.64 | 5.99 | 8.54 | 5.94 |
| | Progressive | 3.53 | 2.96 | 2.56 | 3.00 | 2.22 | 2.81 | 2.60 | 2.86 | 2.74 |
| | Perfect progressive | 0.17 | 0.16 | 0.15 | 0.21 | 0.18 | 0.18 | 0.15 | 0.12 | 0.20 |
| | Simple | 89.05 | 91.78 | 93.49 | 91.40 | 91.60 | 93.38 | 91.25 | 88.48 | 91.12 |
| Tense and Aspect | Present perfect | 6.30 | 4.51 | 3.52 | 3.92 | 5.53 | 3.01 | 4.85 | 7.79 | 5.33 |
| | Past perfect | 0.90 | 0.57 | 0.28 | 1.43 | 0.43 | 0.60 | 1.09 | 0.75 | 0.58 |
| | Future perfect | 0.05 | 0.02 | 0.00 | 0.04 | 0.03 | 0.02 | 0.05 | 0.01 | 0.03 |
| | Present progressive | 2.93 | 2.58 | 2.40 | 2.15 | 1.96 | 2.22 | 2.15 | 2.55 | 2.42 |
| | Past progressive | 0.56 | 0.33 | 0.15 | 0.79 | 0.17 | 0.57 | 0.41 | 0.25 | 0.29 |
| | Future progressive | 0.04 | 0.04 | 0.01 | 0.06 | 0.09 | 0.01 | 0.04 | 0.06 | 0.04 |
| | Present perfect progressive | 0.13 | 0.14 | 0.14 | 0.12 | 0.17 | 0.17 | 0.11 | 0.10 | 0.19 |
| | Past perfect progressive | 0.04 | 0.02 | 0.01 | 0.09 | 0.02 | 0.01 | 0.05 | 0.02 | 0.01 |
| | Future perfect progressive | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| | Present simple | 66.98 | 74.35 | 77.64 | 67.15 | 78.20 | 72.73 | 67.07 | 73.96 | 73.08 |
| | Past simple | 18.51 | 12.95 | 8.45 | 21.19 | 8.99 | 18.18 | 19.22 | 11.92 | 10.28 |
| | Future simple | 3.56 | 4.48 | 7.40 | 3.07 | 4.41 | 2.47 | 4.97 | 2.59 | 7.76 |

[1] Finite verbs are the verbs capable of bearing tense markings. In the diagrams on aspects, the 'per finite verbs' metric can be problematic, as aspect oppositions can be marked in nonfinite verb phrases as well (e.g., *he claims to work/ to be working/ to have worked/ to have been working*). To facilitate comparison across tense and aspect forms, aspect forms in nonfinite verb phrases are not included in this study.

**Tense and Aspect (Occurence/Finite verbs*100)**

| | | Italian | Japanese | Norwegian | Polish | Russian | Spanish | Swedish | Tswana | Turkish |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Tense | Present | 86.27 | 78.70 | 80.92 | 87.58 | 78.43 | 81.92 | 81.69 | 82.28 | 87.59 |
| | Past | 11.21 | 17.99 | 14.88 | 9.10 | 18.18 | 14.76 | 13.72 | 10.24 | 8.41 |
| | Future | 2.52 | 3.30 | 4.20 | 3.31 | 3.39 | 3.33 | 4.59 | 7.48 | 4.00 |
| Aspect | Perfect | 6.28 | 2.92 | 6.92 | 4.61 | 4.65 | 5.30 | 6.89 | 2.95 | 3.33 |
| | Progressive | 2.44 | 2.66 | 3.12 | 1.77 | 2.58 | 3.62 | 3.27 | 6.35 | 2.90 |
| | Perfect progressive | 0.11 | 0.18 | 0.17 | 0.22 | 0.21 | 0.13 | 0.14 | 0.08 | 0.14 |
| | Simple | 91.17 | 94.24 | 89.80 | 93.40 | 92.55 | 90.95 | 89.70 | 90.62 | 93.62 |
| Tense and Aspect | Present perfect | 5.84 | 2.22 | 6.33 | 4.29 | 4.11 | 4.87 | 6.26 | 2.71 | 2.91 |
| | Past perfect | 0.44 | 0.70 | 0.56 | 0.32 | 0.54 | 0.42 | 0.59 | 0.23 | 0.40 |
| | Future perfect | 0.01 | 0.00 | 0.03 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.04 | 0.01 | 0.01 |
| | Present progressive | 2.19 | 2.29 | 2.72 | 1.60 | 2.11 | 3.34 | 2.95 | 5.65 | 2.69 |
| | Past progressive | 0.25 | 0.35 | 0.36 | 0.14 | 0.45 | 0.27 | 0.30 | 0.41 | 0.20 |
| | Future progressive | 0.00 | 0.03 | 0.04 | 0.02 | 0.02 | 0.01 | 0.02 | 0.29 | 0.01 |
| | Present perfect progressive | 0.10 | 0.14 | 0.12 | 0.22 | 0.18 | 0.12 | 0.11 | 0.08 | 0.14 |
| | Past perfect progressive | 0.01 | 0.03 | 0.05 | 0.00 | 0.04 | 0.01 | 0.03 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| | Future perfect progressive | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| | Present simple | 78.13 | 74.05 | 71.76 | 81.47 | 72.03 | 73.58 | 72.36 | 73.85 | 81.85 |
| | Past simple | 10.51 | 16.93 | 13.91 | 8.64 | 17.16 | 14.05 | 12.80 | 9.60 | 7.80 |
| | Future simple | 2.52 | 3.26 | 4.13 | 3.29 | 3.36 | 3.31 | 4.53 | 7.17 | 3.98 |

The following figures are compiled to have a clear picture of the tense and aspect distribution based on relative frequency per 100, 000 words, and occurrence/finite verbs*100 in all the learner Englishes and native English.

Figure 5.1: Tense distribution based on relative frequency per 100, 000 words

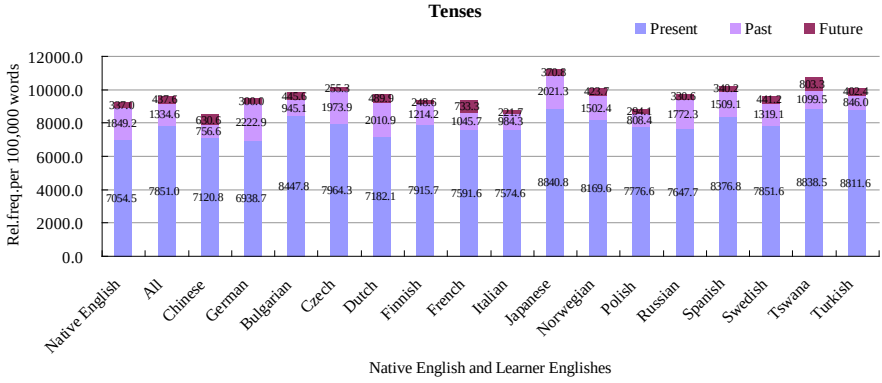


Figure 5.2: Tense distribution based on occurrence/finite verbs*100

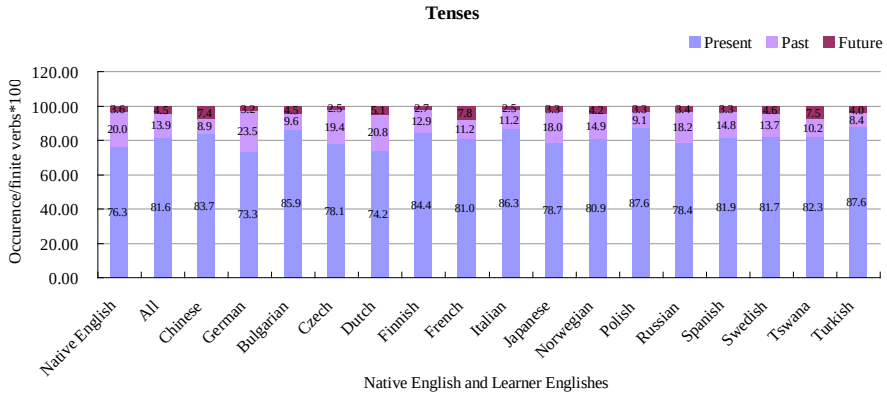



Figure 5.1 displays the distribution of the three tenses in 16 learner Englishes and native English based on relative frequency per 100, 000 words. As can be seen from this figure, Chinese learner English has generally the lowest use frequency of tenses among all the learner Englishes. Not surprisingly, the use frequency of the past tense is also the lowest among all, but the frequency of the future tense in Chinese learner English is the third highest, with the highest in Tswana learner English and the second highest in French learner English. Looking at the German learner English data, it can be seen that the frequency of past tense is the highest among all the learner Englishes.

Figure 5.2 presents the proportions of the three tenses in all finite verbs (including infinitive after *will/shall*) in all the learner Englishes and native English. It shows the same tendency as figure 5.1 does. Past tense in Chinese learner English has the second lowest percentage compared with the others, and future tense has the third highest proportion among all. Past tense in German learner English has the highest percentage among all the learner Englishes.

Figure 5.3: Aspect distribution based on relative frequency per 100, 000 words

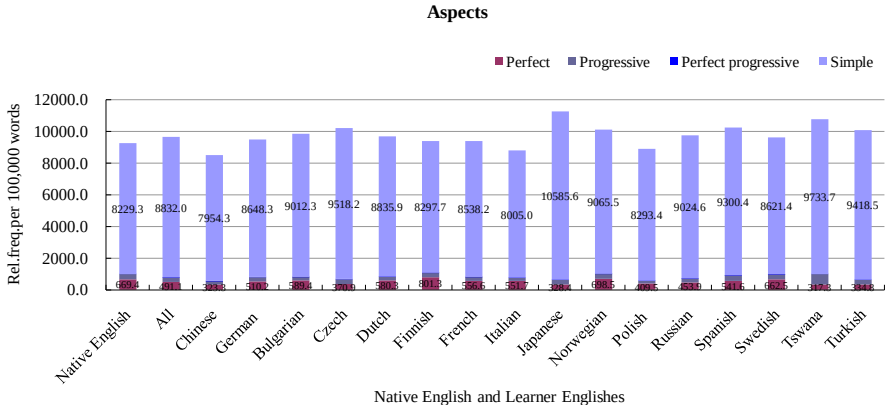



Figure 5.4: Aspect proportion based on occurrence/finite verbs*100

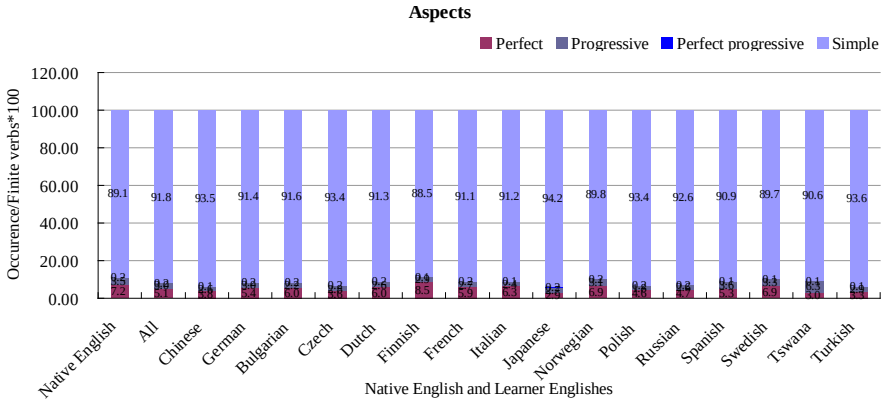



Figure 5.3 illustrates aspect distribution in all learner Englishes and native English based on relative frequency per 100, 000 words. As shown in figure 5.3, Chinese learner English has the lowest relative frequency of aspects among all the learner Englishes and native English. Figure 5.4 provides aspect proportion based on occurrence/finite verbs*100 in all the learner Englishes and native English. It can be seen that the proportion of the simple aspect in Chinese learner English is the second highest among all the learner Englishes with the highest in Japanese learner English. The proportion of the perfect aspect in Chinese learner English is one of the lowest, only around half of native English. Meanwhile, the proportions of aspects in German learner

English are close to those of native English.

Figure 5.5: Tense and aspect distribution based on relative frequency per 100, 000 words

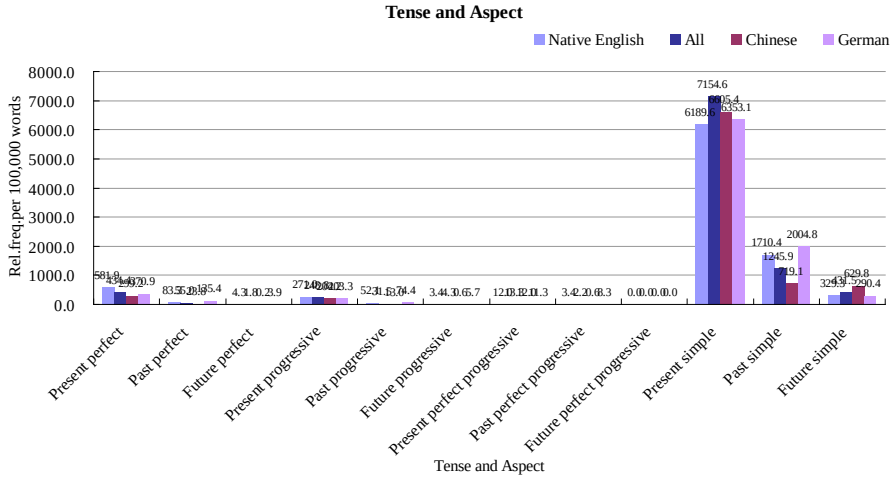



Figure 5.6: Tense and aspect proportion based on occurrence/finite verbs*100

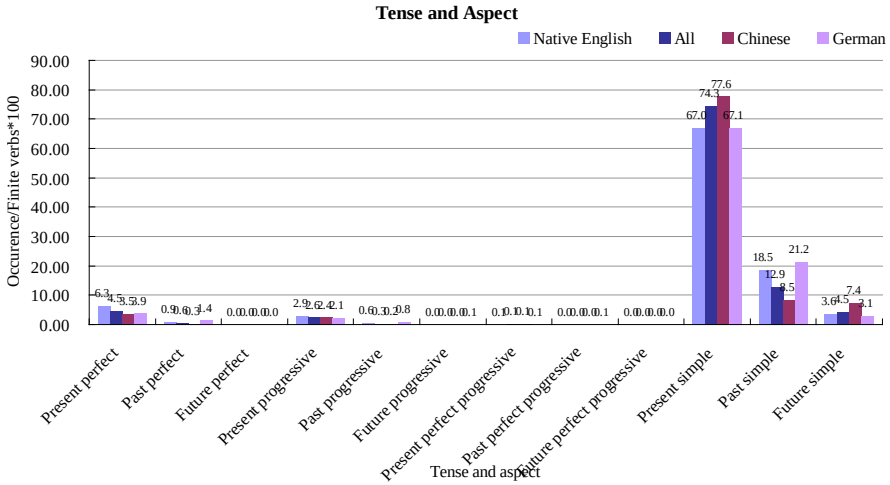



Figure 5.5 (based on relative frequency per 100,000 words) and figure 5.6 (based on occurrence/finite verbs*100) demonstrate a similar tendency about the 12 combinations of tense and aspect in Chinese learner English and German learner English. It is clear that the simple present has the highest relative frequency and the simple past has the second highest one in both

learner Englishes. In Chinese learner English, the simple future comes in the third place, the present perfect the fourth and the present progressive the fifth. In German learner English, the present perfect takes the third highest place, the simple future the fourth and the present progressive the fifth. Comparing Chinese learner English, German learner English and native English, it can be seen from the figures that the frequencies of the simple present and the simple future in Chinese learner English are higher than those in German learner English and those in native English while the frequencies of the simple past and the present perfect in Chinese learner English are lower than those in German learner English and those in native English.

Moreover, based on the occurrences of tenses and aspects in ICLE and LOCNESS and corpora sizes, the overuse and underuse possibilities and log-likelihood value of tenses and aspects relative to native English in LOCNESS are calculated through comparing the relative frequencies between ICLE and LOCNESS. The following table lists the overuse/underuse and log-likelihood of different tenses and aspects in Chinese learner English and German learner English. Plus symbol '+' indicates overuse, and minus symbol '-' indicates underuse. The log-likelihood values over 6.63 (significance $p<0.01$) are marked with red colour, and the log-likelihood values lower than 3.83 (insignificant) are marked with blue colour.

Table 5.3: Over/under-use in Chinese learner English and German learner English

**Over/Under-use in Chinese Learner English and German Learner English**

| | Chinese Learner English | | German Learner English | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Over/under-use | Log Likelihood | Over/under-use | Log Likelihood |
| Present | + | 1.21 | - | 2.58 |
| Past | - | **1901.85** | + | **92.86** |
| Future | + | **346.25** | - | 5.79 |
| Perfect | - | **493.47** | - | **57.51** |
| Progressive | - | 86.44 | - | 8.18 |
| Perfect progressive | - | 1.09 | + | 1.35 |
| Simple | - | 18.28 | + | 28.02 |
| Present perfect | - | **368.65** | - | **125.06** |
| Past perfect | - | **141.98** | + | 34.23 |
| Future perfect | - | 19.47 | - | 0.05 |
| Present progressive | - | 37.15 | - | 25.89 |
| Past progressive | - | **102.45** | + | 10.76 |
| Future progressive | - | 8.77 | + | 1.57 |
| Present perfect progressive | - | 0.00 | - | 0.06 |
| Past perfect progressive | - | 8.77 | + | 5.81 |
| Future perfect progressive | - | 0.00 | - | 0.00 |
| Present simple | + | 52.66 | + | 5.74 |
| Past simple | - | **1674.87** | + | **63.08** |
| Future simple | + | **366.07** | - | 6.56 |

From table 5.3, it is clear that with the exception of the present, the perfect progressive, the present perfect progressive and the future perfect progressive, all tense and aspect forms in Chinese learner English have high log-likelihood values. Almost half of them have extremely high values of log-likelihood, and some are even over 1000, whereas only two in German learner English are over or around 100. In German learner English, the most significant are the underuse of the present perfect and the overuse of the past tense. The following are also significant: the underuse of the perfect aspect and the progressive aspect, the overuse of the simple aspect, the overuse of the past perfect, the past progressive, and the simple past, and the underuse of the present progressive. In Chinese learner English, the future tense, the simple present, the simple future are overused, and the other tenses and aspects are underused except that the present tense, the perfect progressive, the present perfect progressive and the future perfect progressive have insignificant

log-likelihood values.

## 5.2 Tense and aspect in Chinese learner English (CN-ICLE)

The above describes the general tendency of Chinese learner English and German learner English compared with native English through quantitative analysis of corpus data. The following sections will display the learner errors quantitatively, illustrate the most prevalent ones with qualitative examples retrieved from the corpora, classify them into transfer and intralingual errors and explain them via language comparison.

### 5.2.1 Error analysis in Chinese learner English

The Chinese learner English sub-corpus is composed of 490617 words. Altogether 41742 occurrences of finite verbs and future tense forms (will/shall + non-finite verb) are retrieved from the corpus. Among them, there are 1468 occurrences of present perfect, 117 past perfect, 1 future perfect, 1002 present progressive, 64 past progressive, 3 future progressive, 59 present perfect progressive, 3 past perfect progressive, 0 future perfect progressive, 32407 simple present, 3528 simple past and 3090 simple future.

Error analysis is conducted on all the above-mentioned retrieved data except the simple present. Due to the huge number of the simple present, about 1000 random samples are firstly generated, and the final analysis results of the simple present are multiplied based on the proportion of random sample number (1006) and the original retrieved number (32407).

The entries of retrieved data are double checked, analyzed, reanalyzed, classified, annotated and counted in detail. The error analysis is carried out through the following procedures: first, the researcher of this study reads through the corpus items one by one, and identifies the errors that the learners made. The errors considered in this study either directly concern the domain of tense and aspect, or are inseparable from acquiring tense, aspect and verbs. Secondly, an English native speaker reads through all the items and checks all the decisions made by the first rater. Thirdly, the researcher and the English

native speaker discuss cases of disagreement in error identifications to confirm the identified errors and to ensure the accuracy of error identification. Fourthly, all the errors are clarified formally and functionally and counted. Fifthly, the percentage of the errors in each tense and aspect is calculated. For example, the error rate/percentage in the simple past is the number of the errors in the simple past divided by the total occurrences of the simple past. The total error rate in the simple past is the total number of all errors in the simple past divided by the total occurrences of the simple past.

The following is a table of correction and error rate in Chinese learner English and a selective list of the errors in large numbers or percentages in tense and aspect in Chinese learner English (please see Appendix B for the complete list). The errors of large number (>6) and the high error percentages (>4%) are marked with darker shade.

Table 5.4: Correction and error rate in Chinese learner English

| Chinese learner English | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Tense and aspect | Occurrence | Number of errors | Correction percentage | Error percentage |
| Future perfect | 1 | 0 | 100.0% | 0.0% |
| Future perfect progressive | 0 | 0 | / | / |
| Future progressive | 3 | 3 | 0.0% | 100.0% |
| Past perfect | 117 | 64 | 45.3% | 54.7% |
| Past perfect progressive | 3 | 1 | 66.7% | 33.3% |
| Past progressive | 64 | 23 | 64.1% | 35.9% |
| Present perfect | 1468 | 218 | 85.1% | 14.9% |
| Present perfect progressive | 59 | 16 | 72.9% | 27.1% |
| Present progressive | 1002 | 295 | 70.6% | 29.4% |
| Simple future | 3090 | 213 | 93.1% | 6.9% |
| Simple past | 3528 | 1125 | 68.1% | 31.9% |
| Simple present (random sample 1000) | 1006 | 170 | 83.1% | 16.9% |
| Simple present (multiplied based on original number) | 32407 | 5476 | 83.1% | 16.9% |
| Sum Total | 41742 | 7434 | 82.2% | 17.8% |

Table 5.5: Error analysis in Chinese learner English (a selective list)

| Chinese Learner English | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Tense and aspect | Errors | Number | Percentage |
| Future progressive | using future progressive for simple future | 2 | 66.7% |
| | wrong use of verb | 1 | 33.3% |
| | Future progressive - Sum | 3 | 100.0% |
| Past perfect | using past perfect for present perfect | 48 | 41.0% |
| | using past perfect for simple past | 10 | 8.5% |
| | others | 6 | 5.1% |
| | Past perfect - Sum | 64 | 54.7% |
| Past perfect progressive | using past perfect progressive for present perfect | 1 | 33.3% |
| | Past perfect progressive - Sum | 1 | 33.3% |
| Past progressive | *being* + n. | 1 | 1.6% |
| | subject verb disagreement | 5 | 7.8% |
| | using active voice for passive voice in past progressive | 3 | 4.7% |
| | using past progressive for present progressive | 6 | 9.4% |
| | others | 8 | 12.5% |
| | Past progressive - Sum | 23 | 35.9% |
| Present perfect | incorrect spelling and/or morphological inflection of past participle | 25 | 1.7% |
| | subject verb disagreement | 90 | 6.1% |
| | subject verb disagreement, incorrect spelling of past participle | 1 | 0.1% |
| | subject verb disagreement, using active voice for passive voice in present perfect | 1 | 0.1% |
| | subject verb disagreement, using base form for past participle | 1 | 0.1% |
| | subject verb disagreement, using passive voice for active voice in present perfect | 2 | 0.1% |
| | subject verb disagreement, using present perfect for simple present | 3 | 0.2% |
| | subject verb disagreement, using present perfect passive for simple past active | 1 | 0.1% |
| | using active voice for passive voice in present perfect | 12 | 0.8% |
| | using passive voice for active voice in present perfect | 34 | 2.3% |
| | using present perfect for simple past | 13 | 0.9% |
| | using present perfect for simple present | 19 | 1.3% |
| | others | 16 | 1.1% |
| | Present perfect - Sum | 218 | 14.9% |
| Present perfect progressive | *being* + n. | 1 | 1.7% |
| | subject verb disagreement | 4 | 6.8% |
| | using present perfect progressive in stative verb | 3 | 5.1% |
| | others | 8 | 13.6% |
| | Present perfect progressive - Sum | 16 | 27.1% |
| Present progressive | *being* + adj./v-*ed* | 2 | 0.2% |
| | *being* + verb base form | 1 | 0.1% |
| | *being* + n. | 7 | 0.7% |
| | subject verb disagreement | 38 | 3.8% |
| | using active voice for passive voice in present progressive | 10 | 1.0% |
| | using present progressive for simple present | 136 | 13.6% |
| | using present progressive with incompatible stative verbs | 25 | 2.5% |
| | using v-*ing* for infinitive as a predicative expression in SVC sentence | 31 | 3.1% |
| | others | 45 | 4.5% |
| | Present progressive - Sum | 295 | 29.4% |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | missing *be* after *will* in future progressive | 1 | 0.0% |
| | missing *be* after *will* in simple future passive | 6 | 0.2% |
| | missing *be* after *will* in *will + be + adj .* | 24 | 0.8% |
| | missing *be* after *will* in *will + be + n.* | 2 | 0.1% |
| | missing *be* after *will* in *will + be + prep.* | 2 | 0.1% |
| | missing verb after *will* | 4 | 0.1% |
| | unnecessary *be* in *will + v .* as *will + be + v.* | 23 | 0.7% |
| Simple future | using noun for verb infinitive form after *will* | 15 | 0.5% |
| | using passive voice for active voice in simple future | 36 | 1.2% |
| | using past participle for infinitive form after *will* | 13 | 0.4% |
| | using simple future for simple present | 7 | 0.2% |
| | using *will* for *would* | 4 | 0.1% |
| | using *will* for *would* in past tense | 4 | 0.1% |
| | using *will* for *would* in subordinate clause with main verb in past tense | 21 | 0.7% |
| | others | 51 | 1.7% |
| | Simple future - Sum | 213 | 6.9% |
| | *if* clause | 2 | 0.1% |
| | incorrect spelling and/or morphological inflection of verbs in simple past | 18 | 0.5% |
| | missing *be* in passive voice after modal verb | 15 | 0.4% |
| | past tense in main clause but present tense in subordinate clause | 379 | 10.7% |
| | subject verb disagreement | 21 | 0.6% |
| | subject verb disagreement, using passive voice for active voice in simple past | 1 | 0.0% |
| | subject verb disagreement, using simple past for simple present | 4 | 0.1% |
| | using active voice for passive voice in simple past | 20 | 0.6% |
| | using passive voice for active voice in simple past | 24 | 0.7% |
| Simple past | using simple past active for simple present passive | 46 | 1.3% |
| | using simple past for present perfect | 50 | 1.4% |
| | using simple past for simple future | 7 | 0.2% |
| | using simple past for simple present | 335 | 9.5% |
| | using simple past for simple present, present tense in main clause but past tense in subordinate clause | 4 | 0.1% |
| | using simple past form for infinitive form | 156 | 4.4% |
| | using simple past form for *-ing* participle | 16 | 0.5% |
| | *was/were* + base form | 6 | 0.2% |
| | others | 21 | 0.6% |
| | Simple past - Sum | 1125 | 31.9% |

| | | Random sample | Original | Percentage |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *is/are/be* + base form | 17 | 548 | 1.7% |
| | incorrect spelling and/or morphological inflection of verbs in simple present | 7 | 225 | 0.7% |
| | subject verb disagreement | 91 | 2931 | 9.0% |
| | using simple present (third person singular) for infinitive after modal verb | 7 | 225 | 0.7% |
| | using simple present (third person singular) for bare infinitive | 1 | 32 | 0.1% |
| Simple present | using base form for *to* infinitive | 8 | 258 | 0.8% |
| | using base form for *-ing* participle | 14 | 451 | 1.4% |
| | using base form/simple present (third person singular) for past participle | 6 | 193 | 0.6% |
| | using simple present for simple past | 4 | 129 | 0.4% |
| | using base form for noun form | 4 | 129 | 0.4% |
| | others | 11 | 354 | 1.1% |
| | Simple present - Sum (random sample 1006) | 170 | | 16.9% |
| | Simple present - Sum (multiplied based on original number 32407) | | 5476 | 16.9% |
| Sum Total | | | 7434 | 17.8% |

Generally, the quantity of errors in the simple present is the highest since the simple present takes the largest proportion among all tenses and aspects. More than half of the total errors involve simple present. The percentages of different errors in the future progressive and the past perfect progressive are much higher than others because these two tense and aspect forms are more complex than others and the use rates are rather low. There are more errors in the occurrence of these two forms. The simple future has the lowest error rate compared with the other 11 tense and aspect combinations. The overall error rate in tense and aspect in Chinese learner English is 17.8%.

The typical errors with large numbers are discussed in the following part with examples from corpus data, which are the direct retrieval results without any change or correction. The relevant corpus information is provided in brackets after the examples, and the corrected versions of the bold part in the examples are provided at the end of each example.

**Using past perfect for present perfect**

There are 48 error cases of using the past perfect for the present perfect out of 117 occurrences of the past perfect. The error rate is 41.0% in the past perfect.

The perfect is 'the continuing relevance of a previous situation' (Comrie 1976: 56). 'Present perfect expresses a relation between present state and past situation. Past perfect (pluperfect) describes a relation between a past state and an even earlier situation.' (Comrie 1976: 56). Therefore, the reference time point in the past perfect is in the past and the past perfect refers to the time before the past time point, 'past before the past', while the reference time in the present perfect is the present time or the time of the utterance, and the present perfect refers to the continuing situation leading up till now. The reference time in these error samples is the present time, but the learners use the past perfect instead of the present perfect. The error results from the confusion between past perfect and present perfect, and the unclear reference time point. Fundamentally, it is an incorrect use of tense, suggesting that Chinese learners of English experience difficulties in grammatically expressing events located in time.

(5.1) Kong is no longer an industrial centre. In recent years, Hong Kong **had**

**been changed** to a financial centre. Under this change, there is a serious shortages of (ICLE-CN-HKU-0568.1) → has been changed
(5.2) may improve the life more efficience. In recent years, however, it **had brought** into the question that it connives the students to spend extravagent. In this essay, I
(ICLE-CN-HKU-0201.1) → has brought
(5.3) will be throwed to the litter bag. This will waste. In this essay, I **had discussed** some of the main advantages and disadvantages of banning smoking in restaurants. (ICLE-CN-HKU-0349.1) → have discussed

In these sentences, *in recent years* in examples (5.1) and (5.2) and *in this essay* in example (5.3) clearly indicate that the reference time is the present. Therefore, the present perfect should be used rather than past perfect when the perfect aspect is meant to be used.

Aspect does not exist on its own, and always occurs together with tense. As Chinese has no tense, the errors with aspect and tense might be due to lacking awareness of using tenses.

**Using past perfect for simple past**

There are 10 erroneous uses of the past perfect for the simple past. The error rate is 8.5%.

The past perfect refers to a time that is earlier than some specified past time and it is anchored by time adverbials or dependent clauses which overtly identify a time frame as time reference, whereas the simple past describes a situation that no longer exists or an event that took place at a particular time in the past. The difference between the past perfect and the simple past is in time reference. Although both refer to the past time, the time reference of the past perfect is an earlier time before a past time while that of the simple past is just a past time. The following examples (5.4) and (5.5) show the use of the past perfect for the simple past. In these cases the simple past is appropriate as there is a reference point in the past, and not in a past before a past. The reason for this learner error can be the confusion between past perfect and simple past since both refer to the past, or it can be due to the unclear time line.

(5.4) than 20% had $10000 or even more. After the questionnaire, they **had held** interviews with some of the selected students and found a common factor among these (ICLE-CN-HKU-0577.1) → held

(5.5) choice for us to study just in order to get a degree! I remember dad **had ever told** me, what he learned while he was 17 was how to mend television. At that time, all (ICLE-CN-UK-0004.1) → told

**Using past progressive for present progressive**

There are 6 erroneous uses of the past progressive for the present progressive which amounts to an error rate of 9.4% in 64 occurrences of the past progressive.

The present tense refers to the present time while the past tense refers to the past time through a past time reference point, which is separate from the present time. Using the past progressive for the present progressive is an issue of wrong use of tense. The time reference in the following example (5.6), *now*, is actually the present time, not the past time, thus it should be in present tense. In the example (5.7), it is a general current situation, the progressive serves as a time frame in the sentence, and the whole situation still holds true (even there might be some cases in the past). Therefore it should be in the present tense. The error might be due to the unclear time reference.

(5.6) This will cause the army losing the ability of fighting. Now the PLA **was starting** a revolution, "trying to avoid such situation. In fact, I think the best and easiest (ICLE-CN-UK-0115.1) → is starting

(5.7) objective is to promote credit card to university students. When they **were promoting**, they usually points out the benefit of using a credit card. In fact, using credit (ICLE-CN-HKU-0537.1) → are promoting

**Incorrect spelling and/or morphological inflection of past participle**

There are 26 cases of incorrect spelling and/or morphological inflection of the past participle with an error rate of 1.8% in 1468 occurrences of the present perfect.

Most common ones are: regularizing the irregular verb, such as participle *shown* written as *showed*, *arisen* written as *arised* in example (5.8);

irregularizing the regular verb, such as participle *moved* written as *moven* in example (5.9); taking the past tense form same as the past participle, such as past participle *broken* written as *broke*, past participle *become* written as *became* in example (5.10); taking the base form as the past participle, for example, past participle *breached* written as *breach*, *argued* as *argue* in example (5.11).

