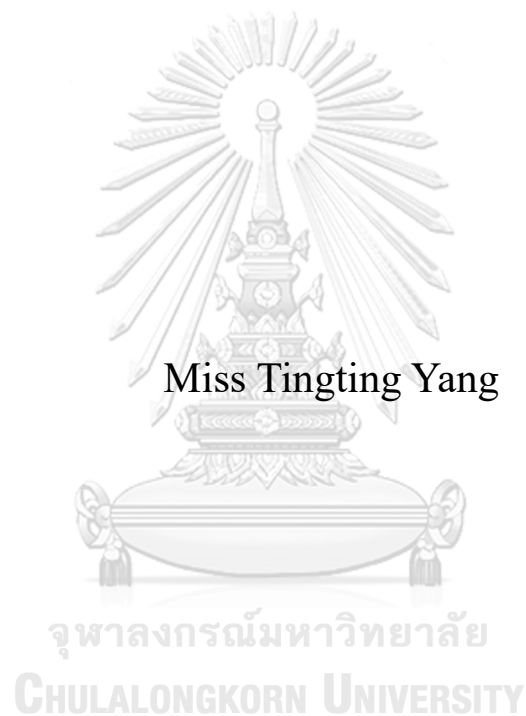


THE ACQUISITION OF ENGLISH IRREGULAR PAST  
TENSE MORPHOLOGY BY L1 CHINESE LEARNERS



A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements  
for the Degree of Master of Arts in English as an International Language  
Inter-Department of English as an International Language  
Graduate School  
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Academic Year 2023



จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย  
**CHULALONGKORN UNIVERSITY**

การรับหน่วยกิตอดิตรูปไม่ปกติในภาษาอังกฤษโดยผู้เรียนที่มีภาษาจีน

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Field of Study English as an International Language  
Thesis Advisor Associate Professor NATTAMA PONGPAIROJ, Ph.D.

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ดิงดิง หยาง :

การรับหน่วยกาลอดีตรูปไม่ปกติในภาษาอังกฤษโดยผู้เรียนที่มีภาษาจีนเป็นภาษาที่ 1.  
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พงศ์ไพโรจน์

