

Analysis of The Use of Chinese Degree Adverbs by Indonesian Students

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Abstract. Degree adverbs are one of the important and difficult learning points in Teaching Chinese as a second language (TCSL). Commonly, Chinese degree adverbs are divided into two types and four levels. Each type and level have different collocations, semantic features, etc. According to the academic article collections in CNKI and google scholar, research on Chinese degree adverbs from the perspective of TCSL for Indonesian students is still very limited. This study discusses the use of Chinese degree Adverbs by Indonesian students. This study aims to describe the student selection of Chinese degree adverbs and to find the most frequent error types in using four commonly used comparative degree adverbs: low-level 'shaowei', medium-level 'bijiao', high-level 'geng', and extreme-level 'zui'. The approach to this study is a quantitative-qualitative method. The samples are Chinese Department students at one of the universities in Bandung city. The data was collected from two exercises. This study applies the error analysis procedure introduced by McDowell to find the most frequent error types. The result shows that the students tend to use pure degree adverbs, and the most used pure degree adverb is high-level 'hen', followed by its synonymous words 'tebie', 'feichang', 'tai', and 'shifen'. In using synonymous degree adverbs, students tend to use the first learned word. The form of exercises in the teaching material should encourage the student to use more varied degree adverbs. The most frequent error types in using four different levels of comparative degree adverbs are selection in *bijiao* word sentences and *zui* word sentences, misordering of degree adverbs, and the omission of complement 'yidianr/yixie' in *shaowei* word sentences. The major cause of the errors is intralingual interference. This study made some suggestions for the improvement of Chinese degree adverbs teaching material based on the findings.

Keywords: Chinese Degree Adverbs, Selection Tendencies, Frequent Error Types, Indonesian Students

<https://ojs.unm.ac.id/eralingua>



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INTRODUCTION

Chinese is an agglutinative language; it lacks morphological changes. Different levels of degree are mainly expressed by adding degree adverbs (degree-ADVs hereinafter) before adjectives or psych-verbs. Hence, the frequency of the use of degree-ADVs is relatively high, therefore they are important in Teaching Chinese as a Second Language (TCSL). Degree-ADVs are also one of the difficult points in TCSL because the members have different collocations, semantic features, pragmatic features, etc.

The development of TCSL has attracted many researchers' attention. They started to study the language with the purpose of solving TCSL's problems and improving the quality of teaching and learning processes and results. The studies are conducted from the perspective of contrastive analysis, interlanguage, error analysis, etc., for instance, [Chen \(2018\)](#), [Laurencia \(2019\)](#), [Chandra \(2020\)](#), and [Li \(2021\)](#). Based on the article collections in CNKI and google scholar, there are few articles related to degree-ADVs in the context of TCSL for Indonesian students. [Susilo \(2019\)](#) compared Chinese and Indonesian degree-ADVs. In the first part, she generally compared the collocations. The second part specifically compared the grammatical function and semantic features of four degree-ADVs: 很 *hen* - *sangat*; 太 *tai* - *terlalu*; 有点 *youdian* - *sedikit*; 最 *zui* - *paling*. [Chen \(2021\)](#) analyzed 太 *tai* (too) word error sentences made by Indonesian students collected from the Interlanguage Corpus of Chinese Language and Culture College, Jinan University, and found seven kinds of error as follows: selection, misordering, collocation, addition, typos, omission, blends. The causes of these errors are negative transfer, overgeneralization, avoidance, and the impact of classroom teaching. [Yessica et al. \(2018\)](#) made an error analysis on the use of Chinese adverbs in students' vlog tasks. The data in this study are eight vlogs made by 17 students of the class of 2015, Chinese Department at Petra Christian University. The investigation found misuse of five categories of adverbs, including misuse of degree-ADVs 很 *hen* (very) and 太 *tai* (too), and found that the cause is negative transfer. [Wilujeng and Fan \(2022\)](#) did a contrastive analysis between [adjective + *yidian* 一点] with its equivalent in Indonesian. The Chinese data are collected from Corpus Linguistics of Academia Sinica Taiwan, there are four structures, two of them consisting of degree-ADV *bijiao* 比较 and *tai* 太 which are placed before the adjectives. The study found that [*bijiao* + adjective + *yidian*] has its equivalent in Indonesia, but differs in structure, while [*tai* + adjective + *le* + *yidian*] has no equivalent in Indonesian. The structure [*shaowei* 稍微 + adjective + *yidian*] was not included in the study. There are also some similar studies, for instance, [Wang and Wang \(2016\)](#) observed Chinese comparative degree-ADVs acquisition by American foreign students and give enlightenment to the learning process for the students. [Liu \(2021\)](#) used corpus as data sources to investigate Japanese learners' acquisition of degree ADVs *hen* 很 (very) and *feichang* 非常 (very). [Wang and Liu \(2022\)](#) analyzed the types and causes of errors in using degree-ADV *feichang* 非常 (very) by intermediate and low-level Chinese learners, and propose effective teaching strategies for Degree-ADVs.