(5.8) after receiving the goods and services. Recently, an argument **has been arised** that students use a credit card may exist some advantgages and disadvantgages. In (ICLE-CN-HKU-0279.1) → has been arisen
(5.9) with mainland companies. A large amount of Hong Kong industries **have moven** to mainland. Therefore, constructing the second railway enable Hong Kong people go to (ICLE-CN-HKU-0054.1) → have moved
(5.10) Internet **has became** very popular and common for people. The goods that internet has given to people is (ICLE-CN-HKU-0644.1) → has become
(5.11) cards has become a controversial topic in recent years. This issue **has been argue**, may help student to have a early training in managing their financial affair. (ICLE-CN-HKU-0639.1) → has been argued

**Using active voice for passive voice in present perfect**
There are 12 error cases of using the active voice for the passive voice in the present perfect with an error rate of 0.8%.

The wrong use of the active voice instead of the passive voice relates to the understanding of the use and the meaning of the verb. Some cases should be clearly used in the passive voice according to the meaning of the sentence, such as examples (5.12) and (5.13). Some cases are related to the use of the verb, such as *worry* in example (5.14). The use of *worry* is usually *somebody is worried about something*.

(5.12) an Provincal exam in 2004. It 's no doubt to say even when the book **has published and sold** to a customer, it has been overfashioned, like a back number magzine, (ICLE-CN-UK-0004.1) → has been published and sold
(5.13) in modern recycling started in the late 1980's. That means, recycling **has just established** in Hong Kong for about twenty years. The rest are

mostly small scale, primitive (ICLE-CN-HKU-0211.1) → has just been established

(5.14) The student use credit cards and owe a large sum of money. They **have worried** about their payment ability. All these elements lead the students feel some pressures (ICLE-CN-HKU-0287.1) → have been worried/ are worried

**Using passive voice for active voice in present perfect**

There are 34 error cases of using the passive voice for the active voice in the present perfect with an error rate of 2.3%.

Same as using the active voice for the passive one, using the passive voice for the active one is actually due to the incomplete mastering of English verbal syntax, the meaning and the use, as shown in examples (5.15) and (5.16).

(5.15) only cause sadness to families. As the population of human beings **has been increased** dramatically in recent years, abortion is also an effective way to reduce the (ICLE-CN-HKU-0764.1) → has increased

(5.16) of the society. For instance, Macau, a famous gambling city, it **has been legalized** soccer betting for a period of time. We can see not much benefits to Macau as we (ICLE-CN-HKU-0441.1) → has legalized

**Using present perfect for simple past**

There are 13 error cases of using the present perfect for the simple past with an error rate at 0.9% in the present perfect.

The present perfect relates the present situation to a past one which is embedded in an extended interval of the present and accessed from the present, while the simple past refers to an event that took place at a specified past time, which is viewed from a past time and disconnected from the present time. To put it in another way, as Biber (Biber et 1999) states, the present perfect describes a situation that continues to exist up to the present time, while the past tense describes a situation that no longer exists or an event that took place at a particular time in the past (Biber et 1999: 467).

Using the present perfect for the simple past indicates that the learners are confused with these two. If an event happened in the past, disconnected

from the present, it should be in the simple past rather than the present perfect. If there is a specified past time in the sentence, it should not be in the present perfect, as present perfect cannot occur with a specified past time adverbial. Only time adverbials such as *recently* and its synonyms can be used with the present perfect. In the examples (5.17) and (5.18), there is clear past time reference. Therefore they should be in the past tense.

(5.17) in a research by a tearm of health care professions in 1999. They **have interviewed** 500 married women randomly. Half of them are against and half of them are no (ICLE-CN-HKU-0688.1) → interviewed
(5.18) to make special dishes for New year's dinner party. Since television **has been created**, it offers many job opportunities, artists and media programme designers have got (ICLE-CN-UK-0024.2) → was created

**Using present perfect for simple present**
There are 19 error cases of using the present perfect for the simple present with 1.3% an error rate in the present perfect.

The simple present refers to the present time and describes a state existing at the present time, a present habitual behavior or an action ongoing at the time, while the present perfect relates the present situation to a past one and describes a situation continuing to exist up to now. The samples actually describe the present state or habitual behavior, and do not connect with the past, therefore the perfect aspect is not necessary and the simple aspect is proper. Examples (5.19) and (5.20) state general facts, rather than an event continues from the past till now.

(5.19) repayments and felt depressed about their debt. In fact, many people **have believed** that students should put more effort on their studies rather than being into repayment (ICLE-CN-HKU-0422.1) → believe
(5.20) is a major risk factor for being overweight later in life. Inactivity **has been correlated** not only to obesity, but also to conditions like diabetes and heart disease. (ICLE-CN-UK-0140.1) → correlates

***Being* + n.**

There are 7 error cases of using *being + n.* with an error rate of 0.7% in 1002 occurrences of the present progressive.

Usually progressive *being* does not combine with nominal predication. When it is used with a noun, it implies play-acting. '*He is being a policeman.*' means that he behaves like a policeman. It is temporary and willful. However, all these situations in the examples are present states and are not just temporary, they should be expressed with the simple present rather than using progressive '*being + n.*' structure, since clearly they are not play-acting and not temporary. The contexts of the examples (5.21), (5.22), and (5.23) indicate that *student*, *material* and *disadvantage* are real and consistent state or situation. Using *being + n.* instead of *be + n.* is actual the overuse of the progressive *being*, and reflects that the learners overgeneralize its use and meaning.

(5.21) be the parents. They have no salary to support their families as they **are still being students**. Even they try to have babies, they will find it difficult to teach their (ICLE-CN-HKU-0772.1) → are still students

(5.22) treating waste and can manage waste well. The recycled materials **are being the materials** for other productions. Extracting of materials is reduced. Recycling becomes (ICLE-CN-HKU-0013.1) → are the materials

(5.23) to spend a lot of money and other resources. Thus, the high cost **is being a disadvange**, According to <R>, the train line consultancy studies are certainly expensive; (ICLE-CN-HKU-0059.1) → is a disadvantage

**Using active voice for passive voice in present progressive**

There 10 error cases of using the active voice for the passive voice in the present progressive with an error rate of 1.0%.

The incorrect use of the active voice for the passive voice relates to the understanding of the use and the meaning of the verb.

(5.24) commercial and industrial concerns. In fact, recycling of waste **is carrying** out in our dairly life. waste material collected by waste stream, and then used as a raw (ICLE-CN-HKU-0014.1) → is carried

**Using present progressive for simple present**

136 error cases of using the present progressive for the simple present are identified in the present progressive with an error rate of 13.6%.

The difference between the progressive aspect and the simple aspect is that the progressive focuses on the 'ongoing' event, while the simple aspect refers to a habitual behavior or an existing state. Confusion between these two aspects or unclear concept about temporary happenings and habitual events might lead to this error. The verb phrases *hold credit cards* in example (5.25) and *play a sport* in example (5.26) clearly are habitually consistent rather than temporary, should be in the simple aspect.

(5.25) it may turn to debt. 60% of university students in Hong Kong **are holding** credit cards. 20% of them have more than $10,000 debt, and the average debt is around (ICLE-CN-HKU-0074.1) → hold

(5.26) soccer betting should not be made legal since football players **are playing** a sports, they exercise hard to win, and they have to be co - operate also, (ICLE-CN-HKU-0424.1) → play

**Using present progressive with incompatible stative verb**

25 error cases of using the present progressive with incompatible stative verbs are found in the present progressive with an error rate of 2.5%.

There are some verbs which are normally incompatible with progressive. Leech (1999) summarizes these verbs: verbs of inert perception such as *feel, hear, see, smell, taste*, etc., verbs of inert cognition such as *believe, forget, hope, know, understand, suppose*, etc., state verbs of having and being such as *belong to, contain, depend on, deserve, have, own* etc. When they are used with progressive, they function as 'activity' verbs. The samples use the present progressive with these types of verbs, such as *have* in example (5.27), *own* in example (5.28), *understand* in example (5.29), etc.

(5.27) since serious problems may be caused. Actually, using credit cards **is having** its pors and cons. And I am going to discuss the advantages of student using credit cards (ICLE-CN-HKU-0191.1) → has

(5.28) cards are very useful. Many students, especially university students, **are**

**owning** credit cars. Some of the students, however, got into trouble because they had credit debt (ICLE-CN-HKU-0583.1) → own
(5.29) manage their financial control. The disadvantages of students whom **are not fully understanding** why they have credit cards. They are feel frighting and some stressing (ICLE-CN-HKU-0288.1) → don't fully understand

**Using v-*ing* for infinitive as a predicative expression in SVC sentence**

There are 29 error cases of using v-*ing* for the infinitive as a predicative expression in SVC sentence with an error rate of 2.9% in present progressive.

The infinitive as a noun phrase, expressing action or state, can form a predicative expression or as subject complement. For example, *the best thing to do is to take a walk*; *What she should do is make a list*. The learners use the '*be + v-ing*' structure for the infinitive in these situation. It should be the infinitive *to watch* in example (5.30), *to study* in example (5.31), *to place* in example (5.32), and the bare infinitive *watch* in example (5.33).

(5.30) during daytime. While they go home, the best thing to do maybe **is watching** TV with a cup of tea in the hands, which makes them feel ease. However, they are not (ICLE-CN-UK-0117.1) → is to watch
(5.31) is quite high according to officer in a bank. As the job of students **is studying**. Students should not spend time on part-time work to earn money for repaying the debt. (ICLE-CN-HKU-0420.1) → is to study
(5.32) waste materials as raw materials to produce products. The last stage **is placing** products in the market for sell and consumption. Reducing waste management costs, (ICLE-CN-HKU-0254.1) → is to place
(5.33) go to the zoo, go climbing the hills, go camping, etc. What they do **is just watching** TV. Some even skip the snap or supper only to catch up the program, A lot of them (ICLE-CN-UK-0047.3) → is watch

**Missing *be* after *will* in *will + be + adj./n./prep.* in the passive simple future/ in the future progressive**

The copular *be* is often omitted after *will* in structure *will + be + adj./n./prep.* or in the passive voice of the simple future, or in the future progressive. There are altogether 35 cases, and 24 cases are *will + adj.* with an error rate of 0.8%

in 3090 occurrences of the simple future. The learners might take the modal verb *will* as the full verb or take the part following *will* as the full verb.
Missing *be* after *will* in *will + be + adj*.

(5.34) restaurants are not an open area that the second-hand smoke **will still harmful** to the customers in the restaurant. Breathing secondhand smoke increase the risk (ICLE-CN-HKU-0268.1) → will be still harmful
(5.35) in different regions. Besides this, the average natural life of us **will much longer** than now, maybe 90 or even 100! 2. Genetic engineering helps to improved quality of (ICLE-CN-UK-0038.4) → will be much longer

Missing *be* after *will* in *will + be + prep.*
(5.36) main religions, Christainity, Islam and Jadaism, they all feel that it **will against** the willing of the god if they terminate a pregnancy. Those women who terminate the (ICLE-CN-HKU-0664.1) → will be against

Missing *be* after *will* in *will + be + n.*
(5.37) then, people may be talk some lie on the computer to someone, there **will no trust** in the furture, everyone may be everytime tell lies. So we should concern that and (ICLE-CN-HKU-0152.1) → will be no trust

Missing *be* after *will* in the simple future passive
(5.38) smoking. If total smoking banning is practised, health problems **will surely reduced**. In short, this discussion is very argueable. Even the government make a (ICLE-CN-HKU-0179.1) → will surely be surely reduced
(5.39) of customers are smokers. If total banning smoking, their business **will directly affected**. Now, there is already established a law for over 200 seats resturants should (ICLE-CN-HKU-0363.1) → will be directly affected

Missing *be* after *will* in the future progressive
(5.40) can be reuse or going to processing. Third the the waste materials **will reprocessing** and produce a new product. In this case manufacture can reduce the raw materials (ICLE-CN-HKU-0118.1) → will be reprocessing

**Missing verb after *will***

There are 4 error cases of missing the verb after *will* in the simple future with an error rate of 0.1%.

Just as missing copular *be*, it is also not rare that the learners omit the verb after *will*. In example (5.41), there should be a verb such as *present*, and in example (5.42), the verb *have* is omitted after *will*.

(5.41) point out the advantages and disadvantages of recycling. Finally, I **will** my opinion towards whether the Government should promote recycling. It seems that recycling as (ICLE-CN-HKU-0255.1) → will present
(5.42) to spend lots of time and energy on their part-time works, thus they **will** not enough time and energy to concentrate their studys. The next argument is that students (ICLE-CN-HKU-0462.1) → will have

**Using unnecessary *be* after *will* in *will + v.* as *will be + v.***

23 error cases of unnecessary *be* after *will* (using *will be + v.* for *will + v.*) are identified with an error rate of 0.7% in the simple future.

While it is quite often to miss copular *be* in *will + be + adj./n./prep.*, it is surprisingly frequent to use unnecessary *be* after *will* in *will + v.* structure. The use of *will + be + v.* might be due to the fact that the chunk *will be* frequently is used in *will + be + adj./n./prep.*

(5.43) the Long Valley line will destroy the wetland, many birds and insects **will be** lose their home and food. So that they will die, Therefore, the government has recentes (ICLE-CN-HKU-0719.1) → will
(5.44) developing the nation 's economy completely together. Such situation **will be** absolutely do harm to the modernization of the countries. Second If the army is made up of (ICLE-CN-UK-0154.1) → will

**Using noun for verb infinitive form after *will***

There are 15 error cases of using the noun for the verb infinitive form after *will* in the simple future with an error rate of 0.5%.

Using the noun for the verb infinitive form after *will* shows that the learners confuse the verb form with the noun form. This might be because of

similar spellings such as *breath* vs. *breathe*, *loss* vs. *lost* in example (5.46) and (5.47) or simply taking the noun form same as the verb form in example (5.45).

(5.45) a second railway to improve this problem. In this essay, I **will conclusion** the pros and cons about constructing a second railway link to the mainland. Nowadays (ICLE-CN-HKU-0060.1) → will conclude
(5.46) air. Especially the waiters or waitresses who work in restaurants **will breath** polluted air all of their working time. This will increase the chance of having (ICLE-CN-HKU-0177.1) → will breathe
(5.47) area, if we carry out development in those area, those living things **will loss** their homes and endanger their lives. In a greater extend, the ecosystem will be affected. (ICLE-CN-HKU-0097.1) → will lose

**Using passive voice for active voice in simple future**
There are 36 cases of using the passive voice for the active voice in the simple future with 1.2% error rate.

(5.48) If there is total ban on smoking, greater disappointed of smokers **will be existed**. According to a survey conducted by KPMG Consulting Asia <R>, 14% of respondents (ICLE-CN-HKU-0179.1) → will exist
(5.49) is downtracking. If we can take this advantage, our economy **will be recovered**. <R> states that, <*> It is a good chance to save our economy. Furthermore, it not (ICLE-CN-HKU-0055.1) → will recover

**Using past participle for infinitive form after *will***
There are 13 error cases of using the past participle for the infinitive form after *will* in the simple future with 0.4% error rate.

Using the past participle for the infinitive form after *will* shows that the learners do not master the past participle and the infinitive form of certain verbs, and regard the past participle form as the infinitive form, such as *lost* for *lose* in example (5.50), *spent* for *spend* in example (5.51). Since some verbs have past participle forms similar to their infinitive forms, it might be confusing for the learners to differentiate them.

(5.50) people. Most of their like go to bars, if all the bars was smoke-free, it **will lost** a lot of customers and decrease the income. In Hong Kong, the catering industry also have (ICLE-CN-HKU-0172.1) → will lose
(5.51) cafe A lot of teenagers play online games with their friends. They **will spent** more time and money in the online games. The parents always worry that the children waste (ICLE-CN-HKU-0235.1) → will spend

**Using simple future for simple present**
7 error cases of using the simple future for the simple present are found in the simple future with 0.2% error rate.

The simple future refers to the future time while the simple present describes a present habitual state or behavior. When a general fact is referred to, it should be in the simple present rather than the simple future. In temporal clauses with conjunctions such as *when*, the independent clause should be in the simple present, when it refers to events or situations in the future.

(5.52) are occupied by the country parks. However, once the country parks **will be developed**, numerous of side effects will be emerged. Higher pressure to Hong Kong people and (ICLE-CN-HKU-0758.1) → are developed
(5.53) or not. It is undeniable that smoking can affect our health. Smokers **will hav**e a higher chance of getting lung cancer and it is same as passive smokers. According to <R> (ICLE-CN-HKU-0611.1) → have

**Using *will* for *would* in subordinate clause with main verb in past tense**
There are 21 error cases of using *will* for *would* in the subordinate clause with the main verb in the past tense with an error rate of 0.7%.

According to the sequence of tenses rule in English (Comrie 1985: 114), the tense of the direct speech is kept in the indirect speech if it is in non-past tense. When the main verb is in the past time, the tense of the original speech is shifted into the past. When the content of the indirect speech still holds true in the present time, it is possible not to shift to past sequence in the subordinate clause.

Therefore, when the main verb is in the past tense, the original words in the future tense should be shifted into the past tense corresponding to the

future in the indirect speech. That is the future in the past. Only when the content still has validity, can it be remained in the future tense.

The future tense in the subordinate clause in the examples (5.54) and (5.55) should be shifted into the future in the past since the verbs in the main clauses are in the past tense. They should be *would +v*. The error was due to the incomplete mastering of sequence of tenses rules in English. However, in sentences like the last example (5.56), it is difficult to tell the reason for using future tense in indirect speech with main verb in past tense. It might be due to the incomplete mastering of the sequence of tenses rules or it is because the content in indirect speech still holds true.

(5.54) half of them stated that having an abortion was an act of murder, and **will** cause harm to women both physically and mentally also could persuade other reluctant women to (ICLE-CN-HKU-0680.1) → would
(5.55) is prohibited in restaurants. The researchers estimated that there **will** be around 120,000 potential new customers for smoke-free establishments in the territary. (ICLE-CN-HKU-0613.1)
(5.56) survey also found that 14% of respondents, mostly smokers said they **will** spend less when they eat out. The catering industry chairman, Tommy Cheung Yu-Yan claimed that (ICLE-CN-HKU-0274.1)

**Incorrect spelling and/or morphological inflection of verbs in simple past**
18 cases of incorrect spelling and/or morphological inflection of verbs are identified with an error rate of 0.5% in 3528 occurrences of the simple past.

The most common incorrect spelling and/or morphological inflection of verbs in the simple past is regularizing the irregular verbs, such as *telled* for *told* in example (5.57), *seeked* for *sought* in example (5.58), *spended* for *spent*, *maked* for *made*, *flied* for *flew* etc.

(5.57) children purchase the goods or services is the same as their children **telled** to them. It can avoid student get money from parents dishonestly. However, the disadvantage (ICLE-CN-HKU-0286.1) → told
(5.58) there seems to be a conelation between the using number of abortions **seeked** an a more liberal attitude towards sex. Many people in fact claim that

people are becoming (ICLE-CN-HKU-0773.1) → sought

**Missing *be* in passive voice after modal verb**

There are 15 error cases of missing *be* in the passive voice after the modal verb with an error rate of 0.4%.

The passive voice used after the modal verb should be in the structure *modal verb+be+past participle*. Missing *be* in this structure is very common. The possible explanation is that the modal verb takes the usual position of the copular verb *be*, thus the learners might have easily forgotten to use the copular verb *be*.

(5.59) first and then sort them into different kind. The waste materials **can used** as a raw mateiral for manufacturer to produce new products. When manufacturer using their (ICLE-CN-HKU-0119.1) → can be used

(5.60) technology is extremely high, and it is aimed to make profit, it **may considered** as the rich people's right only. This may disguish the gap between the rich and the poor (ICLE-CN-UK-0037.4) → may be considered

**Past tense in main clause but present tense in subordinate clause**

There are 379 cases of using the past tense with the main verb but the present tense in the subordinate clause, which amounts to 10.7% of all occurrences of the simple past retrieved.

The sequence of tenses rule is not applied in these cases where the main verb is in the past tense while the verb in subordinate clause remains in the present tense. There could be two explanations: 1) the learners know about the sequence of tenses rule, but they don't apply it as the content still holds true. 2) the learners have not mastered the rule and take the indirect speech as direct speech, not shifting the tense into the past, even when the main verb is in the past tense. Some cases such as examples (5.61) and (5.62) can be easily analyzed as the second situation, while some cases such as example (5.63) cannot be easily judged as it is unknown or unseen whether the content of the indirect speech still holds true or not.

(5.61) they also can have at least $1,5000 credit card amounts. Therefore, it

**was said** that there **is** a bad trend to let more students use it. But on the other hand, some are (ICLE-CN-HKU-0192.1)
(5.62) of the benefits recycling provides as mentioned by <R> Many people **argued** that, however, recycling industry **is** hard to survive because of the high cost of running. In (ICLE-CNH-HKU-0257.1)
(5.63) For example, there is a game called ' Lineage', <R> Some parent **claimed** that most of their children **waste** their time instead of doing useful activities like their (ICLE-CN-HKU-0224.1)

Chinese has no tense, so the sequence of tenses does not exist in Chinese either. Lacking the awareness about tense and the sequence of tenses might lead to the unclear or incorrect application of this rule in English.

**Using active voice for passive voice in simple past**
20 error cases of using the active for the passive voice are identified with an error rate of 0.6% in the simple past.

(5.64) carinogens was detected in blood and urine of nonsmokers who **exposed** to environment with tobacco smoke. The report concludes that the risk of cardiovascular and (ICLE-CN-HKU-0336.1) → were exposed
(5.65) more than $2,000, the reseunh indicated that many interviewers, who **selected** from students, suffer from a high level of anxiety and even some interviewers lost sleep (ICLE-CN-HKU-0538.1) → were selected

**Using passive voice for active voice in simple past**
24 error cases of using the passive for the active voice are identified with an error rate 0.7% in the simple past.

(5.66) life, hard to create the community integration. Another problem I **was** argued is, people acquire the information from the " Internet " become a part of their life. (ICLE-CN-HKU-0142.1) → argued
(5.67) a kind of opium for them, a dangerous hobby. One of my classmate **was** failed his exams many times because of watch TV. I think they should use time of watch TV to (ICLE-CN-UK-0097.1) → failed

**Using simple past active for simple present passive**

There are 46 error cases of using the simple past active for the simple present passive with an error rate of 1.3% in the simple past.

In the cases where the passive simple present is proper, the active simple past is used. The copular *be* in the passive present tense is omitted, and only the past participle is remained.

(5.68) credit card to solve the eating or travelling problem. Some students **attacted** by the card card and then to possess because the credit card give many and many benefit to (ICLE-CN-HKU-0134.1) → are attracted

(5.69) the problem in their work. Moreover, when they apply for a job, they **stuck** in a dilemma situation: they possess the diploma or a degree requested, but they haven't (ICLE-CN-UK-0005.1) → are stuck

(5.70) university, the result of your interview will be known quickly when it **finished**. From what have been mentioned above, we may safely come to the conclusion that both of the (ICLE-CN-UK-0028.1) → is finished

**Using simple past for present perfect**

50 error cases of using the simple past for the present perfect are indentified with an error rate of 1.4% in the simple past.

Just as using the present perfect for the simple past, using the simple past for the present perfect shows that the learners have not fully understood and mastered the use of these two. The crucial difference between the two is whether the event extends to the present moment or no longer exists disconnected to the present. If an event happened and continues to exist up till now, it should be in the present perfect rather than the simple past since the simple past describes a past situation or event that does not continue into the present. Obviously, the contexts and the time phrases such as *in the recent years* in example (5.71), *in the past ten years* in example (5.72) and *throughout the years* in example (5.73) indicate that the events continue up to the present time, are related with the present and have impact on the current situation, therefore they should be in the present perfect.

(5.71) In worldwide, people **started** to raise their attention of their health in

the recent years. They will concern have with (ICLE-CN-HKU-0164.1) → have started

(5.72) In the Past ten years, the development of information technology **was** rapid. Nowadays, you can find the application of computer easily. For example, people can do (ICLE-CN-HKU-0144.1) → has been

(5.73) entered a new era, but the cost of manufacturing a television **dropped** steadily throughout the years. It has led to the popularity of television. We could see the (ICLE-CN-UK-0029.4) → has dropped

**Using simple past for simple present**

335 error cases of using the simple past for the simple present are found with an error rate of 9.5% in the simple past.

The simple past describes the past event that is separated from now, and no longer exists. General truth, habitual behavior at the present time should be in the simple present. The time reference in the samples is clearly the present time, and therefore should be in the present tense, rather than in the past time.

(5.74) personal opinion on this topic. Recycling can save the resources we **used**. <R> state that recycling can help to reduce the cost of waste management, lower the costs of (ICLE-CN-HKU-0003.1) → use

(5.75) the land spend on landfilled will increase rapidly. as the rubbish we **produced** everyday is increasing too. On the other hand, the recycling of paper can give us a better (ICLE-CN-HKU-0003.1) → produce

(5.76) The students should consider their financial situation before they **spent** money in goods. <R> states that the students using the credit cards to train and manage their (ICLE-CN-HKU-0287.1) → spend

(5.77) than 2 hours tv everyday to protect our eyes. To sum up, television **did** have its own advantages and disadvantags. Both of them is influencing us in many ways. My point (ICLE-CN-UK-0033.1) → does

(5.78) film, and sports. In many families, when parents and children **finished** their work, they will sit together watch TV and have a delicious dinner. What an agreeable (ICLE-CN-UK-0097.1) → finish

**Using simple past form for infinitive form**

156 error cases of using the simple past form for the infinitive form are identified with an error rate of 4.4% in the simple past.

The infinitive form of verb should be used after the modal verb, after certain verbs such as *make*, *let*, or *allow* etc. In the samples here, the simple past forms instead of infinitive forms are used.

(5.79) early training in managing their financial affairs. They also can **learned** to use card in a responsible way at the age of eighteen or nineteen is less likely to get (ICLE-CN-HKU-0134.1) → learn
(5.80) attention to it, we can easily become short-sighted. And it can also **affected** us in the metal way. The amont of crimes done by the youths is increasing, and we ca n't (ICLE-CN-UK-0061.3) → affect
(5.81) it will greatly demage their health. The debts always make students **felt** depressed. In shorts, credit card can develop students financial management and useful for pay (ICLE-CN-HKU-0405.1) → feel

**Using simple past form for *-ing* participle**

16 cases of using the simple past form for the *–ing* participle are found with an error rate of 0.5% in the simple past.

Simple past forms are used instead of *–ing* participles in some situations, for example, *find somebody doing sth*, or *–ing* participle post-modifying a noun, or after preposition.

(5.82) After prohibiting smoking, most bartenders found themselves **experienced** fewer breathing problems. <R> points out that, <*> Clearly, nonsmokers ' health will (ICLE-CN-HKU-0622.1) → experiencing
(5.83) great troubles of repayment. In addition, there is another problem **occurred** after the students get into debts. If they do not ask their parents for help or their (ICLE-CN-HKU-0518.1) →occurring
(5.84) owners in order to get some rule in enforcing the laws rather than **went** ahead to enforce the ban. This would, at least, reduce the resentment of this party. Besides, (ICLE-CN-HKU-0618.1) →going
(5.85) mostly are smokers said that they wo n't spend so much time on **ate** out if smoking was banned, also the Catering Industry Chairman claimed that over

30% of the (ICLE-CN-HKU-0615.1) →eating

***Is/are/be* + base form**

Using *is/are/be* + base form for the simple present/the present progressive is also quite often. There are 17 cases with an error rate of 1.7% in 1006 random samples of the simple present (548 proportionally out of original number 32407).

(5.86) be paid by the credit card immediately. However, using credit card **is lead** to some problems to the student. According to <R>, students are forced to take on part-time (ICLE-CN-HKU-0073.1) → leads

(5.87) hard to know the information is correct or not, so they **are easily get** the wrong information in the cyber cafes. Most cyber cafes also do not ban the sites that (ICLE-CN-HKU-0384.1) → get

(5.88) Kongers commited suicide because of gambling and the ages of them **are become** younger and younger. Gamblers lose all their properties by going to casinos, betting in (ICLE-CN-HKU-0444.1) → are becoming

**Using simple present (third person singular) for infinitive after modal verb**

There are 7 error cases of using the simple present (third person singular) for the infinitive after the modal verb with an error rate of 0.7% (225 proportionally out of original number 32407).

The learners still mark the third person singular in the verbs with *-s* after modal verbs. The verbs after modal verbs should be the infinitive form without tense/number inflectional markings.

(5.89) the government and the public. While it is true that such policy **can eases** the overpopulation problem in urban area by creating more residential that land and have (ICLE-CN-HKU-0085.1) → can ease

(5.90) should evaluates the outcome to all parties. And it **should gives** the suitable rights for employees. The employees will have a stable life in the future. (ICLE-CN-HKU-0300.1) → should give

**Using simple present for *to*-infinitive**

8 error cases of using the simple present for *to*-infinitive are identified with an error rate of 0.8% (258 proportionally out of original number 32407).

The infinitive with *to* form should be used after some verbs such as *want in example* (5.91), *cause* in example (5.92) etc. The learners use the simple present form instead of the infinitive form in these situations.

(5.91) by our parents. There were many restricts we would meet if we **want buy** a thing. So, once we can be free to use the savings. That means we escaped from the control of (ICLE-CN-HKU-0637.1) → to buy

(5.92) play oline game. So, the popular of cyber cafe **cause** teenagers **waste** their time and money in online game. On the other hand, Internet has allowed us to do more (ICLE-CN-HKU-0235.1) → to waste

**Using base form for *-ing* participle**

There are 14 error cases of using the base form for *–ing* participle with an error rate of 1.4% in the simple present (451 proportionally out of original number 32407).

The base form is used for *–ing* participle, for example, after preposition, post-modifier after noun, in some verb structure such as *spend*, nominalization of verbs etc.

(5.93) and inhumanity. It ignored the right of the baby and without **consider** the law of natural in this world. Therefore, the genetic technology use to manipulate the (ICLE-CN-UK-0030.4) →considering

(5.94) the country parks, there 's still practical as well as social problem **arise** from this act. Firstly, immense practical problem would be involved. <R> states that <*> So (ICLE-CN-HKU-0101.1) →arising

(5.95) concern that the children spend much time on the screen more than **communicate** with their parents or friend which is block the relationship with each other. However, (ICLE-CN-HKU-0149.1) →communicating

(5.96) practical problems may appear during the development. In addition, **develop** the green belt area may cause a lot of environmental problems. Many different kinds of trees (ICLE-CN-HKU-0097.1) →developing

**Using simple present for simple past**

4 error cases of using the simple present for the simple past are identified with an error rate of 0.4% in the simple present (129 proportionally out of original number 32407).

The simple present refers to the present time while the simple past refers to the past time. The contexts and past time phrases show that these cases are in the past time and should be in the past tense rather than the present tense.

(5.97) a case for murder that the murderer changed his mind in prison and **work** hard in his study and then finally did well in his academic result. It's a good example to (ICLE-CN-UK-0053.1) →worked

(5.98) the financial crisis in 1997, the situation of Hong Kong economy **become** poorer and poorer, and the unemployment rate reach a higher level in every month. Then if the (ICLE-CN-HKU-0290.1) →became

**Subject-verb disagreement**

Subject-verb disagreement is one of the most common errors in Chinese learner English occurring in almost all tenses and aspects. There are altogether 266 cases, including 5 in the past progressive, 99 in the present perfect, 4 in the present perfect progressive, 41 in the present progressive, 26 in the simple past, and 91 in the random sampled simple present. Based on the proportion of the random samples (1006) to the original number (32407) for the simple present, this should correspond to 2931 cases in original number. The overall error rate in all corpus items is 7.4% [(266-91+2931)/41742].

The subjects in these errors are pronouns, countable or uncountable nouns, mass nouns, subject clauses, and nominalized verb phrase, but the inflectional endings of verbs do not agree with the respective singular or plural forms of the subjects.

(5.99) make our in trouble. For example, 9.11 cases, American government **were looking** for Bin Laden and had killed him possible. If someone want to do similar risk thing to (ICLE-CN-UK-0011.1) → was looking

(5.100) Time **have changed**, market's trend have also changed. Information technology is fully recommended in the (ICLE-CN-HKU-0116.1) →has

changed

(5.101) argued over the years. It is a contradiction that number of smokers **have been increasing** and getting younger and young while modern people always mention about a word – (ICLE-CN-HKU-0622.1) →has been increasing

(5.102) In this modern ages, technology **are becoming** more and more advanced. Motor cars, aeroplanes, ships and trains, they were invented (ICLE-CN-HKU-0508.1) → is becoming

(5.103) short TV programmes. The reasons why people watched television **was** that: firstly, it was very new to people, and it was such an interesting and smart thing (ICLE-CN-UK-0007.1) → were

(5.104) cafes brings many advantages, it also causes some problems. Internet **become** popular. Either upload or download of the information, the high speed of transferring data is (ICLE-CN-HKU-0242.1) → becomes

### 5.2.2 Most prevalent errors in Chinese learner English

Based on the above analysis of errors and the total number of errors (shown in brackets below) in the corpus, it can be concluded that the common errors in Chinese learner English are in the following categories:

1. Sequence of tenses: the past tense in the main verb but the present tense in the subordinate clause (379).

There are two possible explanations in this use as previously stated: 1) the learners know the rule about sequence of tenses and the subordinate clause still holds true at present. 2) the learners are not clear about sequence of tenses, and make no tense shifting.