งานวิจัยนี้มุ่งศึกษาเรื่องการรับหน่วยคำที่แสดงกาลอดีตรูปไม่ปกติในภาษาอังกฤษโดยผู้เรียนที่มีภาษาจีนเป็นภาษาที่หนึ่ง ผู้เข้าร่วมวิจัยในครั้งนี้ประกอบด้วยผู้เรียนที่พูดภาษาจีนกลาง (Mandarin) จำนวน 60 คน แบ่งออกเป็นสองกลุ่มตามระดับสมรรถภาพภาษาอังกฤษระดับกลางและระดับสูง เครื่องมือวิจัยที่ใช้เก็บข้อมูลประกอบด้วย แบบทดสอบเติมคำในช่องว่าง (Fill-in-the-Blank Test) แบบทดสอบตัดสินความถูกต้องทางไวยากรณ์ (Grammaticality Judgment Task) และการสัมภาษณ์ โดยตั้งสมมติฐานไว้ 3 ข้อ ตามทฤษฎีการวิเคราะห์ข้อผิดพลาดทางไวยากรณ์ (Error Analysis Theory) (Ellis, 1994; Richards, 1974) สมมติฐานข้อที่ 1 คือ สมรรถภาพด้านภาษาส่งผลต่อการรับหน่วยคำที่แสดงกาลอดีตรูปไม่ปกติในภาษาอังกฤษโดยผู้เรียนที่มีภาษาจีนเป็นภาษาที่หนึ่ง พบว่าผลการวิจัยจากแบบทดสอบทั้งสองชุดมีความสอดคล้องกับสมมติฐาน ข้อค้นพบจากการวิจัยชี้ให้เห็นว่าการใช้หน่วยคำที่แสดงกาลอดีตรูปไม่ปกติในภาษาอังกฤษได้อย่างถูกต้องของผู้เรียนที่มีสมรรถภาพทางภาษาระดับกลางนั้นอยู่ในระดับที่น้อยกว่าผู้เรียนที่มีสมรรถภาพทางภาษาระดับสูงอย่างมีนัยสำคัญทางสถิติ ( $p < .05$ ) สมมติฐานข้อที่ 2 คือ ตามการวิเคราะห์ข้อผิดพลาดทางไวยากรณ์ ผู้เรียนที่มีภาษาจีนเป็นภาษาที่หนึ่งแสดงข้อผิดพลาดทางไวยากรณ์หน่วยคำที่แสดงกาลอดีตในภาษาอังกฤษ ทั้งในรูปแบบความผิดพลาดจากปัจจัยระหว่างภาษาและความผิดพลาดจากปัจจัยในภาษาเป้าหมาย โดยผลการวิจัยมีความสอดคล้องกับสมมติฐานที่สอง ซึ่งข้อผิดพลาดทางไวยากรณ์ที่พบแสดงให้เห็นถึงการแทรกแซงจากปัจจัยระหว่างภาษาและปัจจัยในภาษาเป้าหมาย กล่าวคือ ในด้านปัจจัยระหว่างภาษา ปัญหาการรับรู้และการผลิตหน่วยคำที่แสดงกาลอดีตรูปไม่ปกติในภาษาอังกฤษโดยผู้เรียนชาวจีนมีสาเหตุมาจากการไม่มีหน่วยคำที่แสดงกาลอดีตในภาษาจีน นอกจากนี้ ปัจจัยในภาษาเดียวกันมีผลต่อการรับรู้และการผลิตหน่วยคำที่แสดงกาลอดีตรูปไม่ปกติในภาษาอังกฤษอีกด้วย สมมติฐานข้อที่ 3 คือ อิทธิพลข้ามภาษา การสรุปเงื่อนไข และการมีมโนทัศน์ที่ผิดพลาดส่งผลต่อการรับหน่วยคำที่แสดงกาลอดีตรูปไม่ปกติในภาษาอังกฤษของผู้เรียนชาวจีน ข้อค้นพบจากการวิจัยแสดงให้เห็นว่า นอกจากปัจจัยการแทรกแซงจากภาษาที่หนึ่งแล้ว ปัญหาการรับหน่วยคำกาลอดีตยังมีสาเหตุมาจากปัจจัยการสรุปเงื่อนไขอีกด้วย กล่าวคือ ในแบบทดสอบด้านการรับรู้ พบว่าการนำหน่วยคำที่แสดงกาลอดีตรูปปกติ ('-ed') มาใช้กับกริยาที่ต้องผันรูปไม่ปกติมากถึงร้อยละ 15.4 และในแบบทดสอบด้านการผลิต ร้อยละ 38.9 ทั้งในกลุ่มผู้เรียนที่มีระดับสมรรถภาพระดับกลางและกลุ่มผู้เรียนที่มีระดับสมรรถภาพระดับสูง นอกจากนี้ ปัญหาการรับหน่วยคำที่แสดงกาลอดีตยังเป็นผลมาจากการที่ผู้เรียนมีมโนทัศน์ที่ผิดพลาด ซึ่งอาจเป็นผลจากการเรียนการสอน กล่าวคือ การสอนเรื่องหน่วยคำที่แสดงกาลอดีตรูปไม่ปกติในประเทศจีนมักเน้นการเรียนรู้แบบท่องจำ จึงส่งผลให้ผู้เรียนเรียนรู้กริยาในกลุ่มนี้ในรูปแบบเดียวกับการเรียนรู้คำศัพท์ ผลลัพธ์งานวิจัยนี้ได้ให้ข้อมูลทั้งด้านทฤษฎีและด้านการเรียนการสอนซึ่งเกี่ยวข้องกับกรับภาษาที่สอง

สาขาวิชา	ภาษาอังกฤษเป็นภาษานานาชาติ	ลายมือชื่อนิสิต .....
ปีการศึกษา	2566	ลายมือชื่อ อ.ที่ปรึกษาหลัก .....

## 6488047420 : MAJOR ENGLISH AS AN INTERNATIONAL LANGUAGE

KEYWORD: SLA English irregular past tense morphology L1 Chinese learners Error Analysis

Tingting Yang : THE ACQUISITION OF ENGLISH IRREGULAR PAST TENSE MORPHOLOGY  
BY L1 CHINESE LEARNERS. Advisor: Assoc. Prof. NATTAMA PONGPAIROJ, Ph.D.