As mentioned above degree-ADVs play an important role in Chinese, and they are difficult to master. Nevertheless, there are only a few studies on degree-ADVs in

the context of TCSL for Indonesian students, many research still have to be done. This study discusses the use of degree-ADV by Indonesian students. this study aims to describe students' tendencies in choosing degree-ADV and to find the most frequent errors that students made in using comparative degree-ADV and finally made some suggestions for the improvement of Chinese degree-ADV teaching material based on the findings.

Chinese Degree-ADV

1. Scope

Chinese degree ADVs mainly modify adjectives and psych-verbs, some can modify nouns. The combination of [degree-ADV + Noun], for instance, *feichang Zhongguo* 非常中国 (very Chinese) is a new phenomenon in Chinese (Zhu, 2020; Cai, 2022). Other new functions of degree-ADV are to modify common verbs (*yiban dongci* 一般动词) and state adjectives (*zhuangtai xingrongci* 状态形容词) (Zhu, 2021). Degree-ADV in modern Chinese is a closed class with a limited number, which can be listed. However, there is a difference in terms of the quantity listed in several books or articles: (Zhou, 2021)

Table 1. The Number of Degree-ADV in Several Books/Articles

No.	Author	Article/book	Number of Degree-ADV
1.	Ding Shengshu et al.	<i>Xiandai Hanyu Yufa Jianghua</i>	16
2.	Zhu Dexi	<i>Yufa Jiangyi</i>	17
3.	Liu Yuehua et al.	<i>Shiyong Xiandai Hanyu Yufa</i>	27
4.		<i>Hanyu Cihui Dagang</i>	32
5.	Xia Qifu	<i>Chengdu Fuci Fenlei Shitan</i>	65
6.	Zhang Yisheng	<i>Xiandai Hanyu Fuci Yanjiu</i>	89

There are some new degree-ADV in contemporary Chinese, for example *chao* 超, *ju* 巨, *bao* 爆, *kuang* 狂 (Wang, 2018; Zhu, 2022).

2. Characteristic

Below are the characteristic of Chinese degree-ADV: (Zhou, 2021)

- 1) strong dependencies, cannot stand alone in a sentence, except *youdianr* 有点儿 (a little)
- 2) always be the adverbial adjunct of the sentence, except “*hen* 很 (very) and *ji* 极 (extremely)”
- 3) single semantic orientation, only pointing to the head, except “*zui* 最 (most)”

3. Classification

Wang (1985) divided Chinese degree-ADV into absolute degree-ADV (*juedui chengdu fuci* 绝对程度副词) and relative degree-ADV (*xiangdui chengdu fuci* 相对程度副词) according to the presence or absence of the comparison objects. Other