2. Misusing different tenses.

The most common cases are: using the simple past for the simple present (335), using the past perfect for the present perfect (48), and using the simple present for the simple past (4 out of random samples, 129 proportionally out of original number).

The rest includes using the past progressive for the present progressive

(6), using the present perfect for the past perfect (2), using the present progressive for the past progressive (1), using the simple future for the simple present (7), and using the simple past for the simple future (7).

3. Misusing different aspects.

The most common cases are: using the present progressive for the simple present (136), using the present perfect for the simple present (19), using the past perfect for the simple past (10), using the simple present for the present perfect (3 out of random samples, 97 proportionally for the entire corpus), and using the simple present for the present progressive (2 out of random samples, 64 proportionally out of original number).

The others include using the future progressive for the simple future (2), using the past progressive for the simple past (2), using the present perfect for the present perfect progressive (1), using the present perfect progressive for the present perfect (2), using the present progressive for the present perfect (3), and using the present progressive for the present perfect progressive (3).

4. Misusing different tenses and aspects.

The most common ones are: using the simple past for the present perfect (50) and using the present perfect for the simple past (13).

The rest includes using the past perfect for the simple present (1), using the past perfect progressive for the present perfect (1), using the past progressive for the present perfect progressive (1), using the past progressive for the simple present (1), using the present prefect for the simple future/simple present (1), using the present progressive for the simple future (3).

5. Subject verb disagreement (266, 3106 proportionally extrapolated to the entire corpus).

From narrow theoretical point of view on tense and aspect, subject-verb disagreement is trivial. However, considering such a large number of errors, it needs more attention if wide practical and pedagogical focuses are intended. Subject-verb agreement is supposed to appear in the formal grammatical expressions of tense and aspect and to be taught inseparably with tense and

aspect.

6. Misusing active or passive voices in different tenses and aspects.

The common ones are: using the active for the passive in the present perfect (13), using the passive for the active in the present perfect (36), using the active for the passive in the present progressive (10), using the passive for the active in the simple future (36), using the active for the passive in the simple past (20), using the passive for the active in the simple past (24), using the simple past active for the simple present passive (46), and using the passive for the active in the simple present (2 out of random samples, 64 proportionally out of original number).

The rest includes: using the active for the passive in the past perfect (1), using the passive for the active in the past perfect (1), using the past perfect active for the simple past passive (1), using the past perfect passive for the present perfect active (1), using the active for the passive in the past progressive (3), using the past progressive active for the simple past passive (1), using the present perfect active for the simple past passive (2), using the present perfect active for the simple present passive (1), using the present perfect passive for the past perfect active (1), using the passive for active in the present progressive (2), using the present progressive active for the simple present passive (6), using the present progressive passive for the simple present active (1), using the active for the passive in the simple future (3), using the simple past passive for the present perfect active (5), and using the simple past passive for the simple present active (2).

7. Omitting or wrongly adding copular *be*.

The most common ones are: missing *be* after *will* in *will + be + adj*. (24), using unnecessary *be* in *will + v.* as *will + be + v.* (23) and missing *be* in the passive voice after the modal verb (15).

The others include missing *be* in *be going to* (1), missing *be* after *will* in the future progressive (1), missing *be* after *will* in the simple future passive (6), missing *be* after *will* in *will + be + n.* (2), and missing *be* after *will* in *will + be + prep*. (2).

8. Using different tense/aspect forms for infinitive form.

The most frequent ones include using the simple past form for the infinitive form (156), using v-*ing* for the infinitive as a predicative expression in SVC sentence (29), using the past participle for the infinitive form after *will* (13), using the simple present (third person singular) for the infinitive after modal verb (7 out of random samples, 225 proportionally out of original number), using the simple present (third person singular) for the bare infinitive (1 out of random samples, 32 proportionally out of original number), and using base form for *to* infinitive (8 out of random samples, 258 proportionally out of original number).

The rest are: using present progressive for *be + to + v.* (2), *being* + verb base form (1), using adj. for the verb infinitive form after *will* (2), using *–ing* participle for the verb infinitive form after *will* (4), and using the present singular form for the infinitive form after *will* (5).

9. Using different tense/aspect forms for *–ing* participle.

The prevalent ones are: using the simple past for *–ing* participle (16), and using the base form for the *–ing* participle (14 out of random samples, 451 proportionally out of original number).

The others include: using the past progressive for the *–ing* participle (1), using *going to + v.* for the *–ing* participle (2), and using the present progressive for the *–ing* participle (2).

10. Using other forms for past participle.

It involves using the verb base form for the past participle (9), using the *–ing* participle for the past participle (3), using the *–ing* participle for the past participle in the passive voice (2), using the present singular verb form for the past participle (1), using the base form/simple present for the past participle (6 out of random samples, 193 proportionally out of original number).

11. Using *be* + base form.

There are *is/are/be* + base form (17 out of random samples, 548 proportionally out of original number) and *was/were* + base form (6).

12. Using present progressive with incompatible stative verbs (25)

13. Misusing *being* + *n.* (9)

14. Incorrect spelling and/or morphological inflection.

Incorrect spelling and/or morphological inflection involves the past participle (33), infinitive in the simple future (6), verbs in the simple past (18), and verbs in the simple present (7 out of random samples, 225 proportionally out of original number).

15. Using noun as verb or verb as noun.

Using the noun for the verb infinitive form after *will* (15), using the noun-*ed* for the simple past form (2), using the simple present base form for the noun form (4 out of random samples, 129 proportionally out of original number).

### 5.2.3 Transfer errors and intralingual errors in tense and aspect of Chinese learner English

Most researchers operate with a general distinction between transfer errors and intralingual errors (Ellis 1997: 59).

Lott (1983) divides transfer errors into three categories: 1) Overextension of analogy. It happens when the learner misuses an item because it shares features with an item in L1. 2) Transfer of structure. It occurs when the learner uses some L1 feature (phonological, lexical, grammatical, or pragmatic) rather than that of the target language. 3) Interlingual/intralingual error. It arises when a particular distinction does not exist in the L1 (Ellis 1997: 59).

Richards (1971) divides intralingual errors into four types: 1) Overgeneralization error. It occurs when the learner creates a deviant structure on the basis of other structures in the target language. It generally involves creating one deviant structure in place of two structures in target language. 2) Ignorance of the restrictions. It involves the application of rules to contexts where they do not apply. 3) Incomplete application of rules. It involves a

failure to fully develop a structure. 4) False concepts hypothesized. It occurs when the learner does not fully comprehend a distinction in the target language (Ellis 1997: 59).

After analyzing the all the errors in the error list of Chinese learner English, it is found that 1) most types of errors are intralingual errors, and only few are transfer errors; 2) most transfer errors occur because a certain distinction or use does not exist in Chinese as L1, which are interlingual/intralingual errors; 3) Some transfer errors are transfer of structure. The following errors discussed might involve L1 transfer:

**Subject verb disagreement** (3106)
There is no inflection on verbs in Chinese. No matter what the subject is, the verb stays the same in Chinese. The grammatical rule of subject-verb agreement does not exist in Chinese. Therefore it is possible that subject-verb disagreement occurs due to the lack of subject-verb agreement in the native language. That is one type of transfer error: the interlingual/intralingual error defined by Lott (1983).

***Being* + n.** (9)
The progressive of *be* with nominal predications implies that the subject is acting as a certain role. This unique play-acting implication of *being + n.* is an extended usage of the progressive in English. However, the learners might not understand the play-acting implication, regard this usage as the usual use of the progressive, and overgeneralize the basic meaning to the progressive *being*. This overgeneralization might lead to the overuse of progressive *being* with nominal predication in the situation where there is actually no play-acting meaning at all.

The other possible cause might be: the learners regard the progressive as a grammatical method to catch more others' attentions when they want to emphasize a point. Meanwhile, the Chinese equivalent copular *是 shi* does have the emphasis function. The learners might transfer the function from Chinese to L2 English. These two coincident forces might be combined and cause overusing *being + n.* for emphasizing purpose.

***Being* + adj./v-*ed*/v-*ing*/verb base form** (5)

The progressive of *be* with adjectives describes a temporary willful behaviour. However, the error samples demonstrate no temporariness nor willfulness but rather a relevant persistent property as in *when the father is get addicted to gambling, the children are being neglected and cannot get affection*. The learners might overgeneralize the progressive form and not understand the meaning of 'temporary willful behaviour'. Besides, regarding the progressive as a grammatical way for emphasis might be the other possible cause, just same as the overuse of *being + n*. On the other hand, the Chinese equivalent copular verb *是 shi* is often used for emphasis purpose. This might be overextension of analogy, regarding the function of English *be* same as that of Chinese *是 shi* for emphasis function. All these might be the combined force leading to overusing the progressive *be*.

**Missing *be* after *will* in *will* + *be* + adj./n./prep.** (28)

It is not necessary to use the copular *是 shi* (*be*'s Chinese equivalent) before adjectives, prepositions and nouns in a declarative sentence in Chinese. Once there is copular *是 shi* 'be', its function is emphasis. Adjectives, prepositions and nouns can be used directly as predicates without copular verb in Chinese. By contrast, the copular verb *be* is obligatory before adjectives, prepositions and nouns in a declarative sentence in English. Therefore, the copular *be* in English seem to be the equivalent of the copular *是 shi* in Chinese semantically and syntactically. However, their uses and functions are quite different.

Due to this difference between English and Chinese, it might be concluded that the L1 influence causes the error of missing *be* in *will + be + adj./n./prep.*, which uses adjectives, prepositions and nouns as if they are predicate verbs without a copular verb. This can be regarded as transfer of structure from L1.

The other possible cause is that there is a modal verb *will* before adjectives, prepositions and nouns, and the learners might take it as the main predicative verb just as the copular *be* and omit/forget to use *be* before adjectives, prepositions and nouns.

The both causes might work together resulting in this error.

**Missing *be* after *will* in future progressive** (1)
**Missing *be* after *will* in simple future passive** (6)
**Missing *be* in passive voice after modal verb** (15)
One possible explanation is that the learners regard *will* as copular *be*, taking its place before v-*ing* and v-*ed* participle. The other possible cause is the L1 structure influence because the copular verb is not always necessary in Chinese. Most possibly, the error occurs due to the combined effect of both causes.

**Unnecessary *be* after *will* in *will + v.* as *will + be + v.*** (23)
***Be* + base form (in simple present/past)** (6+548)
The difference of copular verb *be* between two languages might cause the hypercorrection. On the one hand, the learners omit using the copular verb *be* in the structures where it is necessary such as *will + be + adj./n./prep.*, the future progressive, the simple future passive, the passive in modal verb. On the other hand, the learners hypercorrect this error, and add the copular verb *be* where it is not necessary such as before the verb in *will + v.* or before the verb in the simple present and the simple past.

**Using present progressive with incompatible stative verbs** (25)
Most stative verbs cannot be used with the progressive aspect in English. The learners might overlook the non-stativeness in the progressive, and apply the progressive aspect to all types of verbs including stative verbs such as *have, involve, include, understand* etc. On the other hand, the restriction on verbs with the progressive in Chinese is not exactly the same as that in English, although both English and Chinese have the progressive aspect. In Chinese, stative verbs can be used with durative aspect marker *-zhe*, but usually not with progressive aspect marker *zai*. This partial similarity might cause the learners to overlook the non-stativeness of the English progressive.

**Sequence of tenses** (379)
As the last chapter discusses, Chinese has no grammatical devices to locate events in time. Lexical device such as time phrases and adverbs and the context are the main resources used to express time. In terms of meaning, it

seems not too difficult for Chinese learners to understand the three tenses. However, on the level of forms and functions, they are completely new concepts to learn due to the lack of tenses in the native language. The sequence of tenses rule is related to tenses and tense shifting. Both don't exist in the native language for Chinese learners. Therefore, it is quite understandable that the sequence of tenses rule is one of the most difficult grammatical patterns to fully acquire in English. Due to the lack of tenses and tenses shifting in Chinese, this type of error can be classified as interlingual/intralingual error.

**Using simple past for present perfect** (50)

One possible cause is confusion between the simple past and the present perfect and ignorance of the difference between them. Simple past refers to the past time separated from the present time while the present perfect describes an event which started in the past but continues up to the present time. The other possible cause might be related to L1 influence. As there is no grammatical past tense in Chinese, it is quite possible for the learners who realize the necessity of using grammar to express the past time in English to overuse the past tense whenever the event has something to do with a past time point even if it continues to the present.

**Using simple past for simple present** (335)

The simple present is the default and the most common form among all tenses and aspects. It refers to the present time and is usually unmarked morphologically, and the usual form of the simple present is the base form of the verb with the only exception that the third person singular is marked with suffix *–(e)s* in verbs. The simple past refers to the past time and is marked with suffix *–ed* in regular verbs. Irregular verbs have different forms of the past tense and the past participle. It is clear that the form of the simple past is more complex than the simple present. The learners might forget to add the suffix *–ed* when referring to the past time. The error of using the simple present for the simple past is not surprising. However, the corpus findings show that the number (335) and the portion (9.5%) (in respective tense and aspect) of error of using the simple past for the simple present are even higher

than those (129, 0.4%) of using the simple present for the simple past. This unexpected result catches more attentions on the causes of this phenomenon. One possible cause might be hypercorrection. Since it is easy to omit the suffix *–ed*, making error of using the simple present for the simple past, the learners once notice that and consciously correct the usages and start to overuse the simple past due to the hypercorrection. One more possible cause in the case of irregular verbs might be the confusion between the original verb base form and the past tense form, such as verb *lose - lost*, *bring - brought*, *spend - spent* etc. Another possible cause might be transferring the use of time phrases in native Chinese to the use of the English past tense. While the English past tense emphasizes the past and the non-past distinction separated from the present time and specifies that the present or the future is different from the past, the time phrase about the past time in Chinese only defines the past time but leaving the present and the future undefined and unspecified. This crucial usage difference in the Chinese past time phrases compared with English past tense might lead to overusing the English past tense in the situation where it should be in the present tense even the event starts or exists in the past.

**Using simple present for simple past** (129)
The learners might forget to add the simple past suffix *–ed* when referring to the past time since it is more complex compared with the simple present form. This can be caused by the fact that there is no morphological inflection in Chinese and Chinese learners lack a strong inflectional awareness.

**Using verb for noun** (129)
**Using noun for verb infinitive form after *will*** (15)
There are quite a large number of verbs which are the same to their noun forms in Chinese. In English, many verbs need to be converted into the noun form through derivation and some verbs have same forms as their nouns. Both lacking the awareness of converting verbs to nouns through derivation in Chinese and being confused with forming verbs and nouns through conversion or derivation in English might result in thinking that the verb form and the noun form are the same thus using verbs as nouns or using nouns as verbs in

English.

In summary, the transfer errors in Chinese learner English involve: 1) misusing tenses as Chinese lacks tense as a grammatical device to express time; 2) neglecting sequence of tenses due to the lack of rules about it in Chinese; 3) the use of the copular verb *be* in English, for which Chinese has a similar word with a similar structure but different uses and functions; 4) subject verb disagreement, because Chinese has no inflectional changes on verbs; 5) misusing verb forms and noun forms as there are quite a lot of verbs and nouns with the same forms in Chinese; 6) overlooking the non-stative feature of the progressive. As Chinese and English have completely different forms in aspects and Chinese lacks tenses, which can be seen from the previous comparisons, the most transfer errors arise due to the non-existence of certain distinctions or features in Chinese and only few due to similar structures and features in this grammatical domain.

## 5.3 Tense and aspect in German learner English (GE-ICLE)

### 5.3.1 Error analysis in German learner English

The German learner English sub-corpus is composed of 229698 word texts. Altogether 21733 occurrences of finite verbs and future tense forms (*will*/*shall* + non-finite verb) are retrieved from the corpus. Among them, there are 852 occurrences of the present perfect, 311 occurrences of the past perfect, 9 occurrences of the future perfect, 467 occurrences of the present progressive, 171 occurrences of the past progressive, 13 occurrences of the future progressive, 26 occurrences of the present perfect progressive, 19 occurrences of the past perfect progressive, 0 occurrence of the future perfect progressive, 14593 occurrences of the simple present, 4605 occurrences of the simple past and 667 occurrences of the simple future.

Error analysis is conducted on all the above-mentioned retrieved data except the simple present. Due to the huge number of the simple present, about 1000 random samples are firstly generated, and the final analysis results of the simple present are multiplied based on the proportion of random sample number (995) and the original retrieved number (14593).

The error analysis is carried on with the same procedures as that is conducted in Chinese learner English. Almost all the entries of retrieved data (only the items of the simple present are processed proportionally) are double checked, analyzed, reanalyzed, classified, annotated and counted in detail.

The following is a table of correction and error rate in German learner English and a list of all the errors in tense and aspect in German learner English. The errors of large number (>6) and the high error percentage (>4%) are marked with darker shade.

Table 5.6: Correction and error rate in German learner English

| German learner English | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Tense and aspect | Occurrence | Number of errors | Correction percentage | Error percentage |
| Future perfect | 9 | 4 | 55.6% | 44.4% |
| Future perfect progressive | 0 | 0 | / | / |
| Future progressive | 13 | 2 | 84.6% | 15.4% |
| Past perfect | 311 | 59 | 81.0% | 19.0% |
| Past perfect progressive | 19 | 6 | 68.4% | 31.6% |
| Past progressive | 171 | 16 | 90.6% | 9.4% |
| Present perfect | 852 | 58 | 93.2% | 6.8% |
| Present perfect progressive | 26 | 8 | 69.2% | 30.8% |
| Present progressive | 467 | 48 | 89.7% | 10.3% |
| Simple future | 667 | 30 | 95.5% | 4.5% |
| Simple past | 4605 | 227 | 95.1% | 4.9% |
| Simple present (random sample 1000) | 995 | 23 | 97.7% | 2.3% |
| Simple present (multiplied based on original number) | 14593 | 337 | 97.7% | 2.3% |
| Sum Total | 21733 | 795 | 96.3% | 3.7% |

Table 5.7: Error analysis in German learner English

| German Learner English | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Tense and aspect | Errors | Number | Percentage |
| Future perfect | using future perfect for present perfect in temporal clause | 1 | 11.1% |
| | using future perfect for simple present | 1 | 11.1% |
| | using future perfect for simple present in temporal clause | 2 | 22.2% |
| | Future perfect - Sum | 4 | 44.4% |
| Future progressive | using future progressive for simple future | 1 | 7.7% |
| | using future progressive for simple future in the past | 1 | 7.7% |
| | Future progressive - Sum | 2 | 15.4% |
| Past perfect | incorrect spelling and/or morphological inflection of past participle | 2 | 0.6% |
| | using *had better* + past participle | 1 | 0.3% |
| | using passive voice for active voice in past perfect | 1 | 0.3% |
| | using past perfect for present perfect | 14 | 4.5% |
| | using past perfect for simple past | 37 | 11.9% |
| | using past perfect for simple past in temporal clause (*since*) | 1 | 0.3% |
| | using past perfect for simple present | 3 | 1.0% |
| | Past perfect - Sum | 59 | 19.0% |
| Past perfect progressive | using past perfect progressive for past perfect | 1 | 5.3% |
| | using past perfect progressive for past progressive | 1 | 5.3% |
| | using past perfect progressive for present perfect | 3 | 15.8% |
| | using past perfect progressive for present perfect progressive | 1 | 5.3% |
| | Past perfect progressive - Sum | 6 | 31.6% |
| Past progressive | using past progressive for past perfect | 1 | 0.6% |
| | using past progressive for present perfect | 1 | 0.6% |
| | using past progressive for present progressive | 3 | 1.8% |
| | using past progressive for simple past | 10 | 5.8% |
| | using past progressive in stative verb | 1 | 0.6% |
| | Past progressive - Sum | 16 | 9.4% |
| Present perfect | incorrect spelling and/or morphological inflection of past participle | 10 | 1.2% |
| | subject verb disagreement | 8 | 0.9% |
| | using active voice for passive voice in present perfect | 1 | 0.1% |
| | using passive voice for active voice in present perfect | 1 | 0.1% |
| | using present perfect for past perfect | 2 | 0.2% |
| | using present perfect for simple past | 28 | 3.3% |
| | using present perfect for simple present | 8 | 0.9% |
| | Present perfect - Sum | 58 | 6.8% |
| Present perfect progressive | past tense in main clause but present tense in subordinate clause | 1 | 3.8% |
| | using *-ing* participle for passive voice in present perfect progressive | 1 | 3.8% |
| | using present perfect progressive for past perfect progressive | 1 | 3.8% |
| | using present perfect progressive for past progressive | 1 | 3.8% |
| | using present perfect progressive for present perfect | 4 | 15.4% |
| | Present perfect progressive - Sum | 8 | 30.8% |
| Present progressive | *am/is/are* + *being* + adj. | 2 | 0.4% |
| | incorrect spelling of *-ing* participle | 2 | 0.4% |
| | incorrect spelling and/or morphological inflection of past participle | 1 | 0.2% |
| | past tense in main clause but present tense in subordinate clause | 1 | 0.2% |
| | subject verb disagreement | 1 | 0.2% |
| | using adj. for verb | 2 | 0.4% |
| | using present progressive for past progressive | 1 | 0.2% |
| | using present progressive for present perfect | 1 | 0.2% |
| | using present progressive for simple future | 1 | 0.2% |
| | using present progressive for simple present | 32 | 6.9% |
| | using present progressive for simple present/future | 1 | 0.2% |
| | using v-*ing* for infinitive as a predicative expression in SVC sentence | 3 | 0.6% |
| | Present progressive - Sum | 48 | 10.3% |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Simple future | past tense in main clause but present tense for future in subordinate clause | 1 | 0.1% |
| | using *-ing* participle after *will* | 1 | 0.1% |
| | using simple future for simple present | 15 | 2.2% |
| | using *will better* for *had better* | 1 | 0.1% |
| | using *will* for *can* | 2 | 0.3% |
| | using *will* for *would* | 9 | 1.3% |
| | using *will like to* for *would like to* | 1 | 0.1% |
| | Simple future - Sum | 30 | 4.5% |
| Simple past | incorrect use of *be + to + v.* | 4 | 0.1% |
| | *hadn't* for *didn't have* | 2 | 0.0% |
| | incorrect spelling and/or morphological inflection of past participle | 2 | 0.0% |
| | incorrect spelling and/or morphological inflection of verbs in simple past | 14 | 0.3% |
| | *never* | 1 | 0.0% |
| | past tense in main clause but present tense in subordinate clause | 27 | 0.6% |
| | subject verb disagreement | 12 | 0.3% |
| | subject verb disagreement, using simple past for simple present | 1 | 0.0% |
| | using *did* + v. for simple past in negation | 2 | 0.0% |
| | using *did* + v. for simple past in question | 1 | 0.0% |
| | using passive voice for active voice in simple past | 4 | 0.1% |
| | using simple past active for simple future passive | 1 | 0.0% |
| | using simple past active for simple present passive | 1 | 0.0% |
| | using simple past for infinitive form | 14 | 0.3% |
| | using simple past for *-ing* participle | 2 | 0.0% |
| | using simple past for past perfect | 19 | 0.4% |
| | using simple past for past progressive | 5 | 0.1% |
| | using simple past for present perfect | 49 | 1.1% |
| | using simple past for simple future | 1 | 0.0% |
| | using simple past for simple future in the past | 4 | 0.1% |
| | using simple past for simple present | 54 | 1.2% |
| | using simple past for simple present/present perfect | 3 | 0.1% |
| | using simple past for *would + v .* | 1 | 0.0% |
| | using simple past passive for present perfect active | 1 | 0.0% |
| | v.+ *not* | 1 | 0.0% |
| | *was* + base form | 1 | 0.0% |
| | Simple past - Sum | 227 | 4.9% |

| | | Random sample | Original | Percentage |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Simple present | *be + to* + v. | 1 | 15 | 0.1% |
| | incorrect spelling of verbs in simple present | 2 | 29 | 0.2% |
| | past tense in main clause but present tense in subordinate clause | 1 | 15 | 0.1% |
| | subject verb disagreement | 11 | 161 | 1.1% |
| | using simple present for *-ing* participle | 2 | 29 | 0.2% |
| | using simple present for present perfect | 1 | 15 | 0.1% |
| | using simple present for present progressive | 1 | 15 | 0.1% |
| | using simple present for simple past | 3 | 44 | 0.3% |
| | wrong use of verb *effect* (*affect*) | 1 | 15 | 0.1% |
| | Simple present - Sum (random sample 995) | 23 | | 2.3% |
| | Simple present - Sum (multiplied based on original number 14593) | | 337 | 2.3% |
| Sum Total | | | 795 | 3.7% |

In general, the error rates in the future perfect, the future progressive, the past perfect progressive and the present perfect progressive are comparatively high, as the total occurrences of these tenses and aspects are quite low, and their usages and forms are comparatively more complex than other tenses and aspects. More than one-third of total errors come from the simple present, since the simple present takes the largest proportion among all finite verb forms. However, the simple present also has the lowest error rate among all tenses and aspects. The overall error rate in German learner English is 3.7%.

The major and common types of errors are discussed and illustrated with examples from the corpus in the following section.

**Using past perfect for present perfect**

14 error cases of using the past perfect for the present perfect are identified with an error rate of 4.5% in the past perfect.

The past perfect refers to the past time, and it is a past before the past while the present perfect refers to an event starting in the past and continuing to the present. When using the past perfect, it means there is a past time reference, and the event happened before this past time point. However, clearly, all the errors have present time references, and should be in the present perfect rather than the past perfect.

(5.105) view is that everybody should get a second chance no matter what he **had done** . Also criminals should have the possibility to integrate themselves again in the society (ICLE-GE-SAL-0003.4) → has done

(5.106) who has no difficulties in his life, or that there is a person who never **had experienced** any kind of joy. So there must exist something very much higher than the human being (ICLE-GE-SAL-0039.5) → has experienced

**Using past perfect for simple past**

There are 37 error cases of using the past perfect for the simple past with an error rate of 11.9% in the past perfect.

There is just one past time in the simple past while there a past time reference and the past perfect refers to the time before the past time reference, the past before the past time point. There are contexts in error samples

showing the past time reference, such as *needed a telephone* and *went to school* as a context in examples (5.107) and (5.110), or past time phrases showing past time reference, such as *yesterday* in example (5.108), and *in the time of my childhood* in example (5.109), but the situations are not in the past before the past time, but only simply in the past, so they should be in the simple past rather than the past perfect.

(5.107) needed a telephone in the house. Mrs Miller, who lives next door, **had only survived** her terrible heart-attack because she broke down next to the phone and could phone (ICLE-GE-AUG-0025.1) → survived
(5.108) spare time what society judges to be fashionable or not. Yesterday I **had been** to the formal ball the mayor of our town had organized to collect some money for Norogachic (ICLE-GE-AUG-0061.1) → went
(5.109) some years later, he is the same fascinating person for me as he **had been** in the time of my childhood. Whenever I came home to my parents I love it sitting together (ICLE-GE-AUG-0024.2) → was
(5.110) a friend who went to school with me, amazed me. He always **had worn** baggy washed out jeans and a chequered shirt hanging loosely over the trousers. After the " (ICLE-GE-AUG-0045.3) → wore

**Using past progressive for simple past**
10 error cases of using past progressive for simple past are found with an error rate of 5.8% in the past progressive.

Although both the past progressive and the simple past refers to past events, past the past progressive focuses on temporal happening in the past, and the simple past indicates the habitual state or behavior in the past. The error samples describe some general events or states in the past, not some temporal happenings at a specific past time point, such as describe a film or a book in example (5.111) and (5.112), or a habitual behavior in the past in example (5.113), therefore the simple past is suitable.

(5.111) us a film called "Dschungelburger ". This film was just horrible. It **was dealing** with these huge forests in America which were all cut down only to engender enormous (ICLE-GE-AUG-0100.1) → dealt

(5.112) book to somebody: "I read a wonderful book some time ago which **was dealing** with exactly the phenomenon we were just talking about. It was called... ahm... the (ICLE-GE-AUG-0051.3) → dealt
(5.113) the prisoners were allowed to watch TV in the same room where they **were eating**, observed by about ten warders. On TV there was only one channel available. Mark left (ICLE-GE-SAL-0014.5) → ate

**Incorrect spelling and/or morphological inflection of past participle**

There are 10 cases of incorrect spelling of past participles with an error rate of 1.2% in the present perfect.

Most common incorrect spelling and/or morphological inflection of past participles include doubling the final consonant such as spelling *developed* as *developped* in example (5.114) and spelling *promised* as *promissed* in example (5.115), spelling the past participle same as the past tense form for irregular verb, such as spelling *taken* as *took* in example (5.116), regularizing the irregular verb such as spelling *hurt* as *hurtened* in example (5.117).

(5.114) in newspapers. The public awareness of sexual abuse of children **has developped** up to a stage where we may suspect child pornography or abuse very quickly and easily (ICLE-GE-BAS-0057.1) → developed
(5.115) different reasons if people thing that their Christmas has kept what it **had promissed**. Either one does not expect more than a good meal, new cloths, CDs, books and other (ICLE-GE-DRE-0005.1) → promised
(5.116) sanctions are useless. What would have been, when the gulf-war **had not took** place, and when peace in the South-East had been maintained at any price? The answer is (ICLE-GE-AUG-0038.1) → taken
(5.117) people. I can imagine they wish to do harm to the culprit who **has hurtened** them, their relatives or their friends. It is just human and I am sure that I would (ICLE-GE-SAL-0010.4) → hurt

**Subject-verb disagreement**

There are altogether 34 cases of subject-verb disagreement, including 1 in the past perfect, 8 in the present perfect, 1 in the present progressive, 13 in the simple past and 11 out of 995 random samples in the simple present. Based on

the original number 14593 of the simple present, the actual number in the simple present is 161, thus it should be 184 in total, and the error rate is 0.8% in the whole retrieved data (184/21733).

The subjects in these errors are pronouns, countable or uncountable nouns, mass nouns, nominalized verb phrases and in *it*-cleft sentences, and the inflectional endings of verbs do not agree with the respective singular or plural forms of the subjects.

(5.118) a slap on a cheek and beating children up as it were. Psychologist **have found** out that a slap, when it 's administered right after the " deed ", is not experienced as (ICLE-GE-AUG-0092.3) → has found
(5.119) Mr. Bush and Mr. Gorbatchov on the lawn of the White House **has put** an end to the division of the world that had lasted for almost half a century. However, (ICLE-GE-AUG-0025.3) → have put
(5.120) the 1950s and 1960s to the 1980s and say that after 1975/79 there **were** less consensus than before in Britain. In this essay I will choose the same period (1945-75/79 (ICLE-GE-SAL-0002.2) → was
(5.121) told was that my achievement in the university entrance examination **were** below average, that this was why I could n't compete with my peers, that he was terribly sorry, (ICLE-GE-AUG-0097.3) → was
(5.122) lot of fishes will die in every case. They ca n't stand the water which **come** bach warm into the rivers. The power plants need the cold water to cool its reactors. Also some (ICLE-GE-SAL-0026.5) → comes
(5.123) rejecting any food that comes from animals like dairy products **have** mainly spiritual or religious reasons. In their opinion eating meat causes disharmony and (ICLE-GE-AUG-0048.2) → has
(5.124) Beer has also existed for a long time and during the Middle Ages it **were** even especially the monks who brewed it. Today alcohol and tobacco belong to any ' good ' party (ICLE-GE-BAS-0040.1) → was

**Using present perfect for simple past**

28 cases of using the present perfect for the simple past are identified with an error rate of 3.3% in the present perfect.

The present perfect is used for a situation continuing up to the present

time while the simple past describes a situation that no longer exists or an event that occurred at a specific past time. If an event happened in the past, disconnected from the present, it should be in the simple past rather than the present perfect. If there is a specified past time in the sentence, it should not be in the present perfect, as the present perfect can not occur with a specified past time adverbial. All the error samples have some specified past time point in the context, such as the time when the telephone was invented in example (5.125), the birth data in example (5.126) and teenage years in example (5.127), which are all separated from the present time. Therefore, the simple past is proper but the present perfect is not admissible.

(5.125) However, telephone has also brought a lot of advantages since it **has been invented**. If there is any kind of emergency it can help. It's useful for either injured (ICLE-GE-AUG-0024.1) → was invented
(5.126) I think I **have been born** this way. Yes. I think that's why I can't remember when it actually started. It (ICLE-GE-AUG-0050.3) → was born
(5.127) of an inimical world beyond the garden fence. In my teenage years I'**ve often worked** as a babysitter for various neighbours of ours. Now I can but look back in horror (ICLE-GE-AUG-0076.3) → often worked

**Using present perfect for simple present**

There are 8 error cases of using the present perfect for the simple present with an error rate of 0.9% in the present perfect.

When it is a present habitual behaviour or a general state, it should be in the simple present. The error samples refer to general states or habitual behaviours, not connected with any past time point, thus should be in the simple present.