This study investigated the acquisition of English irregular past tense morphology by L1 Chinese learners. The participants consisted of 60 L1 Mandarin-speaking learners of English divided into two groups according to their English proficiency levels, i.e., the intermediate and the advanced levels. The methodology included a Fill-in-the-Blank Test, a Grammaticality Judgment Task, and an interview. Based on the Error Analysis Theory (Richards, 1974; Ellis, 1994), three research hypotheses were formulated. First, it was hypothesized that language proficiency has an impact on the acquisition of English irregular past tense by L1 Chinese learners and the findings conformed to the hypothesis. The results showed that correct English irregular past tense verb use in the intermediate group was significantly lower than that in the advanced group in both tests ( $p < .05$ ). Second, based on Error Analysis, L1 Chinese learners commit both interlingual and intralingual errors of English irregular past tense. The results confirmed the second hypothesis as the findings indicated that several forms of errors in English irregular past tense were demonstrated and could be attributed to both interlingual and intralingual interferences. That is, concerning interlingual errors, non-existence of the past tense morphology in Chinese possibly caused difficulties for L1 Chinese learners in both perceiving and producing English irregular past tense morphemes. Several intralingual factors were also accounted for. Third, it was hypothesized that cross-linguistic influence, overgeneralization, and false concepts hypothesized are the possible factors that cause the problems of English irregular past tense morphology by L1 Chinese learners. Besides L1 interference, overgeneralization was found to be a contributing factor. The regular past form '-ed' occurred in the irregular past verbs at quite high rates in both perception and production in both L1 Chinese groups, i.e., 15.4% and 38.9%, respectively. Besides, false concepts hypothesized, i.e., learners' faulty knowledge of the target language due to influences from teaching and learning possibly led to the problems. In China, the focus on teaching English irregular past tense verbs through memorization so Chinese learners learn these verbs as lexical words. The results, therefore, supported the third hypothesis. The findings yielded both theoretical and pedagogical implications in relation to SLA.

CHULALONGKORN UNIVERSITY

Field of Study:	English as an International Language	Student's Signature .....
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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background of the study

It is obvious that English is one of the most widely used languages in the world. It has an impact on practically all academic and professional fields. It also has a big impact on nations that do not speak English like China. English has played an important role in Chinese language education. English has become a compulsory subject in China since 2003 (Qi, 2016:1). Moreover, in Gaokao<sup>1</sup>, which is the most important exam in China, English is one of the major subjects and has equal scores with Chinese and Mathematics.

Chinese learners of English have been found to have problems with English past tense, which may be related to the lack of the grammatical past tense in Chinese (Hawkins & Liszka, 2003; Sharmini et al. 2009).

Second language acquisition (SLA) is influenced by a variety of factors. Many studies looked at SLA of both regular and irregular English Past Tense morphemes by second language (L2) learners from several first language (L1) backgrounds, e.g., L2 acquisition of English past tense by an L1 Thai speaker in Prapobaranakul and Pongpairoj (2016) and the acquisition of tense/aspect marking in Mandarin–English bilingual children in Nicoladis et al. (2020). In the Chinese context, there was also some research, e.g., Huang (2018) on the acquisition of English past tense by Mandarin-

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<sup>1</sup> Gaokao is the national undergraduate admission exam of China, held in early June every year. The exam is usually taken by high schools' graduating seniors at the end of their final year.

speaking children, Lin (2019) on the problems with the English past tense in Chinese students, Hawkins and Liszka (2003) on the simple past tense by three L1 groups (German, Japanese, and Chinese), and Hsieh (2009) on the acquisition of English agreement/tense morphology by L1-Chinese-speaking learners. However, to the best of my knowledge, there have not been any study specifically exploring L2 acquisition of English irregular past forms. To fill in the gap, the present study was aimed at investigating the acquisition of English irregular past tense morphology by L1 Chinese learners.

## 1.2 Research Questions

1. Do English proficiency levels have an impact on the acquisition of English irregular past tense by L1 Chinese learners of different language proficiency levels?
2. Based on Error Analysis, do Chinese learners of English commit interlingual and intralingual errors with English irregular past tense morphology?
3. Are there any possible factors that cause problems in the production of English irregular past tense morphology?