scholars then made more detailed classifications. Han (2000) uses different terminologies, but they refer to the same things. Han divided degree-ADVs into pure degree-ADVs (danchun chengdu fuci 单纯程度副词) and comparative degree-ADVs (bijiao chengdu fuci 比较程度副词). Comparative degree-ADVs explicitly or implicitly have a comparison meaning, pure degree-ADVs have no comparison meaning. Han argues that pure degree-ADVs has [+subjective] semantic feature. For instance, 这辆车很贵。 *zhe liang che hen gui*. 'This car is very expensive.' The concept of 很贵 *hen gui* (very expensive) can vary from person to person. In other words, the same price can be 有点儿贵 *youdianr gui* (a little expensive), 相当贵 *xiangdang gui* (quite expensive), 特别贵 *tebie gui* (very expensive), or 极其贵 *jiqi gui* (extremely expensive) to different persons. Han furthermore states that the medium-level and extreme-level contrastive degree-ADVs have [+multiple objects] semantic features, compared objects in the sentence must be more than two objects. High-level contrastive degree-ADVs have [+double objects] semantic features, and they are only used to compare two objects. Low-level contrastive degree-ADVs have no restriction. Cui (2022) also states that there are two types of degree-ADVs, the first type is used in comparative sentences or sentences with implicit comparison (e.g. *geng* 更, *zui* 最). The second type does not imply the meaning of comparison, and cannot be used in comparative sentences (e.g. *hen* 很), they are used to express the speaker's subjective position, including the speaker's evaluation, judgment, and emotion that are related to the subjective cognition of the speakers. He furthermore argues that it is important for learners to know this classification to avoid creating error sentences.

The classification had also been made based on the level of the degree. Scholars commonly divided degree-ADVs into three or four levels.

Table 2. Degree-ADVs' Level Classification Made by Four Scholars

No.	Scholar	Year	Classification (from low to high)			
1.	Han Rongzhu	2000	low-level	medium-level	high-level	extreme-level
2.	Lü Jiping	2000	level C	level B	level A	
3.	Zhang Yisheng	2000	slightly lower-level	absolute degree-ADVs: second highest-level	very high-level	excessive level
			lower-level	relative degree-ADVs: fairly-level	higher-level	highest-level
4.	Zhang Yajun	2002	level C	level B	level A	

No.2-4 are cited in Tuo (2008)

There are other classifications made by other scholars. This study uses the classification made by Han as mentioned above.

4. Comparative degree-ADVs and comparison sentences

Tuo (2008) describes the rule for comparative degree-ADV usage in comparison sentences. According to the characteristic of the compared objects, justify whether the degree-ADV can be used in *bi*-word sentences (比字句) or not. *Bi*-word sentence's pattern is [compared object 1 + *bi* + compared object 2 + comparative degree-ADVs + AP/VP], example:

你比他更高。
 ni_bi_ta_geng_gao.
 you_than_she/he_more_tall
 You are taller than him.

Degree-ADVs 较 *jiao*, 比较 *bijiao*, 最 *zui*, 顶 *ding* cannot be used in *bi*-word sentences, and can apply other patterns, for instance, [在 *zai* + NP + 中 *zhong*, compared object + comparative degree ADVs + AP/VP], example:

在全班中, 他最高。
 zai_quan_ban_zhong, ta_zui_gao
 in_whole_class_among/within, she/he_most_tall
 He is the tallest in the class.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study applied a quantitative-qualitative approach to investigate the selection of degree-ADVs, and to find out frequent errors made by the students. The qualitative approach is used to describe the selection and the error types. Samples are twenty-seven students of Maranatha Christian University Chinese Department who were taking the Chinese adverbs course. This is a theoretical course in the fourth semester. The teaching material is compiled by the team teaching, it consists of eight chapters, each chapter discusses one category of adverb, and is divided into three parts: the goals of the chapter, the theories, and the exercises. Chapter one is degree-ADVs, it contains commonly used degree-ADVs as follows: 很 *hen* (very), 挺 *ting* (very), 非常 *feichang* (very), 十分 *shifen* (very), 特别/特 *tebie/te* (especially; very), 格外 *gewai* (especially; extraordinary), 极/极其 *ji/jiqi* (extremely), 最 *zui* (most/-est), 更/更加/越发 *geng/gengjia/yuefa* (more), 太 *tai* (too/extremely), 过于 *guoyu* (too), 比较/较 *bijiao/jiao* (relatively), 稍微/稍稍/稍 *shaowei/shaoshao/shao* (slightly/a bit), 相当 *xiangdang* (fairly). Some of the adverbs have randomly been taught in the language skills courses in the previous semesters. The backgrounds of the samples which are collected in this study are the students' grades, consisting of chapter one quiz grades, mid-term exam grades, final exam grades, and daily assignment grades. These backgrounds in addition to the comparison with students' answers in previous exercises are used to determine the error sentences.