(5.128) car-drivers don't give a damn about pedestrians. Every time when I **have arrived** the middle of the street, suddenly a car seems to come out of nowhere and drives right (ICLE-GE-AUG-0053.1) → arrive
(5.129) when they know that there aren't any parking lots. When the time **has come** that the local government starts the new programm of banning cars from town, you will find (ICLE-GE-AUG-0026.3) → comes

**Using present progressive for simple present**

32 error cases of using the present progressive for the simple present are found with an error rate of 6.9% in the present progressive.

The present progressive describes current happening or on-goings or used as a background, which is temporal and can stop at the next moment, while the simple present describes a habitual state, behavior or a general event, which lasts habitually through the present time. The habitual or general behaviors *go by train* in example (5.130), *try to communicate* in example (5.131), *gain victory* in example (5.132), and *go to the university by train* in example (5.133) should be expressed in the simple present rather than as current on-goings by the present progressive.

(5.130) summer there are million people on their way to their holidays; they **are going** by train, car or aeroplane and travelling all around the world. They are ready to enjoy (ICLE-GE-AUG-0081.1) → go

(5.131) standard language. It seems like travelling: the first language we **are trying** to communicate in when meeting foreigners is English. On the Internet chat-lines the (ICLE-GE-BAS-0016.1) → try

(5.132) part of this world being a witness of the plot. As the good figure **is gaining** the victory, justice is always restored. But detective stories are constructed on (ICLE-GE-BAS-0050.1) → gain

(5.133) sad part: This development is just at it's begining. As every day I **am going** to the university by train. Opposite me there is a young man. He wears headphones and I can (ICLE-GE-DRE-0021.1) → go

**Using simple future for simple present**

There are 15 error cases of using the simple future for the simple present with an error rate of 2.2% in the simple future.

The simple present is used in the *if*-conditional clause (type I), and the main clause is in the simple future. The same is with *when*, *before* temporal clause. The most error samples use the simple future in the subordinate conditional and temporal clauses with the simple future in the main clause, such as examples (5.134), (5.135), and (5.136).

Some general present habitual states or behaviours should be in the

simple present rather than the simple future such as example (5.137).

(5.134) be frustrated that he can not win such a game, but if this person **will join** in those new games, he will surely get a lot of fun out of it. Sport, in my opinion, must (ICLE-GE-AUG-0047.2) → joins
(5.135) and give them up: how peaceful will life be when his work **will be done**! (ICLE-GE-BAS-0049.1) →is done
(5.136) self-centered and greedy. But I do hope it wo n't be long before we **will be able to** form a society where we will all be treated as equals. (ICLE-GE-BAS-0011.1) → are able to
(5.137) our subjectivity lies within the power of choosing whom or what we **will allow** to subject us. Someone you are no subject to does not have any power on you except wiping (ICLE-GE-AUG-0067.3) → allow

**Using *will* for *would***

9 cases of using *will* for *would* are found with an error rate of 1.3% in the simple future.

*Would* can be used for unreal or imagined situations, as the future in the past in the indirect reported speech in past tense. It can also be used for unreal or hypothetical situations in the 2nd and 3rd conditionals, and for past actions. The learners use *will* instead of *would* in conditional sentences, and for past actions.

(5.138) How good would a conversation be if you have it with a dog? He **will** neither be able to discuss or solve your problems or will he be loyal enough to tell you that (ICLE-GE-AUG-0060.1) →would
(5.139) kind of preparatory course, that, since I was only a fresher, I certainly **wo** n't mind, that, in actual fact, I had n't done chemistry for my A-levels, so perhaps this was why (ICLE-GE-AUG-0097.3) → wouldn't

**Incorrect spelling and/or morphological inflection of verbs in simple past**

There are 14 cases of incorrect spelling and/or morphological inflection of verbs in the simple past with an error rate of 0.3%.

Most incorrect ones in simple past include: combining the *–ed* form and

past tense form, such as spelling *lay*, the past time form of *lie*, as *layed* in example (5.140), *splitted* for *split* in example (5.144); regularizing the past tense form of irregular verbs, such as *lied* for *lay* in example (5.141); adding extra consonant or missing the consonant at the end such as *promissed* for *promised* in example (5.143), *commited* for *committed* in example (5.142); spelling the wrong vow such as *desapproved* for *disapproved* in example (5.145), *atteined* for *attained* in example (5.146).

(5.140) to Switzerland for our winter holidays. In the backside of the car **layed** my new skies and a new pair of shoes. I was very nervous and excited about my first day on (ICLE-GE-AUG-0024.2) → lay
(5.141) the sacred fields of " Place Vendme ", I was well prepared for what **lied** in wait for my touristy eyes. Therefore I had put on decent stiletto-heeled shoes and a kind of (ICLE-GE-AUG-0087.3) → lay
(5.142) is accompanied by cruelty, discrimination and crime. Many crimes **commited** in recent years go back on neofascist tendencies; tendencies that seem to be legal and (ICLE-GE-DRE-0026.1) → committed
(5.143) I told one of the warders about the broken down flushing and he **promissed** me to send a person who would repear it. What a damn life! Sitting in one 's own shit! (ICLE-GE-SAL-0013.5) → promised
(5.144) water ), prefer going by car than by bike, does n't make my life easy. **Splitted** between the high society, business, and the fitness club with my mum and the " green values (ICLE-GE-AUG-0044.3) → split
(5.145) The tone of their voices obviously suggested that they **desapproved** of my way of life and that they could n't tolerate the fact that young people today live (ICLE-GE-AUG-0042.2) → disapproved
(5.146) the end that they are compleatly unhappy and joyless although they **atteined** every possible delight. People can try to attein joyfulness by excelent food and drinks, by (ICLE-GE-SAL-0038.5) → attained

**Past tense in main clause but present tense in subordinate clause**

There are 27 cases of using past tense in the main clause but the present tense in subordinate clause with a percentage of 0.8%.

According to the sequence of tense rule, the verb in subordinate clause

should be shifted back to the past tense if the main verb is in the past tense with only one exception that the content still hold true in the present time.

In these 27 cases, it seems that the contents of the subordinate clauses still hold true at the present. The example (5.147) shows that the content of the subordinate clause can be still true or not true at the present, therefore *I was simply crazy* and *I'm simply crazy* are both correct. The other example (5.148) and (5.149) demonstrate that the contents still hold true now, so the present tense in subordinate clause is justifiable. Therefore, whether these uses are correct or not is disputable.

(5.147) reacted in the same way as they did it regarding my father. They **thought** I 'm simply crazy and couldn't understand, how anybody could be able to wake up in the (ICLE-GE-AUG-0016.3)
(5.148) cars, which are thrown away regularly after approximately 2 years, **made** some people aware that there are too many cars in the world. Dr. Smith, author of the article, (ICLE-GE-AUG-0010.1)
(5.149) styling their bodies. The fashion became a feminine line again and **showed** the women as what they are: as intelligent partners with their own life. (ICLE-GE-AUG-0029.1)

**Using simple past for infinitive form**

14 error cases of using the simple past for the infinitive form are identified with an error rate of 0.3% in the simple past.

The simple past form is used instead of the infinitive form in the following situations: after auxiliary verb *did* (negation, question and emphasis), as in examples (5.150), (5.151) and (5.152); after *to*, as in example (5.153); after modal verbs *could* and *can*, as in examples (5.154) and (5.155).
(5.150) teacher had spoken very slowly and loudly, too. But this English man **did not thought** of this. This meant that there was no chance for him and me to have a great talk or (ICLE-GE-AUG-0019.1) → think
(5.151) performance and eleoquence. The question is **did** the people really **chose** out of their own free will. On the other hand, if attorneys work against the will of their (ICLE-GE-DRE-0014.1) → choose
(5.152)" Ossies ", the reunification **did** indeed strengthen their identity and

**made** them feel as complete Germans. Finally the reunification did n't just concern Germans alone. It (ICLE-GE-AUG-0030.3) → make
(5.153) night, no high telephone bills because our toddler Jimmy had tried **to phoned** his grandpa again and phoned the U.S. embassy in France instead, because he was still too (ICLE-GE-AUG-0025.1) → phone
(5.154) waste of energy and time and on top it cost a lot of money. We **could sent** all our garbage to countries of the third world especially to the very poor countries those (ICLE-GE-AUG-0032.1) → send
(5.155) are lots of parking places. Only with the difference that nobody **can offered** to pay 12 DM only for parking his car until he has done his shopping So why does n't the (ICLE-GE-AUG-0035.2) → offer

**Using simple past for past perfect**
19 error cases of using the simple past for the past perfect are found with an error rate of 0.4% in the simple past.

An event or a situation before a past time point, 'past before the past', should be in the past perfect rather than in the simple past. All these error samples have a clear past time point, but use the simple past to refer to an event or situation before the past time point instead of the past perfect.

(5.156) Before I went to England for the first time, everybody **told** me how dreadful the English cooking is. But I thought that it couldn't be that bad. Every (ICLE-GE-AUG-0049.1) → had told
(5.157) He guided us, and we found a man, belonging to that same dog, who **fell** down a few meters and couldn't move anymore. There was just a little tree to which he could (ICLE-GE-AUG-0056.1) → had fallen
(5.158) the half bar was involved. A lot of them were hurted because they **threw** broken bottles through the air and finally ten persons had to be sent to hospital. One of them (ICLE-GE-AUG-0082.1) → had thrown

**Using simple past for present perfect**
49 error cases of using the simple past for the present perfect are identified with an error rate of 1.1% in the simple past.

The simple past refers to the events in the past time separated from the

present time while the present perfect refers to the events which exist from the past till now. The examples show that the events exist till the present time, thus should be in the present perfect.

(5.159) cooking is dreadful. No matter what experiences other people **made**, one sticks to this prejudice like a bur to one 's skirt. When I first visited my pen-friend in (ICLE-GE-AUG-0050.1) → have made
(5.160) want to help in a place where famine and political and social disorder **killed** hundreds of innocent children, women and men in the past years. But how to do it? Many (ICLE-GE-AUG-0076.1) → have killed

**Using simple past for simple present**

54 cases of using the simple past for the simple present are identified with an error rate of 1.2% in the simple past.

The simple past refers to the past time while the simple present refers to the present time. The error examples are clearly the present habitual behaviors or events rather than the events in the past time.

(5.161) disquieting thoughts, however, are soon banished, i.e. as soon as you **caught** sight of what might be a actual mushroom. You rush over to the spot to take a closer look at (ICLE-GE-AUG-0102.1) → catch
(5.162) woke up every night, but what I did and what I 'm still doing is that I **went** to the toilet quickly and returned to bed, closing my eyes again and sleeping immediately. In (ICLE-GE-AUG-0016.3) → go
(5.163) about the disadvantages of coffein for girls at my age. When he **got** up I get musli, orange juice and yoghurt as a second breakfast. He tells me all about gardening (ICLE-GE-AUG-0044.3) → gets

**Using simple present for simple past**

There are 3 cases of using the simple present for the simples past (3 cases out of the random samples, 44 out of original number of the simple present) with an error rate of 0.3% in the simple present.

The present tense forms instead of the past tense forms are used in the sentences with the past time references.

(5.164) dish you get. On the first evening, I was invited to a restaurant and I **choose** a pizza. My experience told me that I needn't be afraid of fish and peas in this case. How (ICLE-GE-AUG-0050.1) → chose

### 5.3.2 Most prevalent errors in German learner English

According to the numbers and the percentages of errors in different tenses and aspects, the most prevalent errors in German learner English can be classified into following categories. The actual occurrences in the corpus are presented in the brackets.

1. Misusing different tenses.

The most prevalent ones include using the simple past for the simple present (54), using the simple present for the simple past (3 in random sample, 44 in original), using the simple future for the simple present (15), and using the past perfect for the present perfect (14).

The less common ones involve using the future perfect for the present perfect (1), using the past perfect progressive for the present perfect progressive (1), using the past progressive for the present progressive (3), using the present perfect for the past perfect (2), using the present perfect progressive for the past perfect progressive (1), using the present progressive for the past progressive (1), using the simple past for the simple future (1), and using the simple past for the simple future in the past (4).

2. Misusing different aspects

The most usual ones are the followings: using the past perfect for the simple past (38), using the present progressive for the simple present (32), using the simple past for the past perfect (19), using the past progressive for the simple past (10), using the present perfect for the simple present (8), using the simple present for the present perfect (1 in random sample, 15 in original), and using the simple present for the present progressive (1 in random sample, 15 in original).

The others are using the future progressive for the simple future (1), using the past perfect progressive for the past perfect (1), using the past

perfect progressive for the past progressive (1), using the past progressive for the past perfect (1), using the present perfect progressive for the present perfect (4), using the present progressive for the present perfect (1), and using the simple past for the past progressive (5).

3. Misusing different tenses and aspects

The most prevalent ones include using the simple past for the present perfect (49), and using the present perfect for the simple past (28).

The rest involve using the future perfect for the simple present (2), using the future progressive for the simple future in the past (1), using the past perfect for the simple present (3), using the past perfect progressive for the present perfect (3), using the past progressive for the present perfect (1), using the present perfect progressive for the past progressive (1), using the present progressive for the simple future (1), and using the simple past for the simple present/ the present perfect (3).

4. Subject-verb disagreement

Subject-verb disagreement includes 1 case in the past perfect, 8 in the present perfect, 1 in the present progressive, 13 in the simple past and 11 out of 995 random samples in the simple present (161 out of original number). Based on the original number 14593 of the simple present, the total number of subject verb disagreement in all tenses and aspects should be 184.

5. Incorrect spelling and/or morphological inflection of verbs

Incorrect spelling and/or morphological inflection involves past participles in the past perfect (2), past participles in the present perfect (10), -*ing* participles in the present progressive (2), the past participle in the present progressive (1), past participles in the simple past (2), verbs in the simple past (14), verbs in the simple present (2 out of random sample, 30 out of original).

6. Using *will* for *would* (9)

7. Using different tense forms for infinitive

It includes using the simple past for infinitive (14) and using v-ing for

infinitive (3).

### 5.3.3 Transfer errors and intralingual errors in tense and aspect of German learner English

Same as Chinese learner English, most errors in German learner English are intralingual errors. However, transfer errors exist as well. As was illustrated in the last chapter, German tense and aspect have parallel forms to English tense and aspect, but the meanings and uses are not the same. These similar forms but different meanings might cause transfer errors. Unlike the transfer errors in Chinese learner English, most transfer errors in German learner English are due to overextension of analogy and transfer of structure rather than interlingual/intralingual errors. The following lists and explains the possible transfer errors in German learner English.

**Using present perfect for simple past** (28)
In English, the present perfect refers to an event or a situation continuing up till the present time and the simple past refers to an event or a situation at a specific past time point, suggesting separation from the present time. The specific past time points shown in the contexts in the corpus data indicate that they are past events or situations and should be used in the simple past instead of the present perfect. These errors arise because of the confusion between these two.

Based on the comparisons between German and English, it can be seen that the English present perfect and the German Perfekt have similar forms but with different meanings and uses. The Perfekt in German has narrative use whereas the present perfect in English does not. The narrative use of the Perfekt in German is used for an event or situation taking place at a definite moment in the past. In this context, the simple past instead of the present perfect is used in English. This use difference between English and German might cause the misusing of the present perfect and the simple past for German learners. Using the present perfect for the simple past might occur due to the transfer of Perfekt from German.

**Using simple past for present perfect** (49)

Using the simple past for the present perfect arises because of the confusion between these two forms. When the event has present relevance or has continued up till now, it should be in the present perfect rather than the simple past. The learners don't fully understand the differences between the simple past and the present perfect in English. Besides, they might confuse them because of the similarities in German and English, and both the simple past tense and the perfect in German have narrative use. This can lead to overextension of analogy as the simple past and the present prefect might be regarded as the same as that in German by the learners. The other possible cause might be hypercorrection once the learners are aware of the possibility of overusing the present perfect for events in the past. These three possibilities might be combined together thus causing to overuse the simple past.

**Using simple present for present perfect** (1-15)

The present habit or state is expressed by the simple present in English. A state or habit persisting from the past up till now is expressed by the present perfect in English, which is the universal use of perfect or the perfect of persistent situation, but by Präsens or Perfekt in German. The only difference between Präsens and Perfekt in German is that Perfekt implies not extending beyond the moment of speech. This nearly interchangeable use of Präsens and Perfekt for a persistent situation or event in German might cause the transfer of German Präsens to English. The typical example is the following: the simple present is used for a persistent situation with *since*-structure, which should be in present perfect in English. This can explain the confusion between the present perfect and the simple present in English for German learners.

**Using present perfect for simple present** (8)

Using the present perfect for the simple present occurs because of the confusion between two. As the interchangeable use of Präsens and Perfekt for a persistent situation or event in German might make the learners overextend the analogy into the present perfect and the simple present in English. The other possible reason is hypercorrection when the learners notice that they tend to overuse the simple present for the present perfect.

**Using simple future for simple present** (15)
Präsens (simple present) in German can be used for future time reference while it is only admissible for scheduled events in English. It seems quite possible for German learners to use the simple present for future time reference in English due to this contrast between German and English. In fact, no case like this is found in the German learner English in C1 level. However, cases of using the simple future for the simple present, the opposite direction of the contrast, are found in German learner English. It includes the event in *if* conditional subordinate clause, the event in *when* temporal clause, and the present habit or state. It can occur due to the incomplete learning of *if* condition clause and *when* temporal clause, or hypercorrection.

**Using simple past for past progressive** (5)
**Using past progressive for simple past** (10)
**Using simple present for present progressive** (1-15)
**Using present progressive for simple present** (32)
English has a fully grammaticalized progressive form while the progressive is expressed through lexical devices in German. Based on the error analysis, it is quite clear that the number of using the progressive for the simple aspect is as twice higher as the number of using the simple aspect for the progressive in German learner English. It indicates tendency of overusing the progressive aspect where the simple aspect should be used in English.

**V. + not** (1)
V. + not is a typical case of transferring structure from German. Verbs in German are negated by placing *nicht* after the verb while *not* is placed after an auxiliary or modal before the verb in English. The use of *v.+not* transfers the German *v.+ nicht* structure to the verb negation in English. Only one case is found in the German learner corpus with C1 proficiency level. Therefore, it is not a typical error for the C1 learners.

The transfer errors in German learner English include: 1) misusing the present perfect for the simple past and misusing the simple past for the present perfect. The narrative use in German Perfekt and no narrative use in English

present perfect might explain the potential transfer errors. 2) misusing the present perfect for the simple present and misusing the simple present for the present perfect. The interchangeable use of Präsens and Perfekt for a persistent situation or event in German and the use of the perfect of persistent situation in English can account for these transfer errors. 3) misusing the simple future for the simple present. The different uses of the simple present for the future time reference in German and English might lead to this confusion between those two. 4) misusing the progressive aspect for the simple aspect and misusing the simple aspect for the progressive aspect. The fully grammaticalized English progressive and the lexical uses in German progressive might lead to the overuse of progressive in English.

What needs to be noticed as well is that the numbers of errors opposite to prediction by the contrast of German and English are twice as high as the numbers of errors predicted by the contrast of German and English. The number of using the simple past for the present perfect is higher than that of using the present perfect for the simple past; using the simple present for the present perfect is more than using the present perfect for the simple present; the number of using the progressive aspect for the simple aspect is higher than that of using the simple aspect for the progressive aspect; there is no using the simple present for the simple future but there are numbers of using the simple future for the simple present. All these indicate a high possibility of hypercorrection among the learners with C1 proficiency level.

In short, those errors that transfer might occur due to overextension of analogy and transfer of structure, and they reflect hypercorrection tendency. The parallel forms but different meanings and uses of tenses and aspects in German and English is the fundamental reason for transfer.

## 5.4 Comparisons between learner Englishes and native English and language transfer

Although most errors in both Chinese learner English and German learner English are intralingual errors, transfer errors exist in both learner Englishes. Most transfer errors in Chinese learner English occur due to the lack of

equivalent grammatical categories or grammars in Chinese, while most transfer errors in German learner English occur because of the parallel forms but different meanings and uses in German compared with English. This explains the fundamental causes why there are more interlingual/intralingual errors in Chinese learner English and there are more overextensions of analogy and transfers of structure in German learner English.

Several factors can be invoked to account for the much higher error rate in Chinese learner English (17.8%) than in German learner English (3.7%). First, due to the closer geographical proximity between Germany and a major English-speaking country (the UK), German learners of English might have more exposure to English than Chinese learners of English when learning English in everyday life, for instance, through personal contacts in Germany or when travelling or during longer-term exchange stays, the consumption of English-language TV programmes and other media, including the internet and World-Wide Web. In addition, there are more English native speakers working as English teachers in Germany than in China (teacher-student ratio). Secondly, the average proficiency level of Chinese students in ICLE is B2 while that of German students is C1. Although the proficiency levels across sub-corpora are broadly comparable across ICLE-subcorpora, detailed comparisons of individual features might still turn out to be more problematical in a comparison of German and Chinese sub-corpora than in that of German and Swedish sub-corpora. Moreover, Chinese learners have visibly more problems with the inflectional apparatus of the English verb than German learners, which might be caused by the different proficiency levels, since the acquisition of inflectional morphology might correlate with proficiency level, which is indicated in a previous study (Ku & Anderson 2003). Finally, there is variability within learner groups. Some individuals have more problems with the use of tense and aspect than others, which can even significantly affect the group average in extreme cases. For instance, most students have 1 to 5 tense-aspect errors (except for the simple present) in their writings, while a small number shows about 15 tense-aspect errors (e.g., ICLE-CN-HKU-0135.1; ICLE-CN-UK-0097.1; ICLE-CN-HKU-0172.1).

Comparing the errors identified in Chinese learner English and German learner English, it can be seen that there is quite a number of similarities with

some L1-specific features. The common errors include: misusing tenses and aspects; the use of *will* and *would*; incorrect spelling and/or morphological inflection of past participles, of verbs in the simple past, and of *-ing* participle; subject-verb disagreement. There are also some L1-specific errors in Chinese learner English, including overusing progressive *be* structure *being + n./adj./v-ed/v-ing/*base form, copular *be* + base form, unnecessary *be* in *will + be + v.*, missing *be* in *will + be + adj./n./prep.*, missing *be* after *will* in future progressive/simple future passive, missing *be* in passive voice after modal verb, misusing voices, sequence of tenses, using the present progressive with incompatible stative verbs. As for German learner English, L1-specific errors include using *v.+ not*, and using *did+v.* for the simple past.

## 5.5 Language transfer and other contextual linguistic and non-linguistic factors

Ellis (1994) summarizes that the constraints on transfer are: language level (phonology, lexis, grammar, and discourse), social factors (the effect of the addressee and of different learning contexts on transfer), markedness (the extent to which specific linguistic features are 'special' in some way), prototypicality (the extent to which a specific meaning of a word is considered 'core' or 'basic' in relation to other meanings of the some word), language distance and psychotypology (the perceptions that speakers have regarding the similarity and difference between languages), developmental factors (constraints relating to the natural processes of interlanguage development), non-structural factors such as individual learner differences, the nature of the tasks a learner is performing (Ellis 1994: 315).

Language level: This study focuses on the grammatical domain of tense and aspect. Previous transfer studies show that language transfer occurs much more often in phonology and lexis, comparatively less often in grammar.

Social factors: the corpora are composed of written texts from exams by the university students. Therefore the effect of the addressee is relatively similar to the students. The different learning contexts include daily exposure to English and teaching methods etc.

Markedness: tense is regarded as special to Chinese learners since Chinese has no tense, only with aspectual distinctions, and no inflectional morphological change on verbs. For German learners, English tense and aspect look similar to the native language in forms, although the meanings and uses are not exactly the same.

Prototypicality: the core use of the progressive in English refers to ongoingness, and all the other uses are extended secondary uses. The core use of the prefect in English relates an event to a past one. The core uses of the present, past, future tense refer to the present, past and future time respectively. The historical present and futurate use of the present are secondary. Whether it is the prototypical use might influence the acquisition.

Language distance and psychotypology: Chinese learners and German learners clearly have different perceptions about the similarities and differences between English and their native languages. English is an Indo-European West Germanic language and does have much more similarities with German than with Chinese, a Sino-Tibetan language.

Developmental factors: the corpus data for Chinese learner English is B2 proficiency level and German learner English is C1 proficiency level.

Non-structural factors: Individual learner differences might exist. The nature of the tasks a learner is performing: since all the students did the same writing task with several given topics to choose from, there should be no significant variances in terms of tasks in this corpus study.

The study in Chapter 6 will compare Chinese learner English and German learner English and verify language transfer in 4 chosen tense-aspect forms through experiment/survey and explore the relationship between the learners' perceptions of markedness and language distance and L1 transfer with controlled language level, social factors, prototypicality, developmental factors and non-structural factors.

'Waiter! What's this?'
'It's bean soup, sir.'
'I don't care what it's been, what is it now?'[2]

[2] A joke about tense and aspect.

# 6 Survey on acquisition of English tense and aspect

## 6.1 Studies on acquisition of tense and aspect and language transfer

As the previous chapter on language transfer has reviewed the transfer studies, only some questionnaire-based studies will be reviewed in this section. Some previous studies focus on tense and aspect and language transfer: L1 Chinese to L2 English (Yang & Huang 2004), L1 Dutch and L1 English to L2 Spanish (Gonzalez & Quintana Hernandez 2018), or the reverse direction such as L2 French to L1 English and L3 French to L2 English (Fung & Murphy 2018).

Yang and Huang (2004) examine the impact of the absence of grammatical tense in Chinese on the acquisition of the tense-aspect system in L2 English. Through written narrative tasks, they find that the learners tend to rely on pragmatic and lexical devices to indicate time in the early stages of the learning process and there is a very slow shift from depending more on pragmatic and lexical devices to depending more on grammatical devices. Gonzalez and Quintana Hernandez (2018) study the inherent aspect and L1 transfer in the L2 acquisition of Spanish grammatical aspect. Fung and Murphy (2018) investigate whether learning L2 French/L3 French influences knowledge of L1 English/L2 English tense-aspect morphosyntax. The results of a grammaticality judgment test and a proofreading task indicate no inhibitive influence from L2 French to L1 English, but influence from L3 French to L2 English causes inaccuracy in past simple and present perfect in Grammaticality Judgment Test.

However, the studies on language transfer from L1 Chinese to L2 English in tense and aspect are very general and have not focused on any specific tense-aspect use of the learners. Besides, most comparative L1 transfer studies are within the Indo-European languages. Therefore, the comparisons of the learner Englishes with typologically different L1s could offer more interesting

and important insights on language acquisition and L1 transfer.

**Research questions**

Considering the few number of comparative studies on the transfer of L1 Chinese to L2 English, L1 German to L2 English, and the limitation of the present corpus study, the present survey is designed to compare the knowledge and use of tense and aspect by the learners of English with L1 Chinese, with L1 German and English native speakers in comparable linguistic conditions, answering the following research questions:

a. Is there any significant difference between English native speakers and the two English learner groups in judging grammaticality of the English present perfect, simple past, present progressive or simple present?
b. Does L1 Chinese or L1 German influence the learners' performance in a grammaticality judgment test on the English present perfect, simple past, present progressive or simple present? Is there any significant difference in the performance of the English learners with L1 Chinese and the English learners with L1 German?
c. In terms of aspects (the simple, the progressive, and the perfect), do the English learners with L1 Chinese and the English learners with L1 German view the actions/movements in a picture description task similarly to the English native speakers? If not, do the differences reflect certain feature in their L1?
d. Is there any correlation between L1 transfer and the learners' perceptions of the similarity between English and their L1, and the markedness of English compared with L1 in the grammatical domain of tense and aspect?

## 6.2 Methodology

### 6.2.1 General overview

This survey tries to find out the L1 (Chinese and German) transfer and relevant factors in acquiring English tense and aspect, specifically the present perfect, the simple past, the present progressive and the simple present. It is

composed of a grammaticality judgment test (GJT), a picture description (blank filling) task, and some general questions about the participants' education, language backgrounds and perception of markedness and similarity between languages. The grammaticality judgment test (GJT) reveals comparatively implicit knowledge on English tense and aspect and the picture description helps to understand the different perspectives of participants and their explicit knowledge. The learners' performance in these tasks can shed some light on L1 transfer in acquiring English tense and aspect. The general questions about the perceptions explore the possible correlation between L1 transfer and the learners' perceptions of markedness and similarity between L1 and English.

### 6.2.2 Sampling frame and participants

There are two experimental groups and one control group. The English proficiency levels of the participants in both experimental groups are intermediate to advanced so that their knowledge about tense and aspect is sufficient and their uses of tense and aspect tend to be stable.

Experimental Group One contains 57 English learners with Chinese as the native language (L1) and English as the first foreign language (L2). The results of their English proficiency tests include IELTS 6 and above, TOEFL above 96, CET 6/ TEM 4[1] and above. 21 of them don't have second foreign languages. The other participants' second foreign languages with very limited knowledge include French, German, Japanese, Korean, Russian, and Spanish. Eight of them have German as a second foreign language but only with minimally basic and elementary knowledge so it will not influence the experimental results. The participants are the Bachelor/Master/PhD students

[1] CET: the College English Test is an English as a Foreign Language test in China, which examines the English proficiency of non-English-major undergraduate and postgraduate students in China. There are two levels: CET band 4 and band 6. Passing CET band 6 equals IELTS 6 or above.

TEM: the Test for English Majors is an English as a foreign language test only for English majors in China. It includes TEM band 4 and TEM band 8. Passing TEM 4 equals IELTS 6.5 or above.

studying all kinds of subjects from various universities[2].

Experimental Group Two consists of 51 English learners with German as the native language (L1) and English as a foreign language. 39 of them take English as their first foreign language (L2), and 12 of them take English as their second foreign language (L3). Their English scores of state graduation exam (Abitur)[3] range from 10 to 14. Their second foreign languages include Croatian, French, Italian, Latin, Portuguese, and Spanish. They are bachelor students from the University of Freiburg in Germany. Most of them are the first year students and a few are in their second year studies. English is one of their two majors. The other majors involve English and American Studies, biology, economy, French, geography, German, history, math, Spanish, sports, education, philosophy, and media studies.

The Control Group consists of 65 English native speakers from different countries including one from Australia, 10 from Canada, 33 from Ireland, 11 from the UK, and 10 from the US. Their ages range from 22 to 57 years old. Their L2s include French, German, Irish, Japanese, Latin, Portuguese, Spanish, and Swedish at different proficiency levels. Their L3s involve Dutch, French, German, Irish, and Spanish. Their L4s are Arabic, Danish, German, Irish, Italian, Japanese, Norwegian, Russian, Spanish, and Turkish. 19 of them have German as L2 or L3, but mostly at basic proficiency level with few at intermediate levels.

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[2] The Chinese participants' study subjects involve American literature, applied linguistics, biology, business English, chemical engineering, chemical technology, chemistry, early childhood and primary education, economics, education, engineering, English, English literature, foreign linguistics and applied linguistics, geology, history, immunology, informatics, international economics and trade, mapping and surveying, marketing management, pharmacology, physics, physics and chemistry, remote sensing, sociology, special education, visual communication design. The universities include Tongji University, ECNU, University of Shanghai, Changhzou University, Zhejiang University of Science and Technology, Chizhou University, Hefei University, Henan University of Technology, University of Freiburg, Nanjing Tech University, Melbourne University, University of Southampton, University of Oxford, Fudan University, University College London, University of Chinese Academy of Sciences.

[3] Abitur exam: the final exams at the end of the secondary education. Abitur English score 12 corresponds to C1 level (CEFR).

### 6.2.3 Questionnaire design

The questionnaire is constituted by three parts: grammaticality judgment test, picture description (blank filling), and questions on language backgrounds. The following discussion explains the three parts respectively.

#### 6.2.3.1 Grammaticality judgment test

The focus of the grammaticality judgment test is on implicit and explicit knowledge of the present perfect, the simple past, the present progressive and the simple present. The grammatical sentences measure implicit knowledge and ungrammatical sentences measure the explicit knowledge.

As can be seen from the corpus-based study in the previous chapter, the Chinese learners have difficulties such as misusing simple past for present perfect or simple present, misusing simple present for simple past, misusing present progressive and progressive *being* + n. structure, and not applying sequence of tenses rule. On the other hand, the corpus-based study shows that the German learners have problems relevant to language transfer such as misusing present perfect for simple past, misusing simple past for present perfect, misusing simple present for present perfect, misusing present perfect for simple present, misusing progressive for simple, and misusing simple for progressive. Therefore, this study chooses to focus on the most common errors among both groups of learners, namely, present perfect, simple past, present progressive, and simple present.

The GJT (see Appendix C and D) is composed of 40 sentences which are randomly ordered. 28 of them involve the target tenses and aspects, and 12 of them are distracters. Grammatical and ungrammatical items are evenly distributed in the target forms including present perfect, simple past, present progressive, and simple present, and the distracter sentences. There are four grammatical sentences respectively in present perfect, simple past, and present progressive, and two grammatical sentences in simple present. Four ungrammatical sentences in present perfect include two using present perfect for simple past and two using present perfect for simple present. Four ungrammatical sentences in simple past include two using simple past for

present perfect and two using simple past for simple present. Four ungrammatical sentences in present progressive include two incorrect using *being* + *n.* and two using present progressive for simple present. Two ungrammatical sentences in simple present incorrectly use simple present for simple past. The ungrammatical sentences in distracters involve inflections and relative pronouns. Each ungrammatical sentence involves only one error based on British English. The following table explains the distribution briefly.