## 1.3 Research Objectives

1. To explore the acquisition of English irregular past tense morphology by L1 Chinese learners of different English proficiency levels.
2. To investigate interlingual and intralingual errors with English irregular past tense morphology by L1 Chinese learners.
3. To identify possible factors that cause problems in the production of English irregular past tense morphology by L1 Chinese learners.

## 1.4 Hypotheses

1. Language proficiency has an impact on the acquisition of English irregular past tense by L1 Chinese learners.
2. Based on Error Analysis, L1 Chinese learners commit both interlingual and intralingual errors of English irregular past tense.
3. Language transfer, Overgeneralization, and False Concepts Hypothesized are the possible factors that cause the problems of English irregular past tense morphology by L1 Chinese learners.

## 1.5 Scope of the Study

The participants of the study were 60 L1-Mandarin-speaking learners of English. They were all English major students from China. At the time of the research, the participants had learned English for almost 10 years, and none of them had ever lived in an English-speaking country. They were divided into two groups according to their English proficiency levels. 30 participants for each group.

The research instruments included a Fill-in-the-blank test, a grammaticality judgment task, and an interview. The target linguistic features in this thesis were English irregular past tense verbs. All the verbs chosen for the tasks were based on the vocabulary lists of the English vocabulary index in the English Language Curriculum Standard MOE (2018).

## 1.6 Significance of the Study

This study aimed to explore the acquisition of English irregular past tense morphology by L1 Chinese learners with different proficiency levels. The results provided some theoretical implications on some possible factors that caused

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interlingual and intralingual errors. Furthermore, the results provided some pedagogical implications for teachers to optimize their English instruction for teaching English irregular past tense morphology to L2 learners.

## 1.7 Definition of Terms

1. Second Language Acquisition: L2 refers to the process by which individuals learn a new language after acquiring their first or native language. It involves developing language skills in a language other than the one learned during infancy, childhood or early adolescence. Krashen (1982) divided the process of L2 acquisition into five stages: preproduction, early production, speech emergence, intermediate fluency, and advanced fluency.

2. Error Analysis (EA): EA is a theory used to document errors that appear in L2 learner language, to determine whether those errors are systematic, and to explain what cause them (Ellis & Barkhuizen, 2005).

3. TEM-8: TEM-8 is designed as an achievement test to measure the overall English proficiency of senior undergraduates majoring in English Language and Literature in China and to decide whether these students meet the requirements of English language abilities and professional knowledge of English as specified in the National College English Teaching Syllabus for English Majors (NACFLT, 2004). The TEM-8 certificate represents three levels; that is, “excellent” for level 9 (advanced stage), “good” for level 7 (advanced stage), “pass” for level 6 (intermediate stage).

4. L1 Chinese Learners: In this study, the term ‘L1 Chinese Learners’ refers to 60 Chinese university students who have been studying English as a foreign language, and whose native language is Mandarin. Their proficiency level is the intermediate level and the advanced level. There were 2 groups (30 participants each) divided by their English proficiency level based on TEM-8 (Intermediate level & Advanced level).

5. English Regular and Irregular Past Tense Forms: English is an inflectional language. In English, the past tense verb forms are divided into two forms: regular and



irregular verb forms. English regular past forms follow the grammar rules of English by adding the inflectional morpheme “-ed” or “-d” to form the past tense. According to Sriphrom and Ratitamkul (2014), the irregular morphemes that use suppletion to represent the past can be divided into total suppletion (or strong suppletion) and partial suppletion (or weak suppletion). Total suppletion occurs when the syntax allows for a lexeme form that is not morphologically predicted from other English verbs (e.g., “go” - “went”). On the other hand, partial suppletion is subject to morphological marking for the past tense. It can be divided into three different categories. The first category is ablaut which refers to the vowel changes within the verb (e.g., “stick” - “stuck”), the second is internal change, which is when the first phoneme or phonemes of a verb remain the same but the verb internal structure and ending change (e.g., “buy” - “bought”), and the last category is identical forms, which occurs when present tense and past tense forms are identical (e.g., “hurt” - “hurt”).