The data in this study is collected by giving two kinds of exercise to the students. The first exercise is designed to answer research question number one. A short diary with eighteen blanks to fill in was given to the students, and they have to fill in the blanks with the right adverbs. Nine blanks can be filled with degree-ADVs, blank numbers 3-5, 7-8, 11, 14-16. After the data is collected, the first step is counting

how many students answer each of the nine blanks with the degree-ADVs. The second step is describing the variety of degree-ADVs used by each student. The last step is finding the students' tendency in using degree-ADVs by answering these two questions: 1. If the blank can be answered with both pure and contrastive degree-ADVs, what type is chosen most by the students? 2. If the blank can only be answered with pure degree-ADVs, what are the top five degree-ADVs chosen by the students?

The second exercise is designed to answer research question number two. The students are required to make four sentences using four commonly used comparative degree-ADVs: low-level 稍微 *shaowei* (a little; a bit), medium-level 比较 *bijiao* (quite), high-level 更 *geng* (more), and extreme-level 最 *zui* (most) based on a table of train fare from city A to eight cities. The data in this part is a collection of error sentences made by the students. After collecting the data, the next step is finding the most frequent errors by applying the error analysis procedure introduced by McDowell. The procedure consists of four stages: ([McDowell, 2020](#))

1. Proofreading

Identification and correction of errors, use the *Track Changes* function in Microsoft Word to markup errors.

2. Coding

Copy over the error sentences to an Excel sheet, and adds three columns to the right for error type, error, and reconstruction. The error type is based on the classification made by Corder. [Corder \(1973\)](#) classifies foreign language learners' errors into four types: selection, omission, addition, and misordering.

3. Quantification

Add one column to the left of the first column, and utilize Excel's *countifs* formula to quantify error frequencies.

4. Sorting

Applies the Excel sort function to sort error frequencies from largest to smallest. The next step is to determine the most frequent error types caused by interlingual or intralingual interferences based on seven points that distinguish intralingual errors from interlingual errors as follows: 1. Similar errors were delivered by native speakers; 2. Learners adopt the same rules as native speakers; 3. Errors reflect learners' ability at a certain stage of development; 4. Learners try to develop hypotheses about L2; 5. Errors are rooted in level 2; 6. Errors reflect common characteristics of acquiring language rules; 7. Learners apply simplification, generalization, and reduction strategies for Grammatical redundancy ([Zobl & Liceras, 1994](#)). The final step is using the research findings as references to give some suggestions for the improvement of teaching material.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Students' selection on Degree-ADVs

As mentioned above, nine of the eighteen blanks in the first exercise can be filled with degree-ADVs. The data shows that 84.6% of the answers are degree-ADVs. The variety of the degree-ADVs which are used by each student is shown in [table 3](#).

Table 3. Number of Degree-ADVs Used by The Students

No.	Number of Degree-ADVs	Student percentage
1.	7	3.8
2.	6	7.7
3.	5	42.3
4.	4	23.1
5.	3	19.2
6.	2	3.8

The table above shows that more than 50% of the students used five and more degree-ADVs, but according to the data, 90.9% of degree-ADVs used by the students are the pure ones, and there are 46,2% of the students who only used pure degree-ADVs. Although there are some possibilities to use the comparative ones, the students tend to use pure degree ADVs, for instance:

我穿着(5) _____ 厚的外套,
Wo chuanzhe (5) _____ houde waitao,
 'I wear a (5) _____ thick coat, ...'

Blank number (5) can be answered with pure and comparative degree-ADVs. Although the answers of twenty students are degree-Advs, only four answers are comparative ones.

我们都(14) _____ 爱吃那家的糖醋里脊,
Women dou (14) _____ ai chi na jiade tangculiji,
 'We all (14) _____ love to eat their tangculiji, ...'