Table 6.1: Distribution of sentences in grammaticality judgment test

| **Target forms** | **Grammaticality** | **Errors** | **Number** |
|---|---|---|---|
| Present perfect | Grammatical | | 4 |
| | Ungrammatical | Used for simple past | 2 |
| | | Used for simple present | 2 |
| Simple past | Grammatical | | 4 |
| | Ungrammatical | Used for present perfect | 2 |
| | | Used for simple present | 2 |
| Present progressive | Grammatical | | 4 |
| | Ungrammatical | Being+N. | 2 |
| | | Used for simple present | 2 |
| Simple present | Grammatical | | 2 |
| | Ungrammatical | Used for simple past | 2 |
| Distracters | Grammatical | | 6 |
| | Ungrammatical | Inflections; relative pronouns | 6 |

The grammaticality of sentences should be evaluated by the participants based on a 4-point Likert scale. It ranges from 1 to 4 meaning from ‘totally ungrammatical’ to ‘totally grammatical’. According to previous studies (Fung & Murphy 2018; Han & Ellis 1998), participants have a rough idea about (un)grammaticality even when they are not precisely sure in GJT tasks. Compared with 3-point scale, this 4-point scale can produce a clearer picture about the participants’ implicit knowledge.

#### 6.2.3.2 Picture description

Slobin (1996) investigates whether the child learns particular ways of thinking

for speaking in acquiring a native language through comparing the descriptions of several scenes in the picture storybook *Frog, where are you?* (Mayer 1969) by children and adults from different countries in their native languages. The scenes show that a boy falls from the tree and the bees chase the dog. In these two simultaneous events, *fall* is punctual and completed, and *chase* is non-punctual and durative. The results show that only 27% English speakers use the same tense and aspect form for both verbs but 71% German speakers narrate the scene in the same tense and aspect in German. This demonstrates that the English speakers tend to describe the scene with non-progressive and progressive distinction, while German speakers tend to use the same tense and aspect form (Slobin 1996: 79–80). Based on this idea, the task picture description in this study is designed to see how differently Chinese learners and German learners describe these two pictures (Picture 1. and Picture 2.) in English compared with the English native speakers, and whether their descriptions in English reflect some features of tense and aspect in their native languages.

Picture 1.

Picture 2.

Picture 1 displays that a boy is on a tree, and a dog barks at some bees in a beehive. Picture 2 shows that the boy falls from the tree and the dog runs because the bees chase him. The participants should use the proper forms of the four given verbs *bark*, *fall*, *run*, and *chase* to describe the two pictures (two regular verbs and two irregular verbs). The background information about the pictures is given in the first and second sentences in the past tense. The participants should complete the sentences following the introduction sentences through filling in the blanks with verbs in proper forms of tense and

aspect (see below).

**Picture description**
There once was a boy who had a dog.
1. The boy was on the tree and the dog _____ at some bees in a beehive (bark).
2. The boy _____ from the tree (fall). The dog _____ as fast as he could (run), because the bees _____ him (chase)

#### 6.2.3.3 Questions on language background

The last section of the study concentrates on information about participants' education and language backgrounds including the native languages, the nationalities, the foreign languages and the proficiency levels. Besides, the Chinese and German participants are required to rate the markedness of English tense and aspect compared with their native languages, ranging from 'not special at all' to 'very special'. They also need to evaluate the degree of similarities between their native languages and English according to their perceptions. English proficiency, markedness of tense and aspect in English and the native language, learners' perceptions of similarities between languages (language distance) correlate to language transfer (Ellis 1994). This section can help to examine the correlation between language transfer and these factors.

### 6.2.4 Research procedure

The German participants are required to answer the printed three-page questionnaires in or after class. Considering the geographic accessibility, the Chinese participants finish the tasks online through a web link (https://surveyhero.com/c/a3f93764). The English native speakers are required to finish the survey through this web link (https://surveyhero.com/c/dea6f4d8), and the last part about markedness and similarity is omitted for the English native speakers as it is not applicable. In the web version, each section takes

one page and the participants can click 'next' to move to the next section. The instructions are clarified to all groups that the questions should be finished with their spontaneous responses within 20 minutes without any help of tools such as books or dictionaries.

## 6.3 Results and data analysis

### 6.3.1 Grammaticality judgment test

Based on the survey design and the 4-point scale, the rating ranges of each category including the grammatical and ungrammatical present perfect, simple past, present progressive and simple present, can be calculated and serve as statistical measures for comparisons.

There are four grammatical sentences respectively in present perfect, simple past, and present progressive. In each measure, if the participant rates all sentences as totally grammatical with 4 points, it will be maximum 16; if the participant judges all the sentences as totally ungrammatical, it will be minimum 4. So the ratings in these three measures should be between 4 and 16. There are two grammatical sentences in simple present, and the rating should be between 2 and 8.

There are four ungrammatical sentences respectively in present perfect, simple past, and present progressive. So the general ratings in these three measures range from 4 to 16. There are two sentences in each type of errors in these measures, thus the ratings in each subdivision range from 2 to 8. These subdivisions include two using present perfect for simple past, two using present perfect for simple present, two using simple past for present perfect, two using simple past for simple present, two incorrect using *being+n.*, two using present progressive for simple present, and two using simple present for simple past.

The responses from the English learners with L1 Chinese, the English learners with L1 German and the English native speakers are collected and the descriptive data are summarized in Table 6.2. It shows the mean, and the standard deviation in each measure from each group. The detailed information about the numbers of participants, the mean, the standard deviation, the

standard error, 95% lower/upper bound, the minimum and the maximum from each group can be found in Appendix E.

Table 6.2: Mean and standard deviation in GJT

| **Mean / Standard Deviation** | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **English learners L1 - Chinese** | | **English learners L1 - German** | | **English native speakers** | |
| | Mean | Std.D | Mean | Std.D | Mean | Std.D |
| 1. Ungrammatical.presentperfect | 7.93 | 2.54 | 8.43 | 2.17 | 5.83 | 2.01 |
| 2. Ung.presentperfect_for_simplepast | 3.98 | 1.74 | 4.90 | 1.57 | 2.85 | 1.09 |
| 3. Ung.presentperfect_for_simplepresent | 3.95 | 1.46 | 3.53 | 1.29 | 2.98 | 1.24 |
| 4. Grammatical.presentperfect | 11.86 | 2.81 | 12.98 | 1.92 | 14.48 | 1.62 |
| 5. Ungrammatical.simplepast | 8.72 | 2.85 | 9.01 | 2.23 | 7.22 | 2.61 |
| 6. Ung.simplepast_for_presentperfect | 3.93 | 1.70 | 4.92 | 1.49 | 4.08 | 1.65 |
| 7. Ung.simplepast_for_simplepresent | 4.79 | 1.86 | 4.09 | 1.41 | 3.14 | 1.40 |
| 8. Grammatical.simplepast | 12.96 | 2.96 | 13.67 | 2.02 | 14.31 | 1.79 |
| 9. Ungrammatical.presentprogressive | 9.11 | 2.17 | 9.01 | 2.07 | 7.75 | 2.38 |
| 10. Ung.being_n | 4.84 | 1.73 | 3.77 | 1.21 | 2.77 | 1.10 |
| 11. Ung.presentprogressive_for_simplepresent | 4.26 | 1.41 | 5.24 | 1.54 | 4.98 | 1.69 |
| 12. Grammatical.presentprogressive | 11.86 | 2.36 | 13.25 | 2.22 | 13.71 | 2.03 |
| 13. Ungrammatical.simplepresent | 3.67 | 1.55 | 2.71 | 1.01 | 3.17 | 1.27 |
| 14. Grammatical.simplepresent | 6.46 | 1.68 | 6.16 | 1.36 | 6.49 | 1.12 |

The assumptions of normality and homogeneity are checked in order to conduct ANOVA to compare the responses from the three groups. Central Limited Theorem applies in this survey because the samples sizes of all the groups (51, 57, 65) are larger than 30, thus the normality of dependent variables is met. Besides, Levene's test shows the homogeneity of variance (see Appendix F). When Levene's test is significant ($\leq 0.05$), the conditions about sample size ratios and sample variance ratios are checked and are satisfied. Since the data sets meet the conditions of normality and homogeneity, the parametric ANOVA test is used to compare the means between the three groups. As the sample sizes of each group are slightly different, Gabriel's procedure is adopted in the post-hoc tests to identify where the differences between groups are. Afterwards, the $R^2_{adj}$ is analyzed to measure the effect sizes.

According to the ANOVA test result (see Appendix G for details), all measures except the measure 'grammatical simple present' show significant

differences between groups. Table 6.3 lists all the significant differences based on the post-hoc tests. The complete results of post-hoc tests including insignificant ones can be found in Appendix H.

Table 6.3: Significant differences between groups in GJT

**Multiple Comparisons**

Gabriel

| Dependent Variable | | | Mean Difference | Std. Error | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Ungrammatical.presentperfect | L1 - Chinese | L1 - English | 2.099* | 0.408 | 0.000 |
| | L1 - German | L1 - English | 2.601* | 0.420 | 0.000 |
| 2. Ung.presentperfect_for_simplepast | L1 - Chinese | L1 - German | -.920* | 0.284 | 0.004 |
| | | L1 - English | 1.136* | 0.267 | 0.000 |
| | L1 - German | L1 - English | 2.056* | 0.275 | 0.000 |
| 3. Ung.presentperfect_for_simplepresent | L1 - Chinese | L1 - English | .963* | 0.241 | 0.000 |
| 4. Grammatical.presentperfect | L1 - Chinese | L1 - German | -1.121* | 0.417 | 0.023 |
| | | L1 - English | -2.617* | 0.393 | 0.000 |
| | L1 - German | L1 - English | -1.497* | 0.405 | 0.001 |
| 5. Ungrammatical.simplepast | L1 - Chinese | L1 - English | 1.5039* | 0.4692 | 0.005 |
| | L1 - German | L1 - English | 1.7944* | 0.4837 | 0.001 |
| 6. Ung.simplepast_for_presentperfect | L1 - Chinese | L1 - German | -.992* | 0.313 | 0.005 |
| | L1 - German | L1 - English | .845* | 0.304 | 0.018 |
| 7. Ung.simplepast_for_simplepresent | L1 - Chinese | L1 - English | 1.6510* | 0.2846 | 0.000 |
| | L1 - German | L1 - English | .9498* | 0.2934 | 0.004 |
| 8. Grammatical.simplepast | L1 - Chinese | L1 - English | -1.343* | 0.417 | 0.005 |
| 9. Ungrammatical.presentprogressive | L1 - Chinese | L1 - English | 1.3514* | 0.4030 | 0.003 |
| | L1 - German | L1 - English | 1.2560* | 0.4155 | 0.008 |
| 10. Ung.being_n | L1 - Chinese | L1 - German | 1.0676* | 0.2635 | 0.000 |
| | | L1 - English | 2.0729* | 0.2481 | 0.000 |
| | L1 - German | L1 - English | 1.0053* | 0.2558 | 0.000 |
| 11. Ung.presentprogressive_for_simplepresent | L1 - Chinese | L1 - German | -.972* | 0.301 | 0.004 |
| | | L1 - English | -.721* | 0.283 | 0.034 |
| 12. Grammatical.presentprogressive | L1 - Chinese | L1 - German | -1.3854* | 0.4240 | 0.004 |
| | | L1 - English | -1.8480* | 0.3991 | 0.000 |
| 13. Ungrammatical.simplepresent | L1 - Chinese | L1 - German | .961* | 0.251 | 0.001 |
| 14. Grammatical.simplepresent | | | | | |

*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

The following will explain the significant results of post-hoc tests based on the four target forms, namely, present perfect, simple past, present progressive, and simple present.

**Present perfect**

In general, both groups of English learners with L1 Chinese and with L1

German rate the ungrammatical sentences significantly higher than the English native speakers do. Specifically, in the ungrammatical use of present perfect for simple past, both groups of English learners rate significantly higher than the English native speakers. Besides, the learners with L1 German judge it significantly higher than the learners with L1 Chinese do. Thus, compared with the learners with L1 Chinese, the German speakers are not good at judging ungrammatical use of present perfect for simple past.

In ungrammatically using present perfect for simple present, there is only a significant difference between the learners with L1 Chinese and the English native speakers. That means the Chinese speakers cannot judge this error as well as the German speakers do.

For grammatical use of present perfect, both groups of learners rate the grammatical sentences significantly lower than the English native speakers. However, the learners with L1 Chinese perform less successfully than the learners with L1 German.

**Simple past**

In the ungrammatical use of simple past, both learner groups rate significantly higher than the native speakers. Same results with the subdivision of the ungrammatical use of simple past for simple present. However, in ungrammatical use of simple past for present perfect, the learners with L1 German rate significantly higher than native speakers, while the learners with L1 Chinese don't and show no difference from the native speakers. So, the German speakers underperform in judging ungrammatical use of simple past for present perfect.

In grammatical use of simple past, only the learners with L1 Chinese perform significantly differently from the native speakers, rating lower than native speakers do.

**Present progressive**

In the ungrammatical use of present progressive, both learner groups rate significantly higher than the English native speakers do. In the ungrammatical use of *being + n.*, the Chinese speakers judge significantly higher than the German speakers although both learner groups perform not as well as the

native speakers. In ungrammatical use of present progressive for simple present, the learners with L1 Chinese rate it significantly lower than the native speakers and the German speakers, and the German speakers perform similarly to the English native speakers.

In grammatical use of present progressive, the learners with L1 Chinese rate significantly lower than the English native speakers and the learners with L1 German, while the German speakers show no difference from the English native speakers.

**Simple present**

There is no significant difference between the English learners and the native speakers in judging grammatical and ungrammatical use of the simple present. Nevertheless, in ungrammatical use of simple present for simple past, the learners with L1 Chinese rate it significantly higher than the learners with L1 German. That shows that the Chinese speakers underperform in judging the incorrect use of simple present for simple past.

The significant differences between the English learners with L1 Chinese and the English learners with L1 German are in the following measures, which are marked with dark gray in Table 6.3: 2) ungrammatical use of present perfect for simple past; 4) grammatical present perfect; 6) ungrammatical use of simple past for present perfect; 10) ungrammatical use of *being+n.*; 11) ungrammatical use of present progressive for simple present; 12) grammatical use of present progressive; 13) ungrammatical use of simple present (for simple past).

To specify the effect sizes, the following table 6.4 lists the $R^2_{adj}$ values in all measures. The relevant detailed information can be found in Appendix I.

Table 6.4: $R^2_{adj}$ (GJT)

| Dependent Variable | $R^2_{adj}$ |
|---|---|
| 1. Ungrammatical.presentperfect | 0.201 |
| 2. Ung.presentperfect_for_simplepast | 0.241 |
| 3. Ung.presentperfect_for_simplepresent | 0.076 |
| 4. Grammatical.presentperfect | 0.200 |
| 5. Ungrammatical.simplepast | 0.079 |
| 6. Ung.simplepast_for_presentperfect | 0.053 |
| 7. Ung.simplepast_for_simplepresent | 0.157 |
| 8. Grammatical.simplepast | 0.046 |
| 9. Ungrammatical.presentprogressive | 0.066 |
| 10. Ung.being_n | 0.283 |
| 11. Ung.presentprogressive_for_simplepresent | 0.053 |
| 12. Grammatical.presentprogressive | 0.107 |
| 13. Ungrammatical.simplepresent | 0.069 |
| 14. Grammatical.simplepresent | -0.001 |

The ANOVA test shows significant differences between the three groups with different L1s in the 13 measures except 'grammatical use of simple present'. The $R^2_{adj}$s in the 13 measures range from 0.046 to 0.283, showing medium to large effect sizes. Measure 2, 4, and 10 show large effect sizes. Around 20% variance in judging the ungrammatical use of present perfect for simple past, the grammatical use of present perfect, and the ungrammatical use of *being + n.* can be explained by the L1.

Considering both the large effect sizes shown by $R^2_{adj}$ values and the significant differences between the learners with L1 Chinese and with L1 German shown by the post-hoc tests, the ungrammatical use of present perfect for simple past, the grammatical use of present perfect, and the ungrammatical use of *being + n.* deserve more attention when exploring L1 transfer.

### 6.3.2 Picture description

The forms of the four verbs *bark*, *fall*, *run* and *chase* that the participants use in the picture description task are collected and analyzed in the following table.

Table 6.5: The results of picture description task

| | **English learners - L1 Chinese** | | | **English learners - L1 German** | | | **English native speakers** | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Verbs | Forms | Number | % | Forms | Number | % | Forms | Number | % |
| Bark | was barking | 25 | 48.1% | was barking | 12 | 23.5% | was barking | 12 | 18.5% |
| | barked | 22 | 42.3% | barked | 36 | 70.6% | barked | 51 | 78.5% |
| | barking | 4 | 7.7% | barking | 1 | 2.0% | barking | 1 | 1.5% |
| | watched | 1 | 1.9% | | | | barks | 1 | 1.5% |
| | | | | is barking | 2 | 3.9% | | | |
| Total | | 52 | | | 51 | | | 65 | |
| Fall | fell | 40 | 76.9% | fell | 47 | 92.2% | fell | 65 | 100% |
| | falls | 3 | 5.8% | | | | | | |
| | falled | 3 | 5.8% | | | | | | |
| | has fallen | 1 | 1.9% | has fallen | 1 | 2.0% | | | |
| | was falling | 1 | 1.9% | | | | | | |
| | fall | 1 | 1.9% | | | | | | |
| | fallen | 1 | 1.9% | | | | | | |
| | fell down | 1 | 1.9% | | | | | | |
| | felt | 1 | 1.9% | | | | | | |
| | | | | had fallen | 1 | 2.0% | | | |
| | | | | is falling | 2 | 3.9% | | | |
| Total | | 52 | | | 51 | | | 65 | |
| Run | ran | 25 | 54.3% | ran | 38 | 74.5% | ran | 65 | 100% |
| | run | 9 | 19.6% | run | 2 | 3.9% | | | |
| | was running | 5 | 10.9% | was running | 5 | 9.8% | | | |
| | is running | 4 | 8.7% | is running | 3 | 5.9% | | | |
| | runs | 2 | 4.3% | | | | | | |
| | running | 1 | 2.2% | | | | | | |
| | | | | had ran | 1 | 2.0% | | | |
| | | | | ran away | 1 | 2.0% | | | |
| | | | | started to run | 1 | 2.0% | | | |
| Total | | 46 | | | 51 | | | 65 | |
| Chase | chased | 12 | 26.1% | chased | 16 | 31.4% | chased | 48 | 73.8% |
| | were chasing | 11 | 23.9% | were chasing | 32 | 62.7% | were chasing | 17 | 26.2% |
| | was chasing | 11 | 23.9% | | | | | | |
| | are chasing | 4 | 8.7% | are chasing | 3 | 5.9% | | | |
| | chasing | 4 | 8.7% | | | | | | |
| | is chasing | 2 | 4.3% | | | | | | |
| | chase | 1 | 2.2% | | | | | | |
| | chased of | 1 | 2.2% | | | | | | |
| Total | | 46 | | | 51 | | | 65 | |

The English native speakers choose the simple past form and the past progressive form for the four verbs with only two exceptions of the *-ing* participle and the simple present, while the Chinese students and German students use more various forms including the infinitive, the *-ing* participle, the present progressive, the simple present, the present perfect and the past perfect.

**Bark**

About half of the Chinese students choose the past progressive form (48.1%), the other half the simple past form (42.3%) and 4 students use the *-ing* participle form. The German students prefer to use the simple past form (70.6%) rather than the past progressive (23.5%) with one using *-ing* participle form and two using present progressive form. Similarly, 78% English native speakers prefer the simple past form and 18% of them use the past progressive with only one *-ing* participle and one simple present form.

**Fall**

Both groups of the students tend to use the simple past form (Chinese: 76.9%, German: 92.2%), and all the English native speakers use the simple past form. One Chinese student uses the present perfect *has fallen*, and one uses the past progressive *was falling*. The other forms the Chinese students use are the simple present *falls*, the base form *fall*, the past participle *fallen*, *-ed* form *falled*, or wrongly spelt as *felt*. The German students use the other forms including the present perfect *has fallen*, the past perfect *had fallen* and the present progressive *is falling*.

**Run**

More than 50% Chinese students use the simple past and more than 70% German students prefer the simple past. About 10% of both groups use the present progressive. The other forms include the base form *run*, the present progressive *is running*, the simple present *runs*, the *-ing* participle *running*, and the past prefect *had run*. However, all the English native speakers use the simple past form.

**Chase**

Around 47% Chinese students and 62% German students use the past progressive. 26% Chinese students and 31% German students use the simple past. By contrasts, only 26% English native speakers choose the past progressive form and 73% of them use the simple past form.

In summary, all the English native speakers choose the simple past form

for the verbs *fall* and *run*. More than 70% prefer the simple past and only about 20 % use the past progressive for verbs *bark* and *chase*. Overall, most native speakers tend to use the simple aspect rather than the progressive aspect and only about 20% of them differentiate the progressive between the simple aspect in the picture description task when it is possible to view the action in different perspectives/aspects. Quite surprisingly, both the Chinese students and the German students use the progressive aspect much more than the English native speakers do for the verbs *bark* and *chase*. Specifically, for the verb *bark*, the number of the Chinese students using the past progressive is twice as that of the German students. Concerning the verb *chase*, more German students prefer the progressive than the Chinese students do. Besides, both the Chinese students and German students tend to use other forms including correct and incorrect forms while the English native speakers mostly use the simple past and occasionally the past progressive.

### 6.3.3 Questions on language backgrounds and perceptions of markedness and similarity

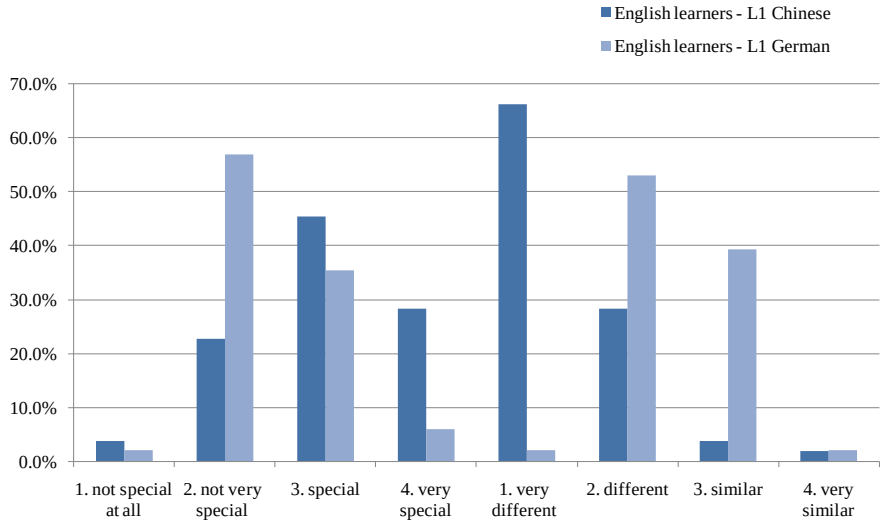
#### 6.3.3.1 Perceptions of markeness and similarity

The following table and figure summarize the responses from the two learner groups about their perceptions on markedness of English tense and aspect and similarity between English and their L1.

Table 6.6: The learners' perceptions of markedness and similarity

| | | English learners - L1 Chinese | | English learners - L1 German | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Number | % | Number | % |
| **Markedness** | 1. not special at all | 2 | 3.8% | 1 | 2.0% |
| | 2. not very special | 12 | 22.6% | 29 | 56.9% |
| | 2.5 | | | 1 | 2.0% |
| | 3. special | 24 | 45.3% | 18 | 35.3% |
| | 4. very special | 15 | 28.3% | 3 | 5.9% |
| Total | | 53 | | 51 | |
| **Similarity (Language distance)** | 1. very different | 35 | 66.0% | 1 | 2.0% |
| | 1.5 | | | 1 | 2.0% |
| | 2. different | 15 | 28.3% | 27 | 52.9% |
| | 2.5 | | | 1 | 2.0% |
| | 3. similar | 2 | 3.8% | 20 | 39.2% |
| | 4. very similar | 1 | 1.9% | 1 | 2.0% |
| Total | | 53 | | 51 | |

Figure 6.1: The learners' perceptions of markedness and similarity




In terms of markedness, 45.3% Chinese students consider English tense and aspect 'special' and 28.3% 'very special' compared with their L1 Chinese. When coming to similarity between English and L1 (language distance), more than 90% of Chinese students think that English and Chinese are 'very different' or 'different' (66% very different and 28.3% different). Therefore, according to the perception of most Chinese students, English tense and aspect

has a high degree of markedeness compared with L1 Chinese and English is very different from their L1 Chinese.

On the other hand, 56.9% German students regard English tense and aspect 'not very special' and 35.3% 'special' compared with their L1 German. However, there are more than half German students (52.9%) who think English is 'different' from L1 German, and 39.2% consider they are 'similar'. Based on most German students' understanding, English tense and aspect has a low degree of markedness compared with L1 German; nevertheless English is different from German.

#### 6.3.3.2 Markedness, similarity and L1 transfer

According to the ANOVA results from the grammaticality judgment test, the L1s play significant roles in judging the ungrammatical use of present perfect for simple past (measure 2), and the ungrammatical use of *being + n.*(measure 10). Based on the theory of Ellis (1994), markedness and similarity (language distance) are two of the important constraints in language transfer. Therefore, the following section tries to find out the correlation between L1 transfer and the learners' perception of markedness and similarity (language distance) in these two measures 2 and 10.

The measures 2 and 10 are the ungrammatical use of present perfect and present progressive respectively. If the learners rate it as 1 (totally ungrammatical) or 2 (probably ungrammatical), it shows that they perceive the ungrammaticality correctly or nearly correctly. If the learners rate as 3 (probably grammatical) or 4 (totally grammatical), it means that they don't understand the ungrammaticality. Based on the analysis in the previous chapters, this incorrect understanding is due to L1 transfer. Thus, rating 1 and 2 are marked as '0 - not L1 transfer' and rating 3 and 4 are marked as '1 - L1 transfer' in the following statistical analysis.

In the measure 2 'ungrammatical use of present perfect for simple past', the learners with L1 German underperform compared with the learners with L1 Chinese due to L1 German influence. In the measure 10 'ungrammatical use of present progressive *being + n.*', the learners with L1 Chinese

underperform due to L1 Chinese influence. As there is only one data set of markedness and similarity for each learner group, only the first sentence in measure 2 and measure 10 are chosen for the statistical test. Therefore the responses of the learners with L1 German in measure 2 (Sentence 1/37) and the responses of the learners with L1 Chinese in measure 10 (Sentence 17/13) are taken in the statistical analysis.

'L1 transfer or not' is set as the dependent variable, and 4-point-scale markedness and similarity are set as the independent variable. Binary logistic regression is conducted to analyze the correlation between L1 transfer and the perceptions of markedness and similarity.

**Sentence 17/13 – The English learners with L1 Chinese**

'Transfer or not' is taken as the dependent variable, 'markedness', 'similarity', and 'markedness*similarity' are taken as the independent variables, and the binary logistic regression is conducted with method 'enter'. The following tables show the result of the binary logistic regression.

Table 6.7: The result of binary logistic regression on sentence 17/13

Omnibus Tests of Model Coefficients

| | | Chi-square | df | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Step 1 | Step | 3.662 | 1 | 0.056 |
| | Block | 3.662 | 1 | 0.056 |
| | Model | 7.038 | 3 | 0.071 |

Model Summary

| Step | -2 Log likelihood | Cox & Snell R Square | Nagelkerke R Square |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 59.470[a] | 0.124 | 0.174 |

a. Estimation terminated at iteration number 5

Classification Table[a]

| | | | Predicted Q17_transfer | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Observed | | | not transfer | transfer | Percentage Correct |
| Step 1 | Q17_transfer | not transfer | 29 | 7 | 80.6 |
| | | transfer | 9 | 8 | 47.1 |
| | Overall Percentage | | | | 69.8 |

Variables in the Equation

| | | B | S.E. | Wald | df | Sig. | Exp(B) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Step 1[a] | Markedness | 3.530 | 1.696 | 4.330 | 1 | 0.037 | 34.124 |
| | Similarity | 6.492 | 3.304 | 3.862 | 1 | 0.049 | 660.006 |
| | Markedness by Similarity | -1.927 | 1.062 | 3.291 | 1 | 0.070 | 0.146 |
| | Constant | -12.867 | 5.665 | 5.158 | 1 | 0.023 | 0.000 |

a. Variable(s) entered on step 1: Markedness, Similarity, Markedness * Similarity .

The Wald tests show that the 'markedness' and 'similarity' have significant values ($p<0.05$) and the Exp(B) values ($B>0$, $Exp(B)>1$) mean that they have positive correlations with L1 transfer: the more similar that learners think that L1 and English are, the more likely it is to transfer L1 in acquiring English *being* + *n.*; the more marked that the learners think English is compared with the L1, the more likely it is to transfer L1. However, the result about markedness is completely opposite to the usual assumption, which needs to be researched further.

**Sentence 1/37 – The English learners with L1 German**

The same procedures are carried out for sentence 1/37 to figure out whether there is a correlation between L1 transfer and the perceptions of markedness and similarity among the English learners with L1 German. 'Transfer or not' is set as the dependent variable, 'markedness', 'similarity', and 'markedness*similarity' are set as the independent variables, and the binary logistic regression is used with method 'enter'. The following tables display the result of the binary logistic regression.

Table 6.8: The result of binary logistic regression on sentence 1/37

Omnibus Tests of Model Coefficients

| | | Chi-square | df | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Step 1 | Step | 4.106 | 1 | 0.043 |
| | Block | 4.106 | 1 | 0.043 |
| | Model | 4.118 | 3 | 0.249 |

Model Summary

| Step | -2 Log likelihood | Cox & Snell R Square | Nagelkerke R Square |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 59.985[a] | 0.079 | 0.109 |

a. Estimation terminated at iteration number 5

Classification Table[a]

| Observed | | | Predicted Tr: not transfer | Predicted Tr: transfer | Percentage Correct |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Step 1 | Tr | not transfer | 2 | 15 | 11.8 |
| | | transfer | 1 | 32 | 97.0 |
| | Overall Percentage | | | | 68.0 |

Variables in the Equation

| | | B | S.E. | Wald | df | Sig. | Exp(B) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Step 1[a] | Markedness | -5.045 | 2.797 | 3.255 | 1 | 0.071 | 0.006 |
| | Similarity | -4.992 | 2.827 | 3.118 | 1 | 0.077 | 0.007 |
| | Markedness by Similarity | 2.201 | 1.251 | 3.092 | 1 | 0.079 | 9.030 |
| | Constant | 12.174 | 6.482 | 3.528 | 1 | 0.060 | 193673.474 |

a. Variable(s) entered on step 1: Markedness, Similarity, Markedness * Similarity .

The p values of Wald tests for markedness (0.07) and similarity (0.07) don't reach the significant level, but they are still quite close to 0.05, leading to a plausible direction. As the B <0, Exp(B) <1, it shows that the less similar that the learners think the L1 and English are, the more likely it is to transfer L1 in acquiring English present perfect; the less marked that English is compared with the L1, the more likely it is to transfer L1.

In general, the logistic regression results of sentence 17 for English learners with L1 Chinese shows that markedness and similarity have a positive correlation with L1 transfer in acquiring English tense and aspect, while the logistic regression results of sentence 1 for English learners with L1 German shows that markedness and similarity have a negative correlation with L1 transfer.

## 6.4 Discussion

This section discusses the survey results and answers the research questions put forward at the beginning of the chapter.

a. Is there any significant difference between the English native speakers and the two English learner groups in judging grammaticality of English present perfect, simple past, present progressive or simple present?

The ANOVA analysis of the grammaticality judgment test shows that there are significant differences between the English native speakers and the two learner groups in judging ungrammatical use of present perfect, simple past, and present progressive, and grammatical use of present perfect. Both learner groups rate the ungrammaticality of these three tense-aspect forms significantly higher than the English native speakers do, and rate the grammaticality of present perfect significantly lower. This reveals that the learners have not mastered the English present perfect, simple past and present progressive completely. The errors which are not identified well by both groups are: ungrammatical use of present perfect for simple past, ungrammatical use of simple past for simple present, and ungrammatical use of *being+n*.

Specifically, only the learners with L1 Chinese don't make correct judgments in ungrammatical use of present perfect for simple present, grammatical use of simple past, ungrammatical use of present progressive for simple present and grammatical use of present progressive. Only the learners with L1 German underperform in judging ungrammatical use of simple past for present perfect.

However, there is no significant difference between the English native speakers and the two learner groups in judging the grammatical and the ungrammatical use of simple present. This demonstrates that both groups of learners have a good knowledge of simple present.

b. Does L1 Chinese or L1 German influence the learners' performance in a grammaticality judgment test on English present perfect, simple past, present progressive or simple present? Is there any significant difference in the performance of the English learners with L1 Chinese and the English learners with L1 German?

The ANOVA analysis of the grammaticality judgment test points out that the significant differences between the two learner groups are in the following measures: 2) ungrammatical use of present perfect for simple past; 4) grammatical present perfect; 6) ungrammatical use of simple past for present perfect; 10) ungrammatical use of *being + n*.; 11) ungrammatical use of present progressive for simple present; 12) grammatical use of present

progressive; 13) ungrammatical use of simple present (for simple past). Measure 2, 4, and 10 have large effect sizes shown by $R^2_{adj}$ values. Around 20% variance in judging the ungrammatical use of present perfect for simple past, the grammatical use of present perfect, and the ungrammatical use of *being + n.* can be explained by the L1.