Blank number (14) can be answered with pure and comparative degree-ADVs, sixteen students' answers are degree-Advs, and all of them are pure degree-ADVs.

Compared to students' language skill level, there is no connection between students' language ability and the number of varieties of Degree-ADVs chosen by them. Students with high grades do not mean that they will use more variety of degree-ADVs, and vice versa. There are ten pure degree-ADVs used by the students, the number of students for each pure degree ADV is shown in [table 4](#).

Table 4. Number of The Students for Each Pure Degree-ADVs

No.	Pure Degree-ADV	Student Number
1.	<i>youdianr</i>	1
2.	<i>xiangdang</i>	4
3.	<i>ting</i>	6
4.	<i>hen</i>	69
5.	<i>feichang</i>	30
6.	<i>tebie</i>	39
7.	<i>shifen</i>	7
8.	<i>tai</i>	20
9.	<i>guoyu</i>	3
10.	<i>gewai</i>	1

Table 4 shows that the most used degree-ADV is *hen*, followed by *tebie*, *feichang*, *tai*, and *shifen*. Liu (2021) states that degree-ADV *hen*, *zhen*, and *tai* are used very frequently both in daily life and also in modern Chinese teaching and TCSL. According to Han (2000), *hen*, *feichang*, *tai*, and *shifen* are high-level pure degree-ADVs. This study also included *tebie* in this group. *Hen*, *feichang*, *tebie*, *shifen*, and *tai* are synonymous adverbs, they all express high degree. In using synonymous words, the students tend to use the ones that they are more familiar with. *Hen* is the first degree-ADVs that they learned, and at first, they were taught that it expresses a high degree, similar to the word ‘*sangat*’ in Indonesian. So, *hen* always comes first in mind to express high degree than its synonymous words, even after they learned that nowadays the degree of *hen* is relatively vague, for instance, table 5 shows The percentage of the answers to questions number 3 and 11.

Table 5. The Percentage of the Answers to Questions number 3 and 11

Number	比较	挺	很	非常	特别	太	过于
3	-	4.17%	45.83%	8.33%	29.17%	4.17%	8.33%
11	11.54%	-	42.30%	11.54%	23.08%	11.54%	-

今早(1)_____刮风(2)_____下雨，外面(3)_____冷。

Jinzao (1)_____ *gua feng* (2)_____ *xia yu*, waimian (3)_____ *leng*.

‘This morning (1)_____ windy (2)_____ raining, (3)_____ cold outside.’

Everyone has a different tolerance for cold air, so the answer to question number (3) can be a low-level, medium-level, high-level, or an extreme-level degree-ADV, the data shows twenty-four answers are degree-ADVs, and more than 40% of the answers are *hen*.

晚上八点多(10)_____把事情办好，觉得(11)_____疲劳。

Wanshang ba dian duo (10) _____ *ba shiqing banhao*, juede (11)_____ *pilao*.

‘After eight o'clock in the evening (10) _____ get things done and feel (11)_____ tired.’

According to the context, the students are expected to answer question number (11) with one of the degree-ADV that has a higher degree than *hen*, the data shows that all of the answers are degree-ADV, and more than 40% of the answers are *hen*.

Comparative Degree-ADV's Frequent Errors Types and Causes

As mentioned above, in the second exercise, students made four sentences using comparative degree-ADV's *shaowei*, *bijiao*, *geng*, and *zui* according to a train fare table. There are 17 error sentences made by 44.44% of the students, 66.67% of these students made one error sentence, 25% made two error sentences, and 8.33% made three error sentences. Table 6 shows the overview of the errors.

Table 6. Overview of The Errors

Student's Number	Error Sentences Type	Errors	Omission	Addition	Selection	Mis-ordering
ST02	<i>bijiao</i>	2			2	
ST04	<i>bijiao</i>	5		2		
	<i>geng</i>		1	1		1
ST07	<i>shaowei</i>	2	1			1
ST10	<i>bijiao</i>	2			2	
ST11	<i>bijiao</i>	2			2	
ST12	<i>shaowei</i>	3	2		1	
ST14	<i>zui</i>	1			1	
ST17	<i>shaowei</i>	4	2			
	<i>bijiao</i>			1		1
ST19	<i>bijiao</i>	1			1	
ST22	<i>bijiao</i>	2			2	
ST24	<i>shaowei</i>	8	1	1		
	<i>bijiao</i>			1	2	
	<i>zui</i>			1	2	
ST26	<i>shaowei</i>	2	1			
	<i>geng</i>				1	
Total	17	34	8	7	16	3

We can see from table 6 that the number of error sentences from high to low is *bijiao* > *shaowei* > *geng/zui*, and the most frequent error type is selection. Table 7 gives more detailed information about the frequencies, errors, reconstructions, and examples of five high-frequent errors.

Table 7. Most Frequent Errors

Rank	Frequency	Error Type	Error	Recon- struction	Error Sentence Type	Example
1	6	Selection	bi-word sentence	non bi-word sentence	bijiao, zui	(ST10-b) 往 D 市 比 往 G 市的 火车票价 格比较贵 一点。
	6	Selection	double compared object	multiple compared object	bijiao, zui	(ST24-d) 往 A 到 I 比 A 到 B 市的火车 票价格最 高。
2	3	misordering	degree- adv	degree- adv	shaowei, bijiao, geng, zui	(ST07-a) 去 G 城的 火车票比 稍微去 D 城的火车 票稍微便 宜一点。
	3	Addition	往 wang	Ø	shaowei bijiao zui	(ST24-a) 往 A 到 E 比 A 到 C 市的火 车 票 价 格 稍 微 贵。
	3	Omission	Ø	一点儿 / 一些 yidianr / yixie	shaowei	(ST17-a): 火 车 票 价 A 市 到 C 市 的比 A 到 E 市 稍 微 贵 <u>一 点</u> <u>儿</u> 。

As can be seen in [table 7](#), the most frequent error type is selection in *bijiao* word sentences and *zui* word sentences, for example:

(ST 10-b)

往 D 市的火车票价格比较贵一点。

wang_D_shi_de_huochepiao_jiage_bijiao_gui_yidianr

towards_D_city_de_train_fare_relatively_expensive_a little

The train ticket to city D is more expensive than to city G.

(ST24-d)

A 到 I 的火车票价格最高。

A_dao_I_de_huochepiao_jiage_zui_pianyi

A_to_I_de_train ticket_price_most_cheap

The train tickets from A to I are the most expensive than A to B city.

As mentioned above, *bijiao* and *zui* cannot be used in *bi-word* sentences ([Tuo, 2008](#)). In addition, *bijiao* is a medium-level, and *zui* is an extreme-level contrastive degree-ADV, according to [Han \(2000\)](#) both levels have [+multiple objects] semantic features, compared objects in the sentence must be more than two objects. The Above two sentences only contain two compared objects in each sentence, for instance, sentence (ST 10-b) only compares train fare from city A to city D and city G.

Sentence pattern selection errors in *bijiao* and *zui* word sentences are caused by intralingual interference. Zobl and Liceras argue that one point that distinguishes intralingual from interlingual error is that learners adopt the same rules as native speakers ([Zobl & Liceras, 1994](#)). *Bi-word* sentence's pattern is [compared object 1 + *bi* + compared object 2 + comparative degree-ADV + adjective/psych verb]. The equivalent of a Chinese *bi-word* sentence in Indonesian is [compared object 1 + degree-ADV + adjective/psych verb + *daripada* + compared object 2]. In the above two sentences, the students adopt the word order of *bi-word* sentences. Furthermore, Degree-ADV 'paling' cannot be applied in *daripada*-word comparison sentences, it is the same as *zui* cannot be applied in *bi-word* sentences, therefore the cause of the error is not interlingual interference.