The German students underperform in measure 2, 6, and 11. Clearly, the parallel forms and different uses of present perfect and simple past in English and German cause the improper judgments in measure 2 and 6. The lack of grammaticalized progressive aspect in German might lead to hypercorrection and overusing the progressive in English.

The Chinese students underperform in measure 4, 10, 12 and 13. Incomplete understanding might cause incorrectly judging the grammatical use of present perfect and present progressive (measure 4 and 12). The emphasizing function of copular *be* in Chinese cause the wrong judgment of *being + n.* (measure 10). The lack of inflectional change in Chinese leads to insensitiveness to inflectional ending of verbs in English. Thus the Chinese students are not good at identifying the errors in measure 13.

Therefore, the differences between the two learner groups reflect exactly the L1 influences.

c. In terms of aspects (the simple, the progressive, and the perfect), do the English learners with L1 Chinese and the English learners with L1 German view the actions/movements in a picture description task similarly to the English native speakers? If not, do the differences reflect certain feature in their L1?

The results of picture description task show that the English native speakers tend to use the simple aspect but not the progressive aspect. All of them choose the simple aspect form for verb *fall* and *run*. Only about 20% of them use the progressive aspect for verb *bark* and *chase* when it is possible according to the pictures. On the contrary, both the Chinese participants and the German participants use the progressive aspect much more frequently than the English native speakers do. About 48% of the Chinese students and 27% of the German students use the progressive aspect for verb *bark*; about 47% of the Chinese students and 68% of the German students use the progressive

aspect for verb *chase*. This striking difference between the English native speakers and the English learners indicates a high possibility of overusing the progressive aspect for the English learners irrespective of their L1s. While there is progressive aspect in Chinese and no fully grammaticalized progressive aspect in German, both groups of learners tend to overuse the progressive aspect.

Learners with L1 German at advanced English level have a hypercorrection tendency thus overusing progressive, as there is no fully grammaticalized progressive in German. Learners with L1 Chinese seem to have no difficulty in understanding the meaning of the progressive aspect and tend to overuse it as there is a similar progressive aspect with a different form in Chinese. Besides, the progressive aspect attracts both groups of learners possibly due to the extra *-ing* form of the progressive, which the learners would like to use to put extra weight to verb phrases to catch attentions or for emphasis purpose.

d. Is there any correlation between L1 transfer and the learners' perceptions of the similarity between English and L1, and the markedness of English compared with L1 in the grammatical domain of tense and aspect?

To find out the correlation, the study examines the Chinese participants' responses on ungrammatical use of *being + n.* and the German participants' responses on ungrammatical use of present perfect for simple past, and regards these two uses as typical L1 transfer cases. The correct responses are taken as 'not L1 transfer', and incorrect ones as 'L1 transfer'. Combined with the learners' perceptions of the markedness and similarity, the logistic regression results of Chinese learners show that markedness and similarity have a positive correlation with L1 transfer. The more similar that the learners with L1 Chinese think that L1 and English are, the more likely it is to transfer L1 in acquiring English *being + n.*; the more marked that the learners with L1 Chinese think the English is compared with the L1, the more likely it is to transfer L1.

Although the result from the German participants is not as significant as that from the Chinese participants, which might be due to the multilingual effects, the study discovers that the English learners with L1 German'

perceptions of markedness and similarity tend to have a negative correlation with L1 transfer. The less similar that the learners with L1 German think that L1 and English are, the more likely it is to transfer L1 in acquiring English present perfect; the less marked that the learners with L1 German think the English is compared with the L1, the more likely it is to transfer L1.

The correlation between L1 transfer and the perceptions of markedness and similarity are not the same for the Chinese students and German students. The fundamental different contrast between Chinese and English, German and English might account for the different correlations for these two groups of learners, where some further research can be done in the future.

## 6.5 Conclusions

Through comparing the performances of the English learners with L1 Chinese, the English learners with L1 German and the English native speakers in the grammaticality judgment test and picture discretion task, this study finds out that:

1. Both groups of learners do not master completely the use of English present perfect, simple past and present progressive. Both groups don't identify the following errors well: ungrammatical use of present perfect for simple past, ungrammatical use of simple past for simple present, and ungrammatical use of *being* + *n*. Both groups of learners do well in the simple present.
2. There are significant differences between the two groups of learners in the following measures: 2) ungrammatical use of present perfect for simple past; 4) grammatical present perfect; 6) ungrammatical use of simple past for present perfect; 10) ungrammatical use of *being* + *n.*; 11) ungrammatical use of present progressive for simple present; 12) grammatical use of present progressive; 13) ungrammatical use of simple present (for simple past). The German students underperform in measure 2, 6, and 11, and the Chinese students underperform in measure 4, 10, 12 and 13. Around 20% variance in judging the ungrammatical use of present perfect for simple past, the grammatical use of present perfect, and the

ungrammatical use of *being* + *n.* can be explained by the L1. All these reflect L1 influence in acquiring English tense and aspect.

3. In the picture description task, the English native speakers tend to use the simple aspect rather than the progressive aspect. Only about 20% of them choose the progressive aspect when the scenes in the picture allow. However, both groups of learners use the progressive aspect much more frequently (about two to three times higher) than the English native speakers. This striking difference shows the learners' high tendency towards overusing the progressive aspect irrespective of their L1.
4. The logistic regression results of the Chinese participants' responses on ungrammatical use of *being* + *n.* show that the learners' perceptions of markedness and similarity have a positive correlation with L1 transfer. On the other hand, the logistic regression results of the German participants' responses on ungrammatical use of present perfect for simple past show that the learners' perceptions of markedness and similarity have a negative correlation with L1 transfer.

Extended from Zadie Smith's sentence, the short concluding remark for this study is: the past is tense, the future perfect, and the present the connection.

# 7 Discussion

This chapter discusses the research findings of both the corpus-based study and the survey in the perspectives of the characteristics and manifestations of language transfer, L1-specific features and universals in learner Englishes, correlation between language transfer and learners' perceptions of similarity and markedness, and research limitations.

## 7.1 The corpus-based study and the survey

The corpus-based study describes the distributions of tenses and aspects in learner Englishes and native English, and points out the general trends of learner Englishes and native English, specially, Chinese learner English and German learner English in the grammatical domain of tense and aspect. It analyzes the overuse and underuse of tenses and aspects in Chinese learner English and German learner English relative to native English, and focuses on identifying, illustrating and analyzing the errors, the most prominent errors, the transfer errors and intralingual errors in tenses and aspects in Chinese learner English and German learner English. Then it discusses how L1 knowledge influences use of tense and aspect in L2 English, and compares Chinese learner English and German learner English to figure out the L1-specific features and the common features (possibly universal) in the grammatical domain of tense and aspect.

The survey uses a GJT task, a picture description task and general questions on the learners' language backgrounds and perceptions of similarity and markedness to figure out whether there is significant difference between English native speakers, Chinese students and German students in judging the grammatical and ungrammatical use of the English present perfect, simple past, present progressive and simple present. It is also tested whether L1 Chinese or L1 German influences the learners' performances in GJT and whether there is difference between two learner groups. The picture description task finds out

whether the English learners with L1 Chinese and the English learners with L1 German view the events similarly to the English native speakers. It is also designed to discover the correlation between L1 transfer and the learners' perceptions of the similarity between English and their L1, and the markedness of English compared with their L1 in the grammatical domain of tense and aspect.

The following section will discuss the research findings of the corpus study and the experimental survey, and the research limitations.

## 7.2 Discussion of research findings

Based on the corpus study and survey, the following points relating to language transfer will be discussed: characteristics and manifestations of L1 transfer, L1-specific features in Chinese learner English and German learner English, typological universals, the correlation between language transfer and learners' perception of similarity and markedness.

### 7.2.1 Coexistence of L1 transfer with other different processes

As a fundamental process of language learning, L1 transfer coexists with other processes. The data in the corpus-based study reveal this characteristic of language transfer.

In Chinese learner English, misusing tenses, neglecting sequence of tenses and verb disagreement occur due to the lack of tense or inflections in Chinese. Misusing copular *be* happens because of a similar structure but with different functions in Chinese. Misusing verb and noun forms may at least partly be traced back to the very high productivity of verb-noun conversion in Chinese. On the other hand, overgeneralization and incomplete learning and application can play a role as well.

In German learner English, the narrative use in German *Perfekt* and no narrative use in English present perfect might lead learners to misuse the present perfect for simple past or to misuse simple past for present perfect. L1 transfer can explain these errors. Other possible causes might also be involved,

such as ignorance of the restrictions in present perfect, incomplete application of rules in present perfect/simple past and overgeneralization etc. The interchangeable use of *Präsens* and *Perfekt* for a persistent situation in German might be transferred to English perfect thus causing learners to misuse present perfect for simple present and to misuse simple present for present perfect. However, ignorance of the restrictions and incomplete application can be the possible reasons as well. The different use of simple present for future time reference in German and English can account for hypercorrection, contrary to the prediction through English-German comparison, misusing simple future for simple present. Lack of fully grammaticalized progressive in German might cause misuse of the progressive aspect. Although L1 transfer can explain these well, incomplete learning and ignorance of restriction might work with transfer as well.

In conclusion, L1 transfer is not a monolithic process, and works with different processes in learning.

### 7.2.2 Manifestations

L1 transfer manifests itself in negative transfer, positive transfer, underuse, and overuse in both the corpus-based study and the survey.

**Positive and negative transfer**

The transfer errors identified in Chinese learner English and German learner English from the corpus study display negative transfer. On the other hand, the survey responses show both negative and positive transfer. Negative transfer of native language structures is reflected in the German students' underperformance in judging ungrammatical use of the present perfect, simple past and present progressive and the Chinese students' underperformance in judging ungrammatical use of *being + n.* and simple present and grammatical use of present perfect and present progressive. On the other hand, positive transfer is evident in a reduced number of errors. The German students' outperform the Chinese students as a result of the positive transfer from L1 German. Despite the different proficiency levels, the error rate in Chinese

learner English from the corpus study is much higher than that in German learner English, which can serve as a rough evidence for positive transfer. The outperformance of German students in some grammaticality judgments from the survey is proved statistically to be a convincing evidence of L1 positive transfer since both groups of students are at the same proficiency level and are given the same tasks, and their native languages are typologically different.

**Overuse and underuse**

The picture description task from the survey demonstrates an obvious overuse of the progressive aspect in both groups of English learners, which is similar to the results of Axelsson & Hahn's (2001) study. German students have a high tendency towards hypercorrection due to the lack of fully grammaticalized progressive aspect in German, while Chinese students tend to overuse it as there is a similar progressive in Chinese.

The log-likelihood values from the corpus study show that Chinese students tend to overuse the future tense, the simple present and simple future, all of which require fewest inflections. This finding confirms the results of the Hinkel's (2004) study on the overuse of the future tense by Chinese learners, and also the Liszka's (2004) study about the overuse of the present by Chinese. Besides, the log-likelihood values from the corpus study indicate that Chinese students tend to significantly underuse the present perfect, the past perfect, the past progressive, and the simple past, which all require much more complicated inflectional changes on the verbs. This is consistent with the conclusions of previous studies that Chinese learners of English have problems with realization of morphology (Hsieh 2009), are insensitive to grammatical violation involving tense (Chen 2009), and have problems with tense markers (Hinkel 1992). Meanwhile, the German students tend to overuse the past perfect, the past progressive, and the simple past, which all are in past tenses, and tend to underuse the present perfect and the present progressive. This also conforms to the findings of Liszka (2004) that German learners prefer the simple past and the results of Fuchs, Götz & Werner (2016), which show that Germen students underuse the present perfect.

### 7.2.3 L1-specific features and universals

As the learners' native language Chinese and German are two typologically different languages, comparison of Chinese learner English and German learner English can yield more insights on both L1-specific features and typologically common features. Even where the two groups of learners produce similar language errors, they might have different causes due to different L1 influence.

L1-specific features in Chinese learner English discovered in the corpus-based study include:

- neglecting sequence of tenses
- incorrectly using *being* + n. /adj. /v-*ed* /base form /v-*ing*
- incorrect use of copular *be* such as missing *be* in *will* + *be* + adj. /n. /prep. /future progressive /simple future passive /passive voice after modal verb
- wrongly adding *be* in *will* + v. /simple present /simple past
- subject verb disagreement
- overlooking the non-stative feature of the progressive
- using simple past for present perfect
- using simple past for simple present
- using simple present for simple past
- misusing verb forms and noun forms

Lack of equivalent grammatical categories and inflection, and different uses of copular verb in Chinese lead to these L1-specific errors in Chinese learner English. Some of these findings about the present perfect and the copular verb agree with Kwan & Wong's (2016) illustrations of Chinese learners' persistent difficulties with the present perfect and Eng's (2012) study on copula omission.

L1-specific features in German learner English shown by the corpus-based study include:

- misusing the present perfect for the simple past and misusing the simple past for the present perfect
- misusing the present perfect for the simple present and misusing the

simple present for the present perfect
- misusing simple future for simple present
- misusing the progressive aspect for the simple aspect and misusing the simple aspect for the progressive aspect

These L1-specific features are consistent with Götz's (2015) observations and conclusions about spoken German learner English. The parallel forms of tenses and aspects with different meanings and uses in German and English result in these L1-specific errors.

Common errors identified in Chinese learner English and German learner English from the corpus study are mostly either related to some specific uses of English modal/copular verbs or typical incorrect morphological changes of verbs. They involve: the use of *will* and *would*; incorrect spellings and/or morphological inflections of verb past participles, verbs in the simple past, and *-ing* participle; and subject-verb disagreement. The common difficulties also include misusing tenses and aspects due to confusion between two forms, such as using simple past for present perfect. However, the underlying main causes are different. The difficulties arise due to the lack of some equivalent grammatical uses in Chinese for Chinese students, while it is the parallel forms with different meanings and uses that cause the confusion for German students.

Besides, the survey focusing on present perfect, simple past, present progressive and simple present also reveals that both groups of learners don't spot well the ungrammatical use of present perfect for simple past, the ungrammatical use of simple past for simple present, and the ungrammatical use of *being* + n. Specifically, Chinese students underperform in judging grammatical present perfect, grammatical present progressive, ungrammatical use of *being* + n, and ungrammatical use of simple present for simple past. German students are not good at judging ungrammatical use of present perfect for simple past, ungrammatical use of simple past for present perfect, and ungrammatical use of present progressive for simple present. Both groups of learners tend to overuse the progressive aspect compared with the English native speakers in situations which can be described in both the progressive and the simple aspect. Although L1 influences play a role in the overuse of

progressive, influence from universal language, independent general or even universal trends may be at work and should be researched further.

### 7.2.4 Similarity, markedness and language transfer

Ellis discusses the research on language transfer and summarizes the constraints on transfer including language level, social factors, markedness, prototypicality, language distance and psychotypology and developmental factors (Ellis 1994, 2009). Jarvis (2015) lists and discusses some recent landmark findings regarding language transfer research involving positive effects, rate and route, similarities, non-linear changes, directions, transferability, meaning, and individual differences. Similarity and markedness are two of the most important factors which relate to language transfer.

**Similarity**

Psychotypology refers to learners' perceptions about language distance, the linguistic difference between two languages (Ellis 1994, 2009). To put it in other words, psychotypology covers the learner's perceptions about linguistic difference and similarity between two languages. The studies by Corder (1979, 1982), Kellerman (1977, 1979), Singleton (1987) focus on psychotypology and language transfer. Andersen (1983), Kellerman (1995), and Ringbom and Jarvis (2009) show that most cases of transfer derive from the learner's assumptions about which features of the native language and the target language are similar. Eckman (1977) and Kellerman (1978, 1983) discuss transferability and propose that learners' intuitions about universal and language-specific features have an important impact on the cross-linguistic associations they make.

**Markedness**

Transferability depends on the degree of markedness. Markedness can be defined based on the basis of language typology and Universal Grammar. According to language typology, 'those features that are universal or present in most languages are unmarked, while those that are specific to a particular

language or found in only a few languages are marked.' (Ellis 1994: 320). Based on the theory of Universal Grammar, peripheral rules are marked while core rules can be both unmarked and marked (Ellis 1994: 319). As this study has usage approach from the typological perspective, the definition based on language typology is adopted.

Eckman (1977: 321) brings together markedness and difficulty in the Markedness Differential Hypothesis. Some research on markedness and second language acquisition focuses on whether the learners acquire the marked forms earlier than the unmarked forms, such as Mazurkewich and White (Mazurkewich & White 1984) on the acquisition of NP+PP and NP+NP. However, criticisms are raised that L1 influence might play a role rather than markedness (White 1989) and the distinction of so-called marked and unmarked structures in the study is not the core/periphery distinction (Hawkins 1987).

Hyltenstam (1984: 43) hypothesizes that learners transfer unmarked forms when the target language form is marked, and resist transferring marked forms when target language form is unmarked. White (1987: 266–267) argues that learners may transfer marked forms from L1 to the interlanguage.

The vagueness of the concept of markedness makes it difficult to decide which features are marked in relation to others. Lack of consensus about markedness leads to problems in research. Kellerman (1977) suggests defining it with reference to native speakers' own perceptions of the structure of their language.

Considering the disputable issues regarding markedness in previous studies and inspired by Kellerman (1977)'s more precise way of defining markedness, the survey on language transfer and similarity and markedness in this study asks for the learners' own perceptions of the 'markedness/specialty' of the structure rather than determining markedness through linguistic descriptions. This could lead to a greater precision when researching the relation between markedness and transfer since it is the learner who transfers a certain feature when acquiring a new language.

The result of the survey shows that the learners' perceptions of similarity and markedness have a positive correlation with L1 transfer in the case of ungrammatical use of *being* + *n*. by Chinese students and have a negative

correlation with L1 transfer in the case of ungrammatical use of present perfect for simple past by German students. The finding about Chinese students conforms to the results of the previous studies on similarity and transfer (Andersen 1983; Kellerman 1995; Ringbom & Jarvis 2009), and it partially agrees with Hyltenstam's thought (1984: 43) that learners transfer unmarked forms when the target language form is marked. The most important improvement compared with previous studies is that the survey investigates the correlations based on the learners' perception rather than only on grammar theories, which solves the issues of vague concept of markedness.

## 7.3 Research limitations

Some research limitations need to be pointed out for improvement in future research. In the corpus-based study, the main practical difficulty in language transfer research results from the non-monolithic process of language transfer. Language transfer unfolds in conjunction with other processes. It does not seem to be possible to separate the transfer process and other processes when analyzing the corpus data comprehensively. It is only possible to identify the high likelihood of transfer. It is, however, impossible to completely rule out other factors, at least for some of the learners. This ambiguity causes difficulty for language transfer research.

When comparing tense and aspect in IL of learners from L1 Chinese and L1 German, differences other than the differences in the learners' L1s may account for the differences in their IL features, such as the differences in cultures and teaching traditions. Only a large sampling can reduce the impact of this possibility.

The Chinese and German participants of the survey are supposed to have similar English proficiency levels (C1). While the German students come from the same university and are in almost the same semester of Bachelor study, the Chinese students are in different semesters of Bachelor, Master and Ph.D. studies from many different universities. The ideal participants would have similar English proficiency levels and have different studies in different semesters from different universities all over the country, which will be a very

large random sample to reduce the chance of variance due to one specific factor such as study, age, or education level.

Quantifying transfer is an issue mentioned by some researchers. This survey uses the results of GJT to decide whether a doubtful case is an instance of transfer or not, because the statistics tests show the significant differences between the English native speakers and two learner groups with typologically different L1s. However, the participants' judgments in GJT may be inconsistent, which can lead to impreciseness. A large sample can reduce the impact of variability of learners' judgments.

The logistic regression test for the relation between transfer and percetions of similarity and markedness in the survey is carried out on the two specific sentences which are proved to have statistical significance after all the responses are collected and analyzed. However, the questions on perceptions of markedness and similarity, which are sent to the participants at the same time as all the sentences of GJT, refer to all tenses and aspects in a general sense. In the feature study, the questions about the perceptions of markedness and similarity can include the specific tense-aspect structure.

Despite the research limitations, this corpus-based study combined with an experiment/survey takes into consideration of the native language influences, target language facts, and typological universals thus revealing the L1 transfer in the acquisition of English tense and aspect.

# 8 Conclusions

This chapter will review and summarize the findings of the whole study, point out the contribution to second language acquisition and learner corpora research, give advices on pedagogical practice and make suggestions for future research.

## 8.1 Summary of research findings

This section will summarize the research findings including Chinese-English contrast and German-English contrast in tense and aspect, the corpus-based study, and the experiment/survey.

### 8.1.1 The differences and similarities between Chinese and English, between German and English

As a tenseless language, Chinese has no grammatical devices to locate events in the time while English has two-tense distinction (present, past) or three-tense distinction (present, past, future) depending on the criteria adopted. To express location in time, lexical expressions, temporal phrases or the narrative sequential context are used in Chinese. In terms of aspect, both Chinese and English have aspectual systems. In English, there are perfect and non-perfect distinction and progressive and non-progressive distinction. With these two distinctions, English has four aspectual forms: perfect, progressive, perfect progressive, and aspectual unmarked (simple) forms. In Chinese, there are four perfective aspects: the actual aspect marked by 了 *le*, the experiential aspect marked by 过 *guo*, the delimitative aspect marked by verb reduplication, and the completive aspect marked by resultative verb complements, and four imperfective aspects: the durative aspect marked by 着 *zhe*, the progressive aspect marked by 在 *zai*, the inceptive aspect marked by 起来 *qilai*, and the continuative aspect marked by 下去 *xiaqu*. Comparing

aspects in Chinese and English, it is found that the English perfect and the Chinese actual marker 了 *le* are alike except that the experiential perfect in English can only be expressed by the Chinese experiential marker 过 *guo*. Chinese progressive 在 *zai* is a dedicated marker for current temporary happenings while English progressive has much wider uses such as used as a time frame, for habits in existence over a limited period, for repetition of events of limited duration, for anticipated happenings in the future, for persistent or continuous activity without 'temporary element' and other extended uses such as the interpretative use, the emotive use and the use with non-verbal predications, such as adjectives or nouns. Moreover, Chinese distinguishes progressive 在 *zai* and durative 着 *zhe*, while English does not. The perfect progressive in English is compositional, while Chinese uses two sentences to express these two aspectual meanings. There are delimitative, inceptive and continuative aspects in Chinese whereas English uses lexical devices rather than grammatical ones for these situations.

As for the tense and aspect in German and English, they have parallel formal distinctions: Present - *Präsens*, Past - *Präteritum*, Future - *Futur I*, Present perfect - *Perfekt*, Past perfect - *Plusquamperfekt*, Future perfect - *Futur II* (König and Gast 2012: 83), but have different meanings and uses. The study summarizes the contrast between German and English according to König and Gast (2012: 80–96). *Präsens* in German can express future time reference in most contexts, while English present can be used with future time reference only for scheduled events. While both *Präsens* and *Perfekt* in German can be used to express the universal use of perfect / perfect of persistent situation indicating state or habit persists up to the present, English uses present perfect. *Perfekt* in German has narrative use while present perfect in English does not. The narrative use of *perfekt* in German refers to a definite moment in the past, and in such context it needs to be expressed in the past tense rather than present perfect in English. Adverbials that locate time at a definite point in the past cannot be used with present perfect in English. However, *perfekt* in German can be used with time reference of definite moments in the past which is separated from the moment of utterance, since there is narrative use in German *perfekt*. Lexical expressions are used to express current happenings or temporal frames in German, whereas, English

has fully grammaticalized progressive aspect with a wider range of uses.

### 8.1.2 The findings of the corpus study

The corpus study compares the use of tense and aspect in learner Englishes, specifically, Chinese learner English and German learner English from ICLE and native English from LOCNESS.

**The distributions of tenses and aspects in learner Englishes and native English**

The analysis of three tenses (present, past and future) in 16 learner Englishes and native English based on relative frequency per 100,000 words shows that Chinese learner English has the lowest use frequency of tenses among all the learner Englishes. The use frequency of past tense in Chinese learner English is also the lowest, while the use frequency of future tense is the third highest, with the highest in Tswana learner English and the second highest in French learner English. The use frequency of past tense in German learner English is the highest among all the learner Englishes. The analysis of the proportions of the three tenses in all finite verbs (occurrence/finite verbs*100) displays a similar tendency. Past tense in Chinese learner English has the second lowest percentage and future tense has the third highest proportion among all. Past tense in German learner English has the highest percentage among all the learner Englishes.

The analysis of the aspect distribution (simple, progressive, perfect and perfect progressive), based on relative frequency per 100,000 words, reveals that Chinese learner English has the lowest relative frequency of aspects among all the learner Englishes and native English. The analysis of aspect proportion based on occurrence/finite verbs*100 demonstrates that the proportion of simple aspect in Chinese learner English is the second highest, with the highest in Japanese learner English among all the learner Englishes. The proportion of the perfect aspect in Chinese learner English is one of the lowest, only half of native English. The proportions of aspects in German learner English are close to those of native English.

The investigation of 12 combinations of tenses and aspects based on relative frequency per 100,000 words and on occurrence/finite verbs*100 in Chinese learner English and German learner English shows that the simple present has the highest relative frequency and the simple past has the second highest in both Chinese learner English and German learner English. In Chinese learner English, the simple future takes the third place, the present perfect the fourth and the present progressive the fifth. In German learner English, the present perfect comes in the third, the simple future the fourth and the present progressive the fifth position. Moreover, the frequencies of the simple present and the simple future in Chinese learner English are higher than those in German learner English and those in native English. However, the frequencies of the simple past and the present perfect in Chinese learner English are lower than those in German learner English and those in native English.

**Overuse and underuse in Chinese learner English and German learner English**

The log-likelihood values of tenses and aspects in Chinese learner English and German learner English in ICLE relative to native English in LOCNESS, based on the occurrences and corpus sizes, indicate that Chinese learners of English tend to significantly overuse the future tense, the simple present and the simple future, which require least inflections and tend to significantly underuse present perfect, past perfect, past progressive, and simple past, which require much more inflectional changes on verbs. German learners of English are inclined to overuse the past perfect, the past progressive and the simple past, which are all in past tense, and underuse the present perfect, and the present progressive. They have a tendency to overuse the simple aspect and underuse the perfect aspect.

**Prominent errors and transfer errors in Chinese learner English**

All the errors in Chinese learner English and German learner English are analyzed, categorized, and described in the error lists (c.f. Chapter 5, Table 5.4 and Table 5.5). In Chinese learner English, more than half of the total errors involve simple present since simple present has the largest proportion among

all. The simple future has the lowest error rate compared with all the others. The overall error rate in tense and aspect in Chinese learner English is 17.8%.

Most prevalent errors in Chinese learner English include: incorrect application of sequence of tenses rules; misusing different tenses such as using simple past for the simple present, using past perfect for present perfect, using the simple present for simple past; misusing different aspects, such as using present progressive for simple present, using present perfect for simple present, using past perfect for simple past, using simple present for present perfect, using simple present for present progressive; misusing different tenses and aspects such as using simple past for present perfect, using present perfect for simple past; subject verb disagreement; misusing active or passive voices in different tenses and aspects; omitting or wrongly adding copular *be*, such as missing *be* after *will* in *will* + *be* + adj./passive voice after modal verbs, using unnecessary *be* in *will* + v. as *will* + *be* + v.; using different tense/aspect forms for infinitive forms; using different tense/aspect forms for *-ing* participle; using other forms such as the verb base form and *-ing* participle for past participle; using *be* + base form; using present progressive with incompatible stative verbs; misusing *being* + n.; incorrect spelling and/or morphological inflection; using noun as verb or use verb as noun.

Most errors identified in Chinese learner English are intralingual errors, and some are transfer errors. The transfer errors involve:

1) misusing tenses, such as using simple past for simple present, using simple present for simple past, and using simple past for present perfect, as there is no tense as a grammatical device to express where the event is located in the time;

2) neglecting sequence of tenses owing to the lack of relevant rules in Chinese;

3) incorrect uses relative to copular verb *be* in English, such as missing *be* in *will* + *be* + adj. /n. /prep. /future progressive /simple future passive /passive voice after modal verb, wrongly adding *be* in *will* + v. /simple present /simple past, using *being* + n. /adj. /v-*ed* /base form /v-*ing*. There is a similar copular verb with a similar structure but different uses and functions in Chinese, which might lead to these transfer errors;

4) subject verb disagreement, as there is no inflectional change on verbs

in Chinese;

5) misusing verb forms and noun forms, as the productivity of verb-noun conversion in Chinese is even greater than in English. The transfer and overgeneralization might cause the error;

6) overlooking the non-stative feature of the progressive due to the partial similarity between Chinese progressive *zai* / durative *-zhe* and English progressive.

Most transfer errors are interlingual/ intralingual errors, such as misusing tenses and aspects, neglecting sequences of tenses, subject verb disagreement, because there is no such distinction, use or grammatical category in L1 Chinese. Some transfer errors are transfer of structure, such as incorrect uses relative to copular verb *be*, misusing verb forms and noun forms, and overlooking the non-stative feature of the progressive, as there are similar structures in English but with different uses and functions in Chinese.

**Prominent errors and transfer errors in German learner English**

In German learner English, the error rates of the future perfect, the future progressive, the past perfect, the past perfect progressive and the present perfect are comparatively high. More than one-third of the total errors are in simple present, since simple present has the largest proportion among all. On the other hand, the simple present has the lowest error rate among all tenses and aspects. The overall error rate in tense and aspect in German learner English is 3.7%.

The most prominent errors are the following: misusing different tenses such as using the simple past for the simple present, using the simple present for the simple past, using the simple future for the simple present, and using the past perfect for the present perfect; misusing different aspects, such as using the past perfect for the simple past, using the present progressive for the simple present, using the simple past for the past perfect, using the past progressive for the simple past, using the present perfect for the simple present, using the simple present for the present perfect, and using the simple present for the present progressive; misusing different tenses and aspects, such as using the simple past for the present perfect and using the present perfect for the simple past; subject verb disagreement; using *will* for *would*; using

different tense forms for infinitive.

The transfer errors in German learner English include:

1) misusing the present perfect for the simple past and misusing the simple past for the present prefect. The transfer error might occur due to the narrative use in German *Perfekt* and no narrative use in English present perfect;

2) misusing the present perfect for the simple present and misusing the simple present for the present prefect because of the interchangeable use of *Präsens* and *Perfekt* for a persistent situation or event in German and the use of the perfect of persistent situation in English;

3) misusing the simple future for the simple present, which might be caused by the different uses of the simple present for the future time reference in German and English;

4) misusing the progressive aspect for the simple aspect and misusing the simple aspect for the progressive aspect, which might occur due to the fully grammaticalized English progressive, whereas the German progressive is optional, stylistic, variant with several lexical and partly grammaticalized options.

A high possibility of hypercorrection among German learners of English with C1 proficiency level is evident in the higher numbers of using simple past for present perfect, using the simple present for the present perfect, using the progressive aspect for the simple aspect and using the simple future for the simple present than the opposition predicated by German English comparisons.

The parallel forms with different meanings and uses of tenses and aspects in German and English lead to these transfer errors, such as overextension of analogy and transfer of structure in German learner English.

### 8.1.3 The findings of the experiment/survey

The GJT about the Chinese students', the German students' and English native speakers' judgments on the English present perfect, simple past, present progressive and simple present shows that both groups of learners at C1

proficiency level do not acquire complete knowledge in the use of present perfect, simple past and present progressive, as their judgments are significantly different from the native speakers', but the fact that there is no significant difference in judging simple present indicates that they have a good command of simple present. Both groups don't pinpoint the following errors well: ungrammatical use of present perfect for simple past, ungrammatical use of simple past for simple present, and ungrammatical use of *being* + n.

Among all the significant differences in grammaticality judgments between the two groups, the Chinese students underperform in judging grammatical present perfect, ungrammatical use of *being* + n., grammatical use of present progressive and ungrammatical use of simple present for simple past, while the German students underperform in judging ungrammatical use of present perfect for simple past, ungrammatical use of simple past for present perfect, and ungrammatical use of present progressive for simple present. About 20% variance in judging the ungrammatical use of present perfect for simple past, the grammatical use of present perfect, and the ungrammatical use of *being* + n. can be explained by L1. The significant differences between the Chinese and German students and large effect sizes shown by high $R^2_{adj}$ values reflect the L1 influence when Chinese and German students acquire English tenses and aspects.

The result of the picture description task demonstrates that the English native speakers tend to describe the scene in the simple aspect rather than the progressive aspect. Only about 20% of them choose the progressive aspect when the scenes in the picture allow this. However, both groups of learners use the progressive aspect much more frequently (about two to three times higher) than the English native speakers. The striking difference indicates the learners' high tendency towards overusing the progressive aspect, no matter whether their L1 is Chinese or German.

The logistic regression results of the Chinese participants' responses on ungrammatical use of *being + n.* prove that there is a positive correlation between L1 transfer and the learners' perceptions of markedness and similarity. The logistic regression results of the German participants' responses on ungrammatical use of present perfect for simple past show a negative correlation between L1 transfer and the learners' perceptions of markedness

and similarity.