The compared objects selection error in *zui* word sentence is also caused by an intralingual factor. Degree-ADV 'paling' is similar to 'zui', both have [+multiple object] semantic features, therefore the cause of the error is not interlingual interference. The compared objects selection error in *bijiao* word sentences has two possibilities, it can be caused by interlingual or intralingual interference. *Bijiao* has [+multiple object] semantic features, but the equivalent words for *bijiao* in Indonesian have no restriction in the number of compared objects, it can be double or multiple objects. Therefore, in the *bijiao* word sentence, the compared objects selection error can be caused by negative transfer and also by intralingual interference since in applying degree-ADV *geng* and *shaowei* there is also no restriction in the number of compared objects.

The second most frequent error type is misordering of the degree-ADVs, for example:

(ST04-c)

火车票价从 A 市到 B 市比更火车票价从 A 市到 H 市更便宜。

huoche_piaojia_cong_A_shi_dao_B_shi_bi_geng_huoche_piaojia_cong_A_shi_dao_H_shi_geng_pianyi

train_fare_from_A_city_to_B_city_bi_more_train_fare_from_A_city_to_H_city_geng_pianyi

The train fare from city A to city B is cheaper than the train fare from city A to city H.

The pattern of *bi* word sentence is [compared object 1 + *bi* + compared object 2 + degree-ADVs + AP/VP], in this sentence, the student placed *geng* before compared object 2.

The cause of this error is intralingual interference. The equivalent of degree-ADV *geng* in Indonesian is *lebih*, in both languages' comparison sentences, *geng* and *lebih* are directly followed by adjectives. Observing the sentence pattern used by the student, reflected his/her competence at a certain developmental stage. This point distinguishes intralingual errors from interlingual ones (Zobl & Licerias, 1994).

In the third place, the error type which is related to the rule of comparative degree-ADVs is the omission of complement *yidianr/yixie*, for example:

(ST17-a)

火车票价 A 市到 C 市的比 A 到 E 市的稍微贵一点儿。

huoche_piaojia_A_shi_dao_C_shi_de_bi_A_dao_E_shi_de_shaowei_gui_yidianr

train_fare_A_city_to_C_city_de_bi_A_to_E_city_de_slightly_expensive_a little

The train fare from city A to city C is slightly more expensive than that from city A to E.

The pattern of degree-ADVs *shaowei* is [*shaowei* + adjective/psych-verb/noun + complement *yidianr/yixie*], sentence (ST17-a) left out the complement.

Due to the students' backgrounds (language skill ability), the cause for this type of error is intralingual interference. This structure has its equivalent in Indonesian: [*agak + sedikit lebih* + adjective/psych verb] or [*agak lebih* + adjective/psych verb + *sedikit*]. The students use the generalization strategy since in applying the other three comparative degree-ADVs it is not required to add the complement *yidianr/yixie* after the adjective.

Some Suggestions for the Improvement of Teaching Material

Teaching material is one of the instructional variables that influence the teaching and learning process and the success of language teaching (Brown, 2007), in other words, students' language ability is also one of the variables which can be used to evaluate the teaching material. Based on the findings, some suggestions for the improvement of the Chinese degree-ADVs teaching material are as follows:

1. Learners need to know the classification of degree-ADVs to avoid them from creating error sentences (Cui, 2022). Findings show that the cause of the errors

mostly is intralingual interference, knowing the classification of Chinese degree-ADVs will prevent the students from making the same errors. The finding also shows that the students tend to use pure degree-ADVs, especially high degree-ADV *hen*. Knowing the classification will give a general picture of the differences in degree level for each member, and encourage learners to use more variety of degree-ADVs. The teaching material should introduce the classification of degree-ADVs since each type and each level of degree-ADVs has different collocations, semantic features, pragmatic features, etc. For instance, below is the classification by Han (2000) used in this study:

Table 8. Chinese Degree-ADVs Classification

Type	Level			
	Low	Medium	High	Extreme
Pure degree-ADVs	<i>youdianr</i>	<i>xiangdang</i>	<i>hen, feichang, shifen</i>	<i>Guoyu</i>
Comparative degree-ADVs	<i>shaowei</i>	<i>bijiao</i>	<i>geng, gengjia</i>	<i>zui</i>

Knowing the classification will prevent learners to apply *hen* in comparison sentences; will prevent learners to use *geng* to compare multiple objects (because high-level comparative degree-ADVs have [+double object] semantic features), etc.