## 8.2 Contribution to second language acquisition and learner corpora research

The comprehensive and concise comparisons of tense and aspect in Chinese, German and English not only provide an insight on the typologically common and unique features in tense and aspect in these three languages, but also establish a good theoretical foundation for analyzing the learner English with L1 Chinese and with L1 German.

Although there are many studies on learner interlanguage, which are reviewed in the previous chapters, this is one of the most systematic and comprehensive studies on learner English with L1 Chinese and with L1 German in the grammatical domain of tense and aspect. It is based on a 4.5-million-word Learner English corpus (ICLE) and a comparable 0.3-million-word native English corpus (LOCNESS). It analyses and produces two complete lists of errors in tense and aspect by Chinese learners of English and German learners of English, and it points out instances of overuse and underuse, prominent errors, intralingual and transfer errors with L1 transfer explanations. With comparisons of Chinese learner English and German learner English, it identifies L1-specific features and the common features between the two leaner Englishes, potentially serving as a starting point for discovering universal features among learner Englishes with different native languages. All these make a contribution to second language acquisition and learner corpus research.

The experiment/survey proves the significant differences between two learner groups and native speakers of English and provides strong evidence for L1 transfer. Meanwhile, it uses the learners' perceptions of similarity and markedness instead of simply theoretical grammar to find out the correlation between L1 transfer and learners' perceptions' of similarity and markedness. This completely innovative research idea inspired by Kellerman (1977)'s more precise way of defining markedness improves the preciseness of L1 transfer research.

## 8.3 Messages for pedagogical practice

The research findings send some clear messages for pedagogical practice as well. The error lists, prominent errors, intralingual and transfer errors, overuse and underuse in Chinese learner English and German learner English should gain attention from English language teachers, authors of teaching materials, and researchers on second language acquisition. Exercises can be designed to help the learners to avoid or correct these errors. Among the Chinese students, the English teacher should specifically raise the awareness of tenses, sequence of tenses rules, inflections, copular *be* in English. On the other hand, for the German students, it is crucial to point out the different functions of structurally similar tense-aspect forms in German and English. Applying the research findings from this study will make English language teaching more effective and efficient.

## 8.4 Suggestions for future research

The study shows a positive correlation between L1 transfer and learners' perceptions of similarities and markedness in the case of Chinese students, and negative correlation in the case of German students, but whether the transfer is positive or negative is not specified. Further study on this can concentrate on whether there is a correlation between L1 positive or negative transfer and perceptions of markedness and similarity. Furthermore, the future study on learners' perceptions of markedness and similarity should specify the exact target forms or structures to make the result even more precise.

Apart from similarity and markedness, there are other factors correlating with L1 transfer, which are controlled in the current study. It will be great to collect larger samples of learner Englishes and to consider all the factors constraining transfer together, including language levels, social factors, markedness, prototypicality, language distance and psychotypology and developmental factors in one study and to analyze the correlation between L1 transfer and all these factors statistically.

Moreover, language transfer study can also focus on different transfer directions such as L1 to L2, L2 to L1, L2 to L3 or L3 to L1/L2 so on so forth.

This takes the learner reality in Europe in consideration, since many language learners are multilingual with different sequences of acquiring different languages. This will make language transfer research more applicable in the practical teaching and learning situations. It will also be interesting to study the correlation between different multilingual language backgrounds and the speed of learning a new language.

English learners with L1 Chinese and with L1 German are studied in detail in this research. Future research can compare further learner Englishes with more different L1 backgrounds to discover some universal features in domain of tense and aspect in learner languages.

To conclude the whole study in a short remark:
Every people we meet, every language we learn, construct the story of us.

# Appendix

## A Occurrences of tenses and aspects in ICLE and LOCNESS

**Tense and Aspect (Occurrence)**

| | | Native English | All | Chinese | German | Bulgarian | Czech | Dutch | Finnish | French |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Tense | Present | 22878 | 294652 | 34936 | 15938 | 16912 | 16063 | 16858 | 13534 | 17227 |
| | Past | 5997 | 50088 | 3712 | 5106 | 1892 | 3981 | 4720 | 2076 | 2373 |
| | Future | 1093 | 16422 | 3094 | 689 | 892 | 515 | 1150 | 425 | 1664 |
| Aspect | Perfect | 2171 | 18433 | 1586 | 1172 | 1180 | 748 | 1362 | 1370 | 1263 |
| | Progressive | 1059 | 10681 | 1069 | 651 | 438 | 577 | 591 | 458 | 583 |
| | Perfect progressive | 50 | 581 | 62 | 45 | 36 | 37 | 35 | 20 | 43 |
| | Simple | 26688 | 331467 | 39025 | 19865 | 18042 | 19197 | 20740 | 14187 | 19375 |
| Tense and Aspect | Present perfect | 1887 | 16303 | 1468 | 852 | 1090 | 619 | 1103 | 1249 | 1133 |
| | Past perfect | 270 | 2064 | 117 | 311 | 85 | 124 | 248 | 120 | 124 |
| | Future perfect | 14 | 66 | 1 | 9 | 5 | 5 | 11 | 1 | 6 |
| | Present progressive | 879 | 9336 | 1002 | 467 | 386 | 457 | 488 | 409 | 514 |
| | Past progressive | 169 | 1183 | 64 | 171 | 34 | 118 | 93 | 40 | 61 |
| | Future progressive | 11 | 162 | 3 | 13 | 18 | 2 | 10 | 9 | 8 |
| | Present perfect progressive | 39 | 498 | 59 | 26 | 33 | 35 | 24 | 16 | 41 |
| | Past perfect progressive | 11 | 82 | 3 | 19 | 3 | 2 | 11 | 4 | 2 |
| | Future perfect progressive | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | Present simple | 20073 | 268515 | 32407 | 14593 | 15403 | 14952 | 15243 | 11860 | 15539 |
| | Past simple | 5547 | 46759 | 3528 | 4605 | 1770 | 3737 | 4368 | 1912 | 2186 |
| | Future simple | 1068 | 16193 | 3090 | 667 | 869 | 508 | 1129 | 415 | 1650 |

| | | Italian | Japanese | Norwegian | Polish | Russian | Spanish | Swedish | Tswana | Turkish |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Tense | Present | 16984 | 17526 | 17297 | 18191 | 17558 | 16597 | 23844 | 17604 | 17582 |
| | Past | 2207 | 4007 | 3181 | 1891 | 4069 | 2990 | 4006 | 2190 | 1688 |
| | Future | 497 | 735 | 897 | 688 | 759 | 674 | 1340 | 1600 | 803 |
| Aspect | Perfect | 1237 | 651 | 1479 | 958 | 1042 | 1073 | 2012 | 632 | 668 |
| | Progressive | 481 | 593 | 666 | 367 | 577 | 734 | 955 | 1358 | 583 |
| | Perfect progressive | 21 | 39 | 36 | 45 | 48 | 27 | 41 | 17 | 29 |
| | Simple | 17949 | 20985 | 19194 | 19400 | 20719 | 18427 | 26182 | 19387 | 18793 |
| Tense and Aspect | Present perfect | 1150 | 495 | 1352 | 891 | 921 | 987 | 1827 | 580 | 585 |
| | Past perfect | 86 | 155 | 120 | 66 | 120 | 86 | 173 | 49 | 81 |
| | Future perfect | 1 | 1 | 7 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 12 | 3 | 2 |
| | Present progressive | 432 | 509 | 581 | 333 | 472 | 676 | 862 | 1208 | 540 |
| | Past progressive | 49 | 77 | 77 | 30 | 100 | 55 | 87 | 87 | 40 |
| | Future progressive | 0 | 7 | 8 | 4 | 5 | 3 | 6 | 63 | 3 |
| | Present perfect progressive | 19 | 32 | 26 | 45 | 40 | 25 | 32 | 17 | 28 |
| | Past perfect progressive | 2 | 6 | 10 | 0 | 8 | 2 | 9 | 0 | 1 |
| | Future perfect progressive | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | Present simple | 15383 | 16490 | 15338 | 16922 | 16125 | 14909 | 21123 | 15799 | 16429 |
| | Past simple | 2070 | 3769 | 2974 | 1795 | 3841 | 2847 | 3737 | 2054 | 1566 |
| | Future simple | 496 | 726 | 882 | 683 | 753 | 671 | 1322 | 1534 | 798 |

## B Error analysis in Chinese learner English (a complete list)

| Chinese Learner English | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Tense and aspect | Errors | Number | Percentage |
| Future progressive | using future progressive for simple future | 2 | 66.7% |
| | wrong use of verb | 1 | 33.3% |
| | Future progressive - Sum | 3 | 100.0% |
| Past perfect | using active voice for passive voice in past perfect | 1 | 0.9% |
| | using base form for past participle, using past perfect for present perfect | 1 | 0.9% |
| | using passive voice for active voice in past perfect | 1 | 0.9% |
| | using past perfect active for simple past passive | 1 | 0.9% |
| | using past perfect for present perfect | 48 | 41.0% |
| | using past perfect for simple past | 10 | 8.5% |
| | using past perfect for simple present | 1 | 0.9% |
| | using past perfect passive for present perfect active | 1 | 0.9% |
| | Past perfect - Sum | 64 | 54.7% |
| Past perfect progressive | using past perfect progressive for present perfect | 1 | 33.3% |
| | Past perfect progressive - Sum | 1 | 33.3% |
| Past progressive | *being* + n. | 1 | 1.6% |
| | subject verb disagreement | 5 | 7.8% |
| | using active voice for passive voice in past progressive | 3 | 4.7% |
| | using base form for past participle | 1 | 1.6% |
| | using past progressive active for simple past passive | 1 | 1.6% |
| | using past progressive for *-ing* participle | 1 | 1.6% |
| | using past progressive for present perfect progressive | 1 | 1.6% |
| | using past progressive for present progressive | 6 | 9.4% |
| | using past progressive for simple past | 2 | 3.1% |
| | using past progressive for simple present | 1 | 1.6% |
| | wrong use of verb | 1 | 1.6% |
| | Past progressive - Sum | 23 | 35.9% |
| Present perfect | *become* | 1 | 0.1% |
| | incorrect spelling and/or morphological inflection of past participle | 25 | 1.7% |
| | subject verb disagreement | 90 | 6.1% |
| | subject verb disagreement, incorrect spelling of past participle | 1 | 0.1% |
| | subject verb disagreement, using active voice for passive voice in present perfect | 1 | 0.1% |
| | subject verb disagreement, using base form for past participle | 1 | 0.1% |
| | subject verb disagreement, using passive voice for active voice in present perfect | 2 | 0.1% |
| | subject verb disagreement, using present perfect for simple present | 3 | 0.2% |
| | subject verb disagreement, using present perfect passive for simple past active | 1 | 0.1% |
| | using active voice for passive voice in present perfect | 12 | 0.8% |
| | using *-ing* participle for past participle | 1 | 0.1% |
| | using *-ing* participle of be for past participle | 2 | 0.1% |
| | using passive voice for active voice in present perfect | 34 | 2.3% |
| | using present perfect active for simple past passive | 2 | 0.1% |
| | using present perfect active for simple present passive | 2 | 0.1% |
| | using present perfect for past perfect | 2 | 0.1% |
| | using present perfect for present perfect progressive | 1 | 0.1% |
| | using present perfect for simple future/simple present | 1 | 0.1% |
| | using present perfect for simple past | 13 | 0.9% |
| | using present perfect for simple past/present | 1 | 0.1% |
| | using present perfect for simple present | 19 | 1.3% |
| | using present perfect passive for past perfect active | 1 | 0.1% |
| | using present singular verb form for past participle | 1 | 0.1% |
| | using singular form for infinitive form | 1 | 0.1% |
| | Present perfect - Sum | 218 | 14.9% |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Present perfect progressive | *being* + n. | 1 | 1.7% |
| | no present perfect progressive passive | 2 | 3.4% |
| | subject verb disagreement | 4 | 6.8% |
| | using -*ing* participle for past participle in passive voice | 2 | 3.4% |
| | using present perfect progressive for present perfect | 2 | 3.4% |
| | using present perfect progressive in habitualness | 1 | 1.7% |
| | using present perfect progressive in process verb | 1 | 1.7% |
| | using present perfect progressive in stative verb | 3 | 5.1% |
| | Present perfect progressive - Sum | 16 | 27.1% |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Present progressive | *become* | 1 | 0.1% |
| | *being* + adj./v-*ed* | 2 | 0.2% |
| | *being* + verb base form | 1 | 0.1% |
| | *being* + n. | 7 | 0.7% |
| | *being* + v-*ing* | 2 | 0.2% |
| | incorrect spelling of past participle | 1 | 0.1% |
| | missing *be* in *be going to* | 1 | 0.1% |
| | subject verb disagreement | 38 | 3.8% |
| | subject verb disagreement, using present progressive for simple present | 3 | 0.3% |
| | using active voice for passive voice in present progressive | 10 | 1.0% |
| | using base form for past participle | 1 | 0.1% |
| | using *going to + v.* for -*ing* participle | 2 | 0.2% |
| | using passive voice for active voice in present progressive | 2 | 0.2% |
| | using present progressive for past progressive | 1 | 0.1% |
| | using present progressive active for simple present passive | 6 | 0.6% |
| | using present progressive for -*ing* participle | 2 | 0.2% |
| | using present progressive for present perfect | 3 | 0.3% |
| | using present progressive for present perfect progressive | 3 | 0.3% |
| | using present progressive for simple future | 3 | 0.3% |
| | using present progressive for simple future/simple past | 1 | 0.1% |
| | using present progressive for simple present | 136 | 13.6% |
| | using present progressive with incompatible stative verbs | 25 | 2.5% |
| | using present progressive passive for simple present active | 1 | 0.1% |
| | using v-*ing* for infinitive as a predicative expression in SVC sentence | 31 | 3.1% |
| | *will be going to* | 1 | 0.1% |
| | *will going to* | 2 | 0.2% |
| | wrong use of verb | 9 | 0.9% |
| | Present progressive - Sum | 295 | 29.4% |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Simple future | incorrect spelling of infinitive | 6 | 0.2% |
| | incorrect spelling and/or morphological inflection of past participle | 6 | 0.2% |
| | missing *be* after *will* in future progressive | 1 | 0.0% |
| | missing *be* after *will* in simple future passive | 6 | 0.2% |
| | missing *be* after *will* in *will + be + adj*. | 24 | 0.8% |
| | missing *be* after *will* in *will + be + n.* | 2 | 0.1% |
| | missing *be* after *will* in *will + be + prep.* | 2 | 0.1% |
| | missing verb after *will* | 4 | 0.1% |
| | unnecessary *be* in *will + v*. as *will + be + v.* | 23 | 0.7% |
| | using active voice for passive voice in simple future | 3 | 0.1% |
| | using adjective for verb infinitive form after *will* | 2 | 0.1% |
| | using base form for past participle in simple future passive | 5 | 0.2% |
| | using *-ing* participle for verb infinitive form after *will* | 4 | 0.1% |
| | using noun for verb infinitive form after *will* | 15 | 0.5% |
| | using passive voice for active voice in simple future | 36 | 1.2% |
| | using past participle for infinitive form after *will* | 13 | 0.4% |
| | using present singular form for infinitive form after *will* | 4 | 0.1% |
| | using present singular form for infinitive form after *will*, using active voice for passive voice in simple future | 1 | 0.0% |
| | using simple future for simple present | 7 | 0.2% |
| | using *there will have* | 2 | 0.1% |
| | using *will be going to* | 1 | 0.0% |
| | using *will be to + v.* for simple future | 1 | 0.0% |
| | using *will* for *would* | 4 | 0.1% |
| | using *will* for *would* in past tense | 4 | 0.1% |
| | using *will* for *would* in subordinate clause with main verb in past tense | 21 | 0.7% |
| | using *will like to* for *would like to* | 1 | 0.0% |
| | *will + to* | 3 | 0.1% |
| | wrong use of verbs | 5 | 0.2% |
| | wrong use of verb *effect* (*affect*) | 7 | 0.2% |
| | Simple future - Sum | 213 | 6.9% |
| Simple past | *if* clause | 2 | 0.1% |
| | incorrect spelling and/or morphological inflection of verbs in simple past | 18 | 0.5% |
| | missing *be* in passive voice after modal verb | 15 | 0.4% |
| | past tense in main clause but present tense in subordinate clause | 379 | 10.7% |
| | subject verb disagreement | 21 | 0.6% |
| | subject verb disagreement, using passive voice for active voice in simple past | 1 | 0.0% |
| | subject verb disagreement, using simple past for simple present | 4 | 0.1% |
| | using active voice for passive voice in simple past | 20 | 0.6% |
| | using *be* for *been*, using past perfect for present perfect | 1 | 0.0% |
| | using *did not* for *would not* | 1 | 0.0% |
| | using n-*ed* for simple past form | 2 | 0.1% |
| | using passive voice for active voice in simple past | 24 | 0.7% |
| | using simple past active for simple present passive | 46 | 1.3% |
| | using simple past for future in the past | 2 | 0.1% |
| | using simple past for past perfect | 1 | 0.0% |
| | using simple past for past progressive | 1 | 0.0% |
| | using simple past for present perfect | 50 | 1.4% |
| | using simple past for simple future | 7 | 0.2% |
| | using simple past for simple future/present | 1 | 0.0% |
| | using simple past for simple present | 335 | 9.5% |
| | using simple past for simple present, present tense in main clause but past tense in subordinate clause | 4 | 0.1% |
| | using simple past form for adj. | 1 | 0.0% |
| | using simple past form for infinitive form | 156 | 4.4% |
| | using simple past form for *-ing* participle | 16 | 0.5% |
| | using simple past passive for present perfect active | 5 | 0.1% |
| | using simple past passive for simple present active | 2 | 0.1% |
| | using *will* for *would* in subordinate clause | 1 | 0.0% |
| | *was/were + became* | 3 | 0.1% |
| | *was/were* + base form | 6 | 0.2% |
| | Simple past - Sum | 1125 | 31.9% |

| | | Random sample | Original | Percentage |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *is/are/be* + base form | 17 | 548 | 1.7% |
| | incorrect spelling and/or morphological inflection of verbs in simple present | 7 | 225 | 0.7% |
| | missing the auxiliary verb | 1 | 32 | 0.1% |
| | subject verb disagreement | 91 | 2931 | 9.0% |
| | *there have* | 1 | 32 | 0.1% |
| | using *is* + *n.* for v. | 1 | 32 | 0.1% |
| | using passive voice for active voice in simple present | 2 | 64 | 0.2% |
| | using prep. as v. | 1 | 32 | 0.1% |
| Simple present | using simple present (third person singular) for infinitive after modal verb | 7 | 225 | 0.7% |
| | using simple present (third person singular) for bare infinitive | 1 | 32 | 0.1% |
| | using base form for *to* infinitive | 8 | 258 | 0.8% |
| | using base form for *-ing* participle | 14 | 451 | 1.4% |
| | using base form/simple present (third person singular) for past participle | 6 | 193 | 0.6% |
| | using simple present for present perfect | 3 | 97 | 0.3% |
| | using simple present for present progressive | 2 | 64 | 0.2% |
| | using simple present for simple past | 4 | 129 | 0.4% |
| | using base form for noun form | 4 | 129 | 0.4% |
| | Simple present - Sum (random sample 1006) | 170 | | 16.9% |
| | Simple present - Sum (multiplied based on original number 32407) | | 5476 | 16.9% |
| Sum Total | | | 7434 | 17.8% |

## C Questionnaire

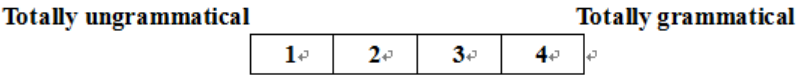
This is a study about language acquisition conducted by a Ph.D. student (Jingying Li) from University of Freiburg. Your participation will contribute to the study on acquisition of tense and aspect in English as a foreign language/second language.

The study contains three parts: grammaticality judgment test, picture description (blank filling), and questions on language background. Please give your spontaneous responses without too much thinking after reading the sentences or questions. It will take about 15 minutes to finish the survey.

Your personal data will be kept confidential. Thank you so much for your participation.

**Part I Grammaticality Judgment Test**

Please rate the grammaticality of the following 40 sentences based on a 4-point Likert scale. The 4-point scale ranges from 1 denoting 'Totally Ungrammatical' to 4 denoting 'Totally Grammatical'.




(1- totally ungrammatical; 2 - probably ungrammatical; 3 - probably grammatical; 4 - totally grammatical )

| **Sentences** | **1** | **2** | **3** | **4** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. They usually do some sports at weekends. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 2. You are being polite. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 3. He often watch football matches after dinner. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 4. Sharon is always doing clumsy dance moves. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 5. They are doing exercises now. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 6. He was good at singing in his childhood. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 7. He plays piano every day. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 8. She will fly to Beijing tomorrow. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 9. I have played tennis (before). | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 10. Students should consider their financial situation before they spent money. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 11. Andrew is the teacher which I mentioned to you yesterday. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 12. Maria has studied physics since October. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 13. They need to focus on their studies as they are still being students. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 14. Every time when I have arrived in the middle of the street, suddenly a car seems to come out of nowhere. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 15. In fact, many students have believed that they should make more efforts. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 16. In 2017, the employment rate reach a higher level. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 17. This is the book who I will recommend to you. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 18. Andy is going to the university by train every day. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 19. My father has often played football last April. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 20. She always want to receive a present from Santa Claus. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 21. John is a good student who works very hard. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 22. 70% of students are holding credit cards. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 23. They did not see him since last Friday. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 24. Alisa has a cat that name is Ketty. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 25. I found the bag that you lost yesterday. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 26. Mary like hiking very much. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 27. The rubbish we produced every day is increasing. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 28. The development of information technology was rapid in the recent years. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 29. Mary is writing her thesis in her room. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 30. The student changed his mind, work harder and then finally did well in his academic studies. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 31. This is the book which you want to have. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 32. She found her lost book on Tuesday. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 33. She likes to eat ice-cream in winter. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 34. Lisa was at home yesterday. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 35. Mark came to the UK in 2008. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 36. The high cost is being a disadvantage of that project. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 37. Jack has written an essay on environmental | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

protection several days ago.

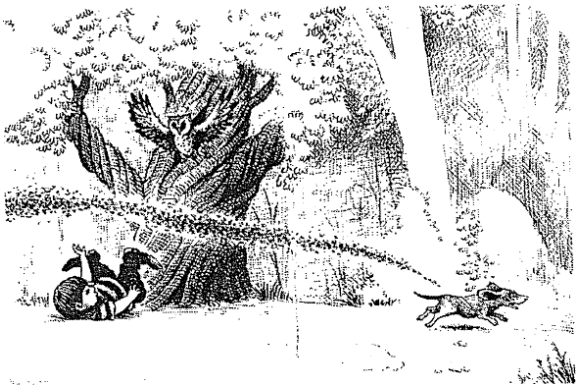
| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 38. I have breakfast at home every day. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 39. They have lived here for five years. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 40. The president has just resigned. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

**Part II. Picture Description**

Please use the given verbs in proper forms to describe the pictures and write your answers in the text fields.

Picture 1.

Picture 2.



*Frog, where are you?* (Mayer 1969)

There once was a boy who had a dog.

1. The boy was on the tree and the dog _____ at some bees in a beehive (bark).

2. The boy _____ from the tree (fall). The dog _____ as fast as he could (run), because the bees _____ him (chase).

**Part III. Questions on language background**

1. Your native language: _____
2. Your first foreign language: _____
3. Your second foreign language (if you have one): _____
4. Your English proficiency level: _____

Abiturnote (English): _____

5. Your major: _____
6. Your education: _____

e.g. the first year of Bachelor/Master/Ph.D study at University of Freiburg (university name)

7. Is English tense and aspect special compared to your native language? ( )

1– not special at all; 2 – not very special; 3 – special; 4 – very special

8. Do you think your native language is _____ from/to English? ( )

1– very different; 2 – different; 3 – similar; 4 – very similar

## D Questionnaire - Grammaticality judgment test design

**Present perfect**

Ungrammatical

- used for simple past

1. Jack has written an essay on environmental protection several days ago.
2. My father has often played football last April.

- used for simple present

3. In fact, many students have believed that they should make more efforts.
4. Every time when I have arrived in the middle of the street, suddenly a car seems to come out of nowhere.

Grammatical

5. They have lived here for five years.
6. Maria has studied physics since October.
7. The president has just resigned.
8. I have played tennis (before).

**Simple past**

Ungrammatical

- used for present perfect

9. They did not see him since last Friday.
10. The development of information technology was rapid in the recent years.

- used for simple present

11. Students should consider their financial situation before they spent money.
12. The rubbish we produced everyday is increasing.

Grammatical

13. Lisa was at home yesterday.
14. Mark came to the UK in 2008.
15. She found her lost book on Tuesday.
16. He was good at singing in his childhood.

**Present progressive**

Ungrammatical

- being +n.

17. They need to focus on their studies as they are still being students.
18. The high cost is being a disadvantage of that project.

- used for simple present

19. 70% students are holding credit cards.
20. Andy is going to the university by train every day.

Grammatical

21. They are doing exercises now.
22. You are being polite.
23. Sharon is always doing clumsy dance moves.
24. Mary is writing her thesis in her room.

**Simple present**

Ungrammatical

- used for simple past

25. The student changed his mind, work harder and then finally did well in his academic studies.
26. In 2017, the employment rate reach a higher level.

Grammatical

27. I have breakfast at home every day.
28. They usually do some sports at weekends.

**Distracters**

Ungrammatical

29. Mary like hiking very much.
30. He often watch football matches after dinner.
31. She always want to receive a present from Santa Claus.
32. This is the book who I will recommend to you.
33. Andrew is the teacher which I mentioned to you yesterday.
34. Alisa has a cat that name is Ketty.

Grammatical

35. He plays piano every day.
36. She likes to eat ice-cream in winter.
37. She will fly to Beijing tomorrow.
38. John is a good student who works very hard.
39. I found the bag that you lost yesterday.
40. This is the book which you want to have.

# E Descriptive data of GJT results

**Descriptives**

| | | N | Mean | Std. Deviation | Std. Error | 95% Lower Boun | 95% Upper Boun | Minimum | Maximum |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Ungrammatical.presentperfect | L1 - Chinese | 57 | 7.93 | 2.54 | 0.34 | 7.26 | 8.60 | 4.0 | 15.0 |
| | L1 - German | 51 | 8.43 | 2.17 | 0.30 | 7.82 | 9.04 | 4.0 | 16.0 |
| | L1 - English | 65 | 5.83 | 2.01 | 0.25 | 5.33 | 6.33 | 4.0 | 12.0 |
| | Total | 173 | 7.29 | 2.51 | 0.19 | 6.91 | 7.67 | 4.0 | 16.0 |
| Ung.presentperfect_for_simplepast | L1 - Chinese | 57 | 3.98 | 1.74 | 0.23 | 3.52 | 4.44 | 2.0 | 8.0 |
| | L1 - German | 51 | 4.90 | 1.57 | 0.22 | 4.46 | 5.34 | 2.0 | 8.0 |
| | L1 - English | 65 | 2.85 | 1.09 | 0.14 | 2.58 | 3.12 | 2.0 | 6.0 |
| | Total | 173 | 3.83 | 1.69 | 0.13 | 3.57 | 4.08 | 2.0 | 8.0 |
| Ung.presentperfect_for_simplepresent | L1 - Chinese | 57 | 3.95 | 1.46 | 0.19 | 3.56 | 4.33 | 2.0 | 8.0 |
| | L1 - German | 51 | 3.53 | 1.29 | 0.18 | 3.17 | 3.89 | 2.0 | 8.0 |
| | L1 - English | 65 | 2.98 | 1.24 | 0.15 | 2.68 | 3.29 | 2.0 | 6.0 |
| | Total | 173 | 3.46 | 1.38 | 0.11 | 3.25 | 3.67 | 2.0 | 8.0 |
| Grammatical.presentperfect | L1 - Chinese | 57 | 11.86 | 2.81 | 0.37 | 11.11 | 12.61 | 5.0 | 16.0 |
| | L1 - German | 51 | 12.98 | 1.92 | 0.27 | 12.44 | 13.52 | 9.0 | 16.0 |
| | L1 - English | 65 | 14.48 | 1.62 | 0.20 | 14.08 | 14.88 | 10.0 | 16.0 |
| | Total | 173 | 13.17 | 2.42 | 0.18 | 12.81 | 13.54 | 5.0 | 16.0 |
| Ungrammatical.simplepast | L1 - Chinese | 57 | 8.72 | 2.85 | 0.38 | 7.96 | 9.47 | 4.0 | 14.0 |
| | L1 - German | 51 | 9.01 | 2.23 | 0.31 | 8.38 | 9.64 | 5.0 | 13.5 |
| | L1 - English | 65 | 7.22 | 2.61 | 0.32 | 6.57 | 7.86 | 4.0 | 15.0 |
| | Total | 173 | 8.24 | 2.69 | 0.20 | 7.84 | 8.64 | 4.0 | 15.0 |
| Ung.simplepast_for_presentperfect | L1 - Chinese | 57 | 3.93 | 1.70 | 0.23 | 3.48 | 4.38 | 2.0 | 8.0 |
| | L1 - German | 51 | 4.92 | 1.49 | 0.21 | 4.50 | 5.34 | 2.0 | 8.0 |
| | L1 - English | 65 | 4.08 | 1.65 | 0.20 | 3.67 | 4.49 | 2.0 | 8.0 |
| | Total | 173 | 4.28 | 1.67 | 0.13 | 4.03 | 4.53 | 2.0 | 8.0 |
| Ung.simplepast_for_simplepresent | L1 - Chinese | 57 | 4.79 | 1.86 | 0.25 | 4.30 | 5.28 | 2.0 | 8.0 |
| | L1 - German | 51 | 4.09 | 1.41 | 0.20 | 3.69 | 4.48 | 2.0 | 7.0 |
| | L1 - English | 65 | 3.14 | 1.40 | 0.17 | 2.79 | 3.49 | 2.0 | 8.0 |
| | Total | 173 | 3.96 | 1.71 | 0.13 | 3.71 | 4.22 | 2.0 | 8.0 |
| Grammatical.simplepast | L1 - Chinese | 57 | 12.96 | 2.96 | 0.39 | 12.18 | 13.75 | 4.0 | 16.0 |
| | L1 - German | 51 | 13.67 | 2.02 | 0.28 | 13.10 | 14.23 | 6.0 | 16.0 |
| | L1 - English | 65 | 14.31 | 1.79 | 0.22 | 13.86 | 14.75 | 8.0 | 16.0 |
| | Total | 173 | 13.68 | 2.35 | 0.18 | 13.32 | 14.03 | 4.0 | 16.0 |
| Ungrammatical.presentprogressive | L1 - Chinese | 57 | 9.11 | 2.17 | 0.29 | 8.53 | 9.68 | 4.0 | 14.0 |
| | L1 - German | 51 | 9.01 | 2.07 | 0.29 | 8.43 | 9.59 | 4.0 | 13.0 |
| | L1 - English | 65 | 7.75 | 2.38 | 0.30 | 7.16 | 8.34 | 4.0 | 14.0 |
| | Total | 173 | 8.57 | 2.30 | 0.17 | 8.22 | 8.91 | 4.0 | 14.0 |
| Ung.being_n | L1 - Chinese | 57 | 4.84 | 1.73 | 0.23 | 4.38 | 5.30 | 2.0 | 8.0 |
| | L1 - German | 51 | 3.77 | 1.21 | 0.17 | 3.44 | 4.11 | 2.0 | 7.0 |
| | L1 - English | 65 | 2.77 | 1.10 | 0.14 | 2.50 | 3.04 | 2.0 | 6.0 |
| | Total | 173 | 3.75 | 1.61 | 0.12 | 3.51 | 3.99 | 2.0 | 8.0 |
| Ung.presentprogressive_for_simplepresent | L1 - Chinese | 57 | 4.26 | 1.41 | 0.19 | 3.89 | 4.64 | 2.0 | 7.0 |
| | L1 - German | 51 | 5.24 | 1.54 | 0.22 | 4.80 | 5.67 | 2.0 | 8.0 |
| | L1 - English | 65 | 4.98 | 1.69 | 0.21 | 4.57 | 5.40 | 2.0 | 8.0 |
| | Total | 173 | 4.82 | 1.60 | 0.12 | 4.58 | 5.06 | 2.0 | 8.0 |
| Grammatical.presentprogressive | L1 - Chinese | 57 | 11.86 | 2.36 | 0.31 | 11.23 | 12.49 | 6.0 | 16.0 |
| | L1 - German | 51 | 13.25 | 2.22 | 0.31 | 12.62 | 13.87 | 6.0 | 16.0 |
| | L1 - English | 65 | 13.71 | 2.03 | 0.25 | 13.20 | 14.21 | 7.0 | 16.0 |
| | Total | 173 | 12.96 | 2.33 | 0.18 | 12.61 | 13.31 | 6.0 | 16.0 |
| Ungrammatical.simplepresent | L1 - Chinese | 57 | 3.67 | 1.55 | 0.21 | 3.26 | 4.08 | 2.0 | 8.0 |
| | L1 - German | 51 | 2.71 | 1.01 | 0.14 | 2.42 | 2.99 | 2.0 | 5.0 |
| | L1 - English | 65 | 3.17 | 1.27 | 0.16 | 2.85 | 3.48 | 2.0 | 6.0 |
| | Total | 173 | 3.20 | 1.35 | 0.10 | 2.99 | 3.40 | 2.0 | 8.0 |
| Grammatical.simplepresent | L1 - Chinese | 57 | 6.46 | 1.68 | 0.22 | 6.01 | 6.90 | 2.0 | 8.0 |
| | L1 - German | 51 | 6.16 | 1.36 | 0.19 | 5.77 | 6.54 | 3.0 | 8.0 |
| | L1 - English | 65 | 6.49 | 1.12 | 0.14 | 6.21 | 6.77 | 3.0 | 8.0 |
| | Total | 173 | 6.38 | 1.40 | 0.11 | 6.17 | 6.59 | 2.0 | 8.0 |

## F Test of homogeneity of variances in GJT results

**Test of Homogeneity of Variances**

| | | Levene Statistic | df1 | df2 | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Ungrammatical.presentperfect | Based on Mean | 1.148 | 2 | 170.000 | 0.320 |
| | Based on Median | 0.980 | 2 | 170.000 | 0.378 |
| | Based on Median and with adjusted df | 0.980 | 2 | 168.383 | 0.378 |
| | Based on trimmed mean | 1.253 | 2 | 170.000 | 0.288 |
| Ung.presentperfect_for_simplepast | Based on Mean | 11.647 | 2 | 170.000 | 0.000 |
| | Based on Median | 4.946 | 2 | 170.000 | 0.008 |
| | Based on Median and with adjusted df | 4.946 | 2 | 155.203 | 0.008 |
| | Based on trimmed mean | 11.293 | 2 | 170.000 | 0.000 |
| Ung.presentperfect_for_simplepresent | Based on Mean | 0.453 | 2 | 170.000 | 0.637 |
| | Based on Median | 0.470 | 2 | 170.000 | 0.626 |
| | Based on Median and with adjusted df | 0.470 | 2 | 157.187 | 0.626 |
| | Based on trimmed mean | 0.646 | 2 | 170.000 | 0.525 |
| Grammatical.presentperfect | Based on Mean | 7.933 | 2 | 170.000 | 0.001 |
| | Based on Median | 7.248 | 2 | 170.000 | 0.001 |
| | Based on Median and with adjusted df | 7.248 | 2 | 148.022 | 0.001 |
| | Based on trimmed mean | 7.358 | 2 | 170.000 | 0.001 |
| Ungrammatical.simplepast | Based on Mean | 2.429 | 2 | 170.000 | 0.091 |
| | Based on Median | 2.044 | 2 | 170.000 | 0.133 |
| | Based on Median and with adjusted df | 2.044 | 2 | 165.505 | 0.133 |
| | Based on trimmed mean | 2.405 | 2 | 170.000 | 0.093 |
| Ung.simplepast_for_presentperfect | Based on Mean | 1.681 | 2 | 170.000 | 0.189 |
| | Based on Median | 1.827 | 2 | 170.000 | 0.164 |
| | Based on Median and with adjusted df | 1.827 | 2 | 167.106 | 0.164 |
| | Based on trimmed mean | 1.652 | 2 | 170.000 | 0.195 |
| Ung.simplepast_for_simplepresent | Based on Mean | 5.325 | 2 | 170.000 | 0.006 |
| | Based on Median | 5.445 | 2 | 170.000 | 0.005 |
| | Based on Median and with adjusted df | 5.445 | 2 | 158.268 | 0.005 |
| | Based on trimmed mean | 5.951 | 2 | 170.000 | 0.003 |
| Grammatical.simplepast | Based on Mean | 6.429 | 2 | 170.000 | 0.002 |
| | Based on Median | 4.777 | 2 | 170.000 | 0.010 |
| | Based on Median and with adjusted df | 4.777 | 2 | 137.397 | 0.010 |
| | Based on trimmed mean | 6.064 | 2 | 170.000 | 0.003 |
| Ungrammatical.presentprogressive | Based on Mean | 0.995 | 2 | 170.000 | 0.372 |
| | Based on Median | 0.562 | 2 | 170.000 | 0.571 |
| | Based on Median and with adjusted df | 0.562 | 2 | 161.557 | 0.571 |
| | Based on trimmed mean | 0.918 | 2 | 170.000 | 0.401 |
| Ung.being_n | Based on Mean | 8.817 | 2 | 170.000 | 0.000 |
| | Based on Median | 7.271 | 2 | 170.000 | 0.001 |
| | Based on Median and with adjusted df | 7.271 | 2 | 163.486 | 0.001 |
| | Based on trimmed mean | 8.982 | 2 | 170.000 | 0.000 |
| Ung.presentprogressive_for_simplepresent | Based on Mean | 0.390 | 2 | 170.000 | 0.678 |
| | Based on Median | 0.459 | 2 | 170.000 | 0.633 |
| | Based on Median and with adjusted df | 0.459 | 2 | 169.930 | 0.633 |
| | Based on trimmed mean | 0.380 | 2 | 170.000 | 0.684 |
| Grammatical.presentprogressive | Based on Mean | 0.479 | 2 | 170.000 | 0.620 |
| | Based on Median | 0.672 | 2 | 170.000 | 0.512 |
| | Based on Median and with adjusted df | 0.672 | 2 | 168.846 | 0.512 |
| | Based on trimmed mean | 0.599 | 2 | 170.000 | 0.551 |
| Ungrammatical.simplepresent | Based on Mean | 6.188 | 2 | 170.000 | 0.003 |
| | Based on Median | 6.211 | 2 | 170.000 | 0.002 |
| | Based on Median and with adjusted df | 6.211 | 2 | 152.637 | 0.003 |
| | Based on trimmed mean | 6.493 | 2 | 170.000 | 0.002 |
| Grammatical.simplepresent | Based on Mean | 6.895 | 2 | 170.000 | 0.001 |
| | Based on Median | 2.960 | 2 | 170.000 | 0.055 |
| | Based on Median and with adjusted df | 2.960 | 2 | 155.168 | 0.055 |
| | Based on trimmed mean | 5.679 | 2 | 170.000 | 0.004 |

## G ANOVA test results of GJT

**ANOVA**

| | | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Ungrammatical.presentperfect | Between Groups | 228.182 | 2 | 114.091 | 22.622 | 0.000 |
| | Within Groups | 857.368 | 170 | 5.043 | | |
| | Total | 1085.549 | 172 | | | |
| Ung.presentperfect_for_simplepast | Between Groups | 122.844 | 2 | 61.422 | 28.378 | 0.000 |
| | Within Groups | 367.954 | 170 | 2.164 | | |
| | Total | 490.798 | 172 | | | |
| Ung.presentperfect_for_simplepresent | Between Groups | 28.473 | 2 | 14.237 | 8.053 | 0.000 |
| | Within Groups | 300.533 | 170 | 1.768 | | |
| | Total | 329.006 | 172 | | | |
| Grammatical.presentperfect | Between Groups | 210.725 | 2 | 105.362 | 22.500 | 0.000 |
| | Within Groups | 796.073 | 170 | 4.683 | | |
| | Total | 1006.798 | 172 | | | |
| Ungrammatical.simplepast | Between Groups | 111.556 | 2 | 55.778 | 8.342 | 0.000 |
| | Within Groups | 1136.738 | 170 | 6.687 | | |
| | Total | 1248.295 | 172 | | | |
| Ung.simplepast_for_presentperfect | Between Groups | 30.661 | 2 | 15.331 | 5.817 | 0.004 |
| | Within Groups | 448.021 | 170 | 2.635 | | |
| | Total | 478.682 | 172 | | | |
| Ung.simplepast_for_simplepresent | Between Groups | 83.925 | 2 | 41.963 | 17.063 | 0.000 |
| | Within Groups | 418.080 | 170 | 2.459 | | |
| | Total | 502.006 | 172 | | | |
| Grammatical.simplepast | Between Groups | 54.764 | 2 | 27.382 | 5.177 | 0.007 |
| | Within Groups | 899.109 | 170 | 5.289 | | |
| | Total | 953.873 | 172 | | | |
| Ungrammatical.presentprogressive | Between Groups | 69.493 | 2 | 34.746 | 7.043 | 0.001 |
| | Within Groups | 838.675 | 170 | 4.933 | | |
| | Total | 908.168 | 172 | | | |
| Ung.being_n | Between Groups | 130.538 | 2 | 65.269 | 34.917 | 0.000 |
| | Within Groups | 317.774 | 170 | 1.869 | | |
| | Total | 448.312 | 172 | | | |
| Ung.presentprogressive_for_simplepresent | Between Groups | 28.231 | 2 | 14.116 | 5.807 | 0.004 |
| | Within Groups | 413.214 | 170 | 2.431 | | |
| | Total | 441.445 | 172 | | | |
| Grammatical.presentprogressive | Between Groups | 109.496 | 2 | 54.748 | 11.316 | 0.000 |
| | Within Groups | 822.510 | 170 | 4.838 | | |
| | Total | 932.006 | 172 | | | |
| Ungrammatical.simplepresent | Between Groups | 24.925 | 2 | 12.462 | 7.346 | 0.001 |
| | Within Groups | 288.393 | 170 | 1.696 | | |
| | Total | 313.318 | 172 | | | |
| Grammatical.simplepresent | Between Groups | 3.689 | 2 | 1.845 | 0.947 | 0.390 |
| | Within Groups | 331.132 | 170 | 1.948 | | |
| | Total | 334.821 | 172 | | | |

## H ANOVA Post-hoc test of GJT

**Multiple Comparisons**

Gabriel

| Dependent Variable | | | Mean Difference (I-J) | Std. Error | Sig. | 95% Lower Bound | 95% Upper Bound |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Ungrammatical.present perfect | L1 - Chinese | L1 - German | -0.502 | 0.433 | 0.573 | -1.54 | 0.54 |
| | | L1 - English | 2.099* | 0.408 | 0.000 | 1.12 | 3.08 |
| | L1 - German | L1 - Chinese | 0.502 | 0.433 | 0.573 | -0.54 | 1.54 |
| | | L1 - English | 2.601* | 0.420 | 0.000 | 1.59 | 3.61 |
| | L1 - English | L1 - Chinese | -2.099* | 0.408 | 0.000 | -3.08 | -1.12 |
| | | L1 - German | -2.601* | 0.420 | 0.000 | -3.61 | -1.59 |
| Ung.presentperfect_for_simplepast | L1 - Chinese | L1 - German | -.920* | 0.284 | 0.004 | -1.60 | -0.24 |
| | | L1 - English | 1.136* | 0.267 | 0.000 | 0.49 | 1.78 |
| | L1 - German | L1 - Chinese | .920* | 0.284 | 0.004 | 0.24 | 1.60 |
| | | L1 - English | 2.056* | 0.275 | 0.000 | 1.39 | 2.72 |
| | L1 - English | L1 - Chinese | -1.136* | 0.267 | 0.000 | -1.78 | -0.49 |
| | | L1 - German | -2.056* | 0.275 | 0.000 | -2.72 | -1.39 |
| Ung.presentperfect_for_simplepresent | L1 - Chinese | L1 - German | 0.418 | 0.256 | 0.281 | -0.20 | 1.04 |
| | | L1 - English | .963* | 0.241 | 0.000 | 0.38 | 1.54 |
| | L1 - German | L1 - Chinese | -0.418 | 0.256 | 0.281 | -1.04 | 0.20 |
| | | L1 - English | 0.545 | 0.249 | 0.086 | -0.05 | 1.14 |
| | L1 - English | L1 - Chinese | -.963* | 0.241 | 0.000 | -1.54 | -0.38 |
| | | L1 - German | -0.545 | 0.249 | 0.086 | -1.14 | 0.05 |
| Grammatical.presentperfect | L1 - Chinese | L1 - German | -1.121* | 0.417 | 0.023 | -2.13 | -0.12 |
| | | L1 - English | -2.617* | 0.393 | 0.000 | -3.56 | -1.67 |
| | L1 - German | L1 - Chinese | 1.121* | 0.417 | 0.023 | 0.12 | 2.13 |
| | | L1 - English | -1.497* | 0.405 | 0.001 | -2.47 | -0.52 |
| | L1 - English | L1 - Chinese | 2.617* | 0.393 | 0.000 | 1.67 | 3.56 |
| | | L1 - German | 1.497* | 0.405 | 0.001 | 0.52 | 2.47 |
| Ungrammatical.simple past | L1 - Chinese | L1 - German | -0.2905 | 0.4984 | 0.915 | -1.492 | 0.911 |
| | | L1 - English | 1.5039* | 0.4692 | 0.005 | 0.373 | 2.634 |
| | L1 - German | L1 - Chinese | 0.2905 | 0.4984 | 0.915 | -0.911 | 1.492 |
| | | L1 - English | 1.7944* | 0.4837 | 0.001 | 0.630 | 2.958 |
| | L1 - English | L1 - Chinese | -1.5039* | 0.4692 | 0.005 | -2.634 | -0.373 |
| | | L1 - German | -1.7944* | 0.4837 | 0.001 | -2.958 | -0.630 |
| Ung.simplepast_for_presentperfect | L1 - Chinese | L1 - German | -.992* | 0.313 | 0.005 | -1.75 | -0.24 |
| | | L1 - English | -0.147 | 0.295 | 0.944 | -0.86 | 0.56 |
| | L1 - German | L1 - Chinese | .992* | 0.313 | 0.005 | 0.24 | 1.75 |
| | | L1 - English | .845* | 0.304 | 0.018 | 0.11 | 1.58 |
| | L1 - English | L1 - Chinese | 0.147 | 0.295 | 0.944 | -0.56 | 0.86 |
| | | L1 - German | -.845* | 0.304 | 0.018 | -1.58 | -0.11 |
| Ung.simplepast_for_simplepresent | L1 - Chinese | L1 - German | 0.7012 | 0.3023 | 0.063 | -0.027 | 1.430 |
| | | L1 - English | 1.6510* | 0.2846 | 0.000 | 0.965 | 2.337 |
| | L1 - German | L1 - Chinese | -0.7012 | 0.3023 | 0.063 | -1.430 | 0.027 |
| | | L1 - English | .9498* | 0.2934 | 0.004 | 0.244 | 1.656 |
| | L1 - English | L1 - Chinese | -1.6510* | 0.2846 | 0.000 | -2.337 | -0.965 |
| | | L1 - German | -.9498* | 0.2934 | 0.004 | -1.656 | -0.244 |

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Grammatical.simplepast | L1 - Chinese | L1 - German | -0.702 | 0.443 | 0.306 | -1.77 | 0.37 |
| | | L1 - English | -1.343* | 0.417 | 0.005 | -2.35 | -0.34 |
| | L1 - German | L1 - Chinese | 0.702 | 0.443 | 0.306 | -0.37 | 1.77 |
| | | L1 - English | -0.641 | 0.430 | 0.357 | -1.68 | 0.39 |
| | L1 - English | L1 - Chinese | 1.343* | 0.417 | 0.005 | 0.34 | 2.35 |
| | | L1 - German | 0.641 | 0.430 | 0.357 | -0.39 | 1.68 |
| Ungrammatical.present progressive | L1 - Chinese | L1 - German | 0.0955 | 0.4281 | 0.994 | -0.936 | 1.127 |
| | | L1 - English | 1.3514* | 0.4030 | 0.003 | 0.380 | 2.323 |
| | L1 - German | L1 - Chinese | -0.0955 | 0.4281 | 0.994 | -1.127 | 0.936 |
| | | L1 - English | 1.2560* | 0.4155 | 0.008 | 0.256 | 2.256 |
| | L1 - English | L1 - Chinese | -1.3514* | 0.4030 | 0.003 | -2.323 | -0.380 |
| | | L1 - German | -1.2560* | 0.4155 | 0.008 | -2.256 | -0.256 |
| Ung.being_n | L1 - Chinese | L1 - German | 1.0676* | 0.2635 | 0.000 | 0.433 | 1.703 |
| | | L1 - English | 2.0729* | 0.2481 | 0.000 | 1.475 | 2.671 |
| | L1 - German | L1 - Chinese | -1.0676* | 0.2635 | 0.000 | -1.703 | -0.433 |
| | | L1 - English | 1.0053* | 0.2558 | 0.000 | 0.390 | 1.621 |
| | L1 - English | L1 - Chinese | -2.0729* | 0.2481 | 0.000 | -2.671 | -1.475 |
| | | L1 - German | -1.0053* | 0.2558 | 0.000 | -1.621 | -0.390 |
| Ung.presentprogressive_for_simplepresent | L1 - Chinese | L1 - German | -.972* | 0.301 | 0.004 | -1.70 | -0.25 |
| | | L1 - English | -.721* | 0.283 | 0.034 | -1.40 | -0.04 |
| | L1 - German | L1 - Chinese | .972* | 0.301 | 0.004 | 0.25 | 1.70 |
| | | L1 - English | 0.251 | 0.292 | 0.772 | -0.45 | 0.95 |
| | L1 - English | L1 - Chinese | .721* | 0.283 | 0.034 | 0.04 | 1.40 |
| | | L1 - German | -0.251 | 0.292 | 0.772 | -0.95 | 0.45 |
| Grammatical.presentprogressive | L1 - Chinese | L1 - German | -1.3854* | 0.4240 | 0.004 | -2.407 | -0.364 |
| | | L1 - English | -1.8480* | 0.3991 | 0.000 | -2.810 | -0.886 |
| | L1 - German | L1 - Chinese | 1.3854* | 0.4240 | 0.004 | 0.364 | 2.407 |
| | | L1 - English | -0.4626 | 0.4115 | 0.596 | -1.453 | 0.527 |
| | L1 - English | L1 - Chinese | 1.8480* | 0.3991 | 0.000 | 0.886 | 2.810 |
| | | L1 - German | 0.4626 | 0.4115 | 0.596 | -0.527 | 1.453 |
| Ungrammatical.simplepresent | L1 - Chinese | L1 - German | .961* | 0.251 | 0.001 | 0.36 | 1.57 |
| | | L1 - English | 0.497 | 0.236 | 0.106 | -0.07 | 1.07 |
| | L1 - German | L1 - Chinese | -.961* | 0.251 | 0.001 | -1.57 | -0.36 |
| | | L1 - English | -0.463 | 0.244 | 0.165 | -1.05 | 0.12 |
| | L1 - English | L1 - Chinese | -0.497 | 0.236 | 0.106 | -1.07 | 0.07 |
| | | L1 - German | 0.463 | 0.244 | 0.165 | -0.12 | 1.05 |
| Grammatical.simplepresent | L1 - Chinese | L1 - German | 0.299 | 0.269 | 0.605 | -0.35 | 0.95 |
| | | L1 - English | -0.036 | 0.253 | 0.999 | -0.65 | 0.57 |
| | L1 - German | L1 - Chinese | -0.299 | 0.269 | 0.605 | -0.95 | 0.35 |
| | | L1 - English | -0.335 | 0.261 | 0.486 | -0.96 | 0.29 |
| | L1 - English | L1 - Chinese | 0.036 | 0.253 | 0.999 | -0.57 | 0.65 |
| | | L1 - German | 0.335 | 0.261 | 0.486 | -0.29 | 0.96 |

*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

## I ANOVA Adjusted R Squared values in GJT

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Dependent Variable: Ungrammatical.presentperfect

| Source | Type III Sum of | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Corrected Model | 228.182[a] | 2 | 114.091 | 22.622 | 0.000 |
| Intercept | 9374.151 | 1 | 9374.151 | 1858.719 | 0.000 |
| L1 | 228.182 | 2 | 114.091 | 22.622 | 0.000 |
| Error | 857.368 | 170 | 5.043 | | |
| Total | 10277.000 | 173 | | | |
| Corrected Total | 1085.549 | 172 | | | |

a. R Squared = .210 (Adjusted R Squared = .201)

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Dependent Variable: Ung.presentperfect_for_simplepast

| Source | Type III Sum of | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Corrected Model | 122.844[a] | 2 | 61.422 | 28.378 | 0.000 |
| Intercept | 2619.260 | 1 | 2619.260 | 1210.136 | 0.000 |
| L1 | 122.844 | 2 | 61.422 | 28.378 | 0.000 |
| Error | 367.954 | 170 | 2.164 | | |
| Total | 3024.000 | 173 | | | |
| Corrected Total | 490.798 | 172 | | | |

a. R Squared = .250 (Adjusted R Squared = .241)

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Dependent Variable: Ung.presentperfect_for_simplepresent

| Source | Type III Sum of | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Corrected Model | 28.473[a] | 2 | 14.237 | 8.053 | 0.000 |
| Intercept | 2083.146 | 1 | 2083.146 | 1178.357 | 0.000 |
| L1 | 28.473 | 2 | 14.237 | 8.053 | 0.000 |
| Error | 300.533 | 170 | 1.768 | | |
| Total | 2403.000 | 173 | | | |
| Corrected Total | 329.006 | 172 | | | |

a. R Squared = .087 (Adjusted R Squared = .076)

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Dependent Variable: Grammatical.presentperfect

| Source | Type III Sum of | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Corrected Model | 210.725[a] | 2 | 105.362 | 22.500 | 0.000 |
| Intercept | 29423.906 | 1 | 29423.906 | 6283.424 | 0.000 |
| L1 | 210.725 | 2 | 105.362 | 22.500 | 0.000 |
| Error | 796.073 | 170 | 4.683 | | |
| Total | 31029.000 | 173 | | | |
| Corrected Total | 1006.798 | 172 | | | |

a. R Squared = .209 (Adjusted R Squared = .200)

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Dependent Variable: Ungrammatical.simplepast

| Source | Type III Sum of | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Corrected Model | 111.556[a] | 2 | 55.778 | 8.342 | 0.000 |
| Intercept | 11843.758 | 1 | 11843.758 | 1771.242 | 0.000 |
| L1 | 111.556 | 2 | 55.778 | 8.342 | 0.000 |
| Error | 1136.738 | 170 | 6.687 | | |
| Total | 12994.250 | 173 | | | |
| Corrected Total | 1248.295 | 172 | | | |

a. R Squared = .089 (Adjusted R Squared = .079)

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Dependent Variable: Ung.simplepast_for_presentperfect

| Source | Type III Sum of | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Corrected Model | 30.661[a] | 2 | 15.331 | 5.817 | 0.004 |
| Intercept | 3181.444 | 1 | 3181.444 | 1207.188 | 0.000 |
| L1 | 30.661 | 2 | 15.331 | 5.817 | 0.004 |
| Error | 448.021 | 170 | 2.635 | | |
| Total | 3644.000 | 173 | | | |
| Corrected Total | 478.682 | 172 | | | |

a. R Squared = .064 (Adjusted R Squared = .053)

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Dependent Variable: Ung.simplepast_for_simplepresent

| Source | Type III Sum of | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Corrected Model | 83.925[a] | 2 | 41.963 | 17.063 | 0.000 |
| Intercept | 2748.353 | 1 | 2748.353 | 1117.536 | 0.000 |
| L1 | 83.925 | 2 | 41.963 | 17.063 | 0.000 |
| Error | 418.080 | 170 | 2.459 | | |
| Total | 3218.250 | 173 | | | |
| Corrected Total | 502.006 | 172 | | | |

a. R Squared = .167 (Adjusted R Squared = .157)

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Dependent Variable: Grammatical.simplepast

| Source | Type III Sum of | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Corrected Model | 54.764[a] | 2 | 27.382 | 5.177 | 0.007 |
| Intercept | 31902.196 | 1 | 31902.196 | 6031.940 | 0.000 |
| L1 | 54.764 | 2 | 27.382 | 5.177 | 0.007 |
| Error | 899.109 | 170 | 5.289 | | |
| Total | 33312.000 | 173 | | | |
| Corrected Total | 953.873 | 172 | | | |

a. R Squared = .057 (Adjusted R Squared = .046)

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Dependent Variable: Ungrammatical.presentprogressive

| Source | Type III Sum of | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Corrected Model | 69.493[a] | 2 | 34.746 | 7.043 | 0.001 |
| Intercept | 12737.868 | 1 | 12737.868 | 2581.974 | 0.000 |
| L1 | 69.493 | 2 | 34.746 | 7.043 | 0.001 |
| Error | 838.675 | 170 | 4.933 | | |
| Total | 13612.250 | 173 | | | |
| Corrected Total | 908.168 | 172 | | | |

a. R Squared = .077 (Adjusted R Squared = .066)

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Dependent Variable: Ung.being_n

| Source | Type III Sum of | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Corrected Model | 130.538[a] | 2 | 65.269 | 34.917 | 0.000 |
| Intercept | 2467.578 | 1 | 2467.578 | 1320.083 | 0.000 |
| L1 | 130.538 | 2 | 65.269 | 34.917 | 0.000 |
| Error | 317.774 | 170 | 1.869 | | |
| Total | 2879.250 | 173 | | | |
| Corrected Total | 448.312 | 172 | | | |

a. R Squared = .291 (Adjusted R Squared = .283)

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Dependent Variable: Ung.presentprogressive_for_simplepresent

| Source | Type III Sum of | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Corrected Model | 28.231[a] | 2 | 14.116 | 5.807 | 0.004 |
| Intercept | 3992.652 | 1 | 3992.652 | 1642.615 | 0.000 |
| L1 | 28.231 | 2 | 14.116 | 5.807 | 0.004 |
| Error | 413.214 | 170 | 2.431 | | |
| Total | 4462.000 | 173 | | | |
| Corrected Total | 441.445 | 172 | | | |

a. R Squared = .064 (Adjusted R Squared = .053)

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Dependent Variable: Grammatical.presentprogressive

| Source | Type III Sum of | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Corrected Model | 109.496[a] | 2 | 54.748 | 11.316 | 0.000 |
| Intercept | 28673.602 | 1 | 28673.602 | 5926.389 | 0.000 |
| L1 | 109.496 | 2 | 54.748 | 11.316 | 0.000 |
| Error | 822.510 | 170 | 4.838 | | |
| Total | 30000.250 | 173 | | | |
| Corrected Total | 932.006 | 172 | | | |

a. R Squared = .117 (Adjusted R Squared = .107)

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Dependent Variable: Ungrammatical.simplepresent

| Source | Type III Sum of | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Corrected Model | 24.925[a] | 2 | 12.462 | 7.346 | 0.001 |
| Intercept | 1733.002 | 1 | 1733.002 | 1021.557 | 0.000 |
| L1 | 24.925 | 2 | 12.462 | 7.346 | 0.001 |
| Error | 288.393 | 170 | 1.696 | | |
| Total | 2081.000 | 173 | | | |
| Corrected Total | 313.318 | 172 | | | |

a. R Squared = .080 (Adjusted R Squared = .069)

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Dependent Variable: Grammatical.simplepresent

| Source | Type III Sum of | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Corrected Model | 3.689[a] | 2 | 1.845 | 0.947 | 0.390 |
| Intercept | 6947.820 | 1 | 6947.820 | 3566.949 | 0.000 |
| L1 | 3.689 | 2 | 1.845 | 0.947 | 0.390 |
| Error | 331.132 | 170 | 1.948 | | |
| Total | 7380.000 | 173 | | | |
| Corrected Total | 334.821 | 172 | | | |

a. R Squared = .011 (Adjusted R Squared = -.001)

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# German summary

Die vorliegende Studie präsentiert einen korpus-basierten (ICLE / LOCNESS) Vergleich von Tempus- und Aspektgebrauch im chinesischen und deutschen Lerner-Englisch. Sie kombiniert quantitative und qualitative Analysemethoden in einem Forschungsdesign, um zu verstehen, wie der Sprachentransfer im Kontext anderer für den Lernprozess relevanter Faktoren funktioniert. Entsprechend den aktuellen Trends in der Lernerkorpusforschung ergänzen ein Experiment und eine Umfrage die Korpusanalyse.

Das letztendliche Ziel der Analyse des Sprachtransfers beim Erwerb des englisches Tempus und Aspekts besteht darin, das Phänomen selbst systematisch zu erfassen, um die sprachlichen Wechselwirkungen zwischen der Muttersprache und der / den später erlernten Sprache (n) in den Köpfen der Lernenden zu verstehen . Dies hilft dabei, den Zweitspracherwerb besser zu verstehen, und leistet so einen wertvollen Beitrag zum Zweitspracherwerb und zur Erforschung von Lernkompetenzen und indirekt natürlich auch bei der praktischen Anwendung der Forschungsergebnisse beim Lehren und Lernen von Fremdsprachen.

Die Dissertation stellt zunächst kurz das Forschungsthema, die Forschungsziele sowie die Struktur der Studie vor. Anschließend werden Transferphänomene beim Erwerb einer zweiten Sprache erörtert. Es beginnt mit der Erklärung und Darstellung von Termini und Definitionen, konzentriert sich dann auf die Erläuterung von Merkmalen unterschiedlicher Typen des Transfers und ihrer Klassifizierung. In Anlehnung an die Bedeutung des Sprachentransfers und die Geschichte relevanter theoretischer Entwicklungen werden die Zusammenhänge zwischen Sprachentransfer, Typologie, Sprachkontakt und sprachlichen Universalien diskutiert. Empirische Untersuchungen zum Sprachentransfer und aktuelle wegweisende Ergebnisse werden kurz besprochen.

Der konkrete Untersuchungsgegenstand der Forschungen, der grammatikalische Bereich von Tempus und Aspekt im Englischen, wird anschließend dargestellt. Ebenso setzt sich die vorliegende Arbeit mit

allgemeinen Theorien zu Tempus und Aspekt auseinander. Es wird die Vergleichbarkeit zwischen Englisch, Chinesisch und Deutsch diskutiert und hergestellt, dann Tempus und Aspekt im Englischen, Chinesischen und Deutschen analysiert und schließlich eine vergleichende Analyse von Chinesisch und Englisch, sowie von Deutsch und Englisch durchgeführt. Die Vergleiche werden als theoretische und grundsätzliche Voraussetzung für die Untersuchung von Transfer beim Spracherwerb betrachtet.

Die Methoden, die in früheren Forschungen zum Sprachentransfer angewendet wurden, werden überprüft und die in dieser korpusbasierten Studie verwendete Methode wird beschrieben, einschließlich einer Darstellung der vergleichbaren Korpora (ICLE und LOCNESS) und der detaillierten Erläuterung der Suchstrategien.

Der empirische Kern der Arbeit sind die Korpusbefunde zu Tempus und Aspekt in Englisch als Fremdsprache und Englisch als Muttersprache. Die Arbeit präsentiert die allgemeinen Trends von Englischlernenden auf der Grundlage von ICLE und von Muttersprachlern auf der Grundlage von LOCNESS. Anschließend werden die häufigsten Fehler, der deutschen und chinesischen Lerner analysiert und verglichen. Der Sprachvergleich erlaubt eine präzisre Darstellung der Rolle des Transfers.

Das weitere Experiment und die Umfrage, die auf einigen Ergebnissen der Korpusstudie basieren, wird dokumentiert. In dieser Studie werden ein Grammatik -Urteilstest (*Grammaticality Judgement Test*), eine Bildbeschreibungsaufgabe und allgemeine Fragen eingesetzt, um die Kenntnisse chinesischer und deutscher Studenten über das englische *present perfect, simple past, present progressive* und *simple present* zu untersuchen. Die Einflüsse von L1-Chinesisch und L1-Deutsch werden durch statistische Vergleiche der Urteile der Lernenden und der englischen Muttersprachler im *Grammaticality Judgement Test* (GJT) deutlich. In der Bildbeschreibungsaufgabe wird die bevorzugte Tempus und Aspektwahl sowohl der Lernenden als auch der Muttersprachler untersucht. Die Korrelation zwischen dem L1-Transfer und der Wahrnehmung von Ähnlichkeit und Markiertheit (*markedness*) durch die Lernenden wird statistisch getestet.

Abschließend werden alle Forschungsergebnisse zusammengefasst,

darunter die Vergleiche zwischen Englisch, Chinesisch und Deutsch, die korpusbasierte Studie und die experimentelle Erhebung. Auf dieser Grundlaage wird der allgemeine Beitrag der Arbeit zur Lerner(korpus)forschung dargestellt. Zusätzlich werden Hinweise für die pädagogische Praxis und Vorschläge für künftige Forschungen formuliert.

This book presents a corpus-based comparison of tense and aspect usage in Chinese learner English and German learner English. It combines quantitative and qualitative methods of analysis in a research design to understand how language transfer operates in the context of other factors relevant for the learning process. The corpus-based study presents the data and the general trends in learner Englishes from the *International Corpus of Learner English* (ICLE), comparing them to the *Louvain Corpus of Native English Essays* (LOCNESS), and analyzes underuse and overuse of tense-aspect forms. The learner errors, most prominent errors, intralingual errors and transfer errors, the L1-specific and universal acquisition features in Chinese learner English and German learner English are listed and explained. Comparisons between Chinese learner English and German learner English are made to understand language transfer in acquiring English tense and aspect. Based on the corpus findings, an experiment is carried out to understand Chinese students' and German students' knowledge about tense and aspect, their perspectives on different actions or situations and the statistical relationship between L1 transfer and learners' perceptions.

The research produces a comprehensive view of tense and aspect in Chinese learner English and German learner English, links the research on Chinese learner English to that on German learner English, gains some further insights about L1-specific and universal acquisition features, makes contributions to research on language transfer and second language acquisition and delivers advice for pedagogical practice.

Jingying Li received a M.A. degree in English Language and Linguistics from the University of Freiburg in 2015. From 2015 to 2020 she conducted her PhD research at the University of Freiburg. This book is a revised version of her dissertation, which she defended in February 2020.

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