2. As mentioned above, degree-ADV in modern Chinese is a closed class with a limited number, which can be listed. However, there is a difference in terms of the quantity listed in several books or articles (Zhou, 2021). Teachers should consider the teaching goals in deciding how many degree ADVs will be discussed in the module, but at a minimum it would be better to cover commonly used degree-ADVs (formal and informal) for each type and level, to complete the students' knowledge of the classification of degree-ADVs. Furthermore, since there are some new degree-ADVs in contemporary Chinese, the teaching module also suggested to include some of them which are frequently used.
3. The teaching material should give enough examples and exercises, so that the students can learn different semantic features, pragmatic features, etc., especially for synonymous degree-ADVs. This study's findings can be used as references in giving examples and designing the exercises. Give a variety of contexts in the exercises, so the students are encouraged to use more varied degree-ADVs and to use them not only in a sentence but also in a text.

From the findings, we know that the students need guidance in using comparative degree-ADVs. The flowchart below can be used as guidance for the students in choosing the right comparative degree-ADVs and the right sentence pattern.

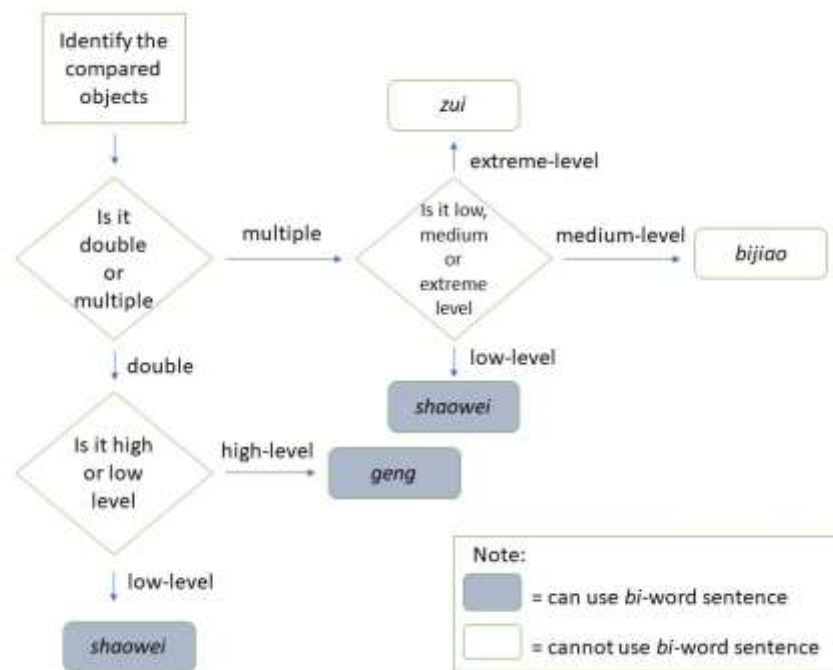


Figure 1. Flowchart Guiding in Choosing Comparative Degree-ADVs

CONCLUSION

This study finds that the students tend to use pure degree adverbs, particularly high-level degree-ADVs. The most used degree-ADVs is *hen*, followed by its synonymous words ‘*tebie*, *feichang*, *tai*, and *shifen*’. In using synonymous words, the students tend to use the ones that they are more familiar with. The form of exercises in the teaching material should encourage the student to use more varied degree adverbs. Applying the EA procedure introduced by McDowell has simplified the process of finding the most frequent error pattern, but in the process, we need to decide what kind of information to fill in the error and reconstruction column according to our research needs. Through the procedure, it is found that the most frequent error type is selection in *bijiao* word sentences and *zui* word sentences. The second most frequent error type is misordering of the degree-ADVs, and the third one is the omission of complement *yidianr/yixie* in *shaowei* word sentences. The major cause of the frequent error types is intralingual interference. Knowing the classification of Degree-ADVs is important in the teaching and learning degree-ADVs process, the teaching material should introduce the classification of Chinese degree-ADVs.

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