The present study proceed as follows. The theoretical framework and literature review are presented in Chapter 2. Chapter 3 describes the methodology of the study. The findings are reported and discussed in Chapter 4. The conclusion of the study is presented in Chapter 5.

## CHAPTER II

### LITERATURE REVIEW

In this chapter, the theoretical basis, i.e., Error Analysis is presented in 2.1, and Pastness in Chinese and English in 2.2. Previous studies on L2 acquisition of English past tense morphology are addressed in 2.3.

#### 2.1 Error Analysis

In the acquisition process, second language (L2) learners often exhibit some errors. Making errors are a common and inherent aspect of the learning journey. These errors are often regarded as instruments that learners utilize to advance their understanding. Hence, learners can enhance their learning and skill development by embracing and learning from their errors. Error Analysis is one of the major areas in Second Language Acquisition (SLA). According to Corder (1976), studying learner errors offers researchers valuable insights into the SLA process and exposure to the strategies learners employ in discovering language. The purpose of error analysis is to uncover how learners learn a language and to reveal the challenges faced during the language learning process.

Errors and mistakes are not the same. Edge (1989) divided mistakes into two categories: slips and attempts. A mistake refers to a slip where the learner forgets the correct form, i.e., the learner knows it is wrong, but the wrong word slips out. Mistake also refers to an attempt which is when a learner tries to say something but does not yet know the correct way to say it. On the other hand, an error refers to the lack of knowledge about L2, i.e., the learner does not know the rule. The difference between

'error' and 'mistake' is in the context that they are used in. A 'mistake' is usually unsystematic and accidental, i.e., mistakes are performance-based, and can be self-corrected. An error is systematic in that it occurs repeatedly and is not recognizable by the learner, and errors cannot be self-corrected (James, 1998).

Errors were classified by Richards (1974) into two categories; Interlingual Error and Intralingual Error. These two factors both refer to the negative effects of the target language and the speaker's L1.

### 2.1.1 Interlingual Errors

Interlingual errors are caused by the interference of the learner's first language (L1). They are related to the differences between their native language and the second language. Corder (1976) explained that these errors occur when the learner's existing habits, patterns, systems, or rules hinder or impede the acquisition of patterns and rules in L2. The learner applies the same rules in L1 to L2, which often lead to errors (Chelli, 2013).

Examples of interlingual errors are shown in (1):

- (1) a. \*"He go school" instead of "He goes to school".
- b. \*"I very happy" instead of "I am very happy".

(Chen, 2016: 28)

According to Chen (2016), Chinese is an uninflected language with no inflectional endings to convey tense, person, and number. Chinese learners of English may omit a copular verb when using English. These examples of Interlingual errors are caused by the linguistic differences between Chinese and English. Unlike English, a copular verb is not needed with a predicate adjective in Chinese.

### 2.1.2 Intralingual Errors

Intralingual errors can occur during L2 acquisition development of L2 learners due

to structures of the complexity of the target language.

Richards (2015) classified intralingual errors into four categories.

**Overgeneralization:** It occurs when the learner makes use of a grammatical rule in the L2 and implements it in structures where its usage is incorrect. If a learner excessively relies on the same grammatical rule or structure, it can result in the production of inaccurate grammatical constructs. Richards (1974:120) provided an example of creating plural by adding '-s' to irregular plurals, e.g., 'He can sings' instead of 'He can sing.' And to generalize the use of the "-ed" past form in the past irregular verbs, e.g., 'hurted' instead of 'hurt.'

**Ignorance of rule restrictions:** It occurs as a result of failure to observe the restrictions or existing structures. For example, \*He made me to rest. The learner ignores the use of *make* which is actually not followed by *to* and a verb (Saputri, 2019:24). The learner lacked knowledge of the rule.

**Incomplete application of rules:** This error may occur when the learner fails to fully develop a certain structure required to produce acceptable sentences. For example, The town was \*destroy (Namkaew, 2015:24). The learner did not apply the complete rule of the past participle form (no '-ed').

**False concepts hypothesized:** This error is due to learners' faulty knowledge of the target language distinctions or inaccurate ideas about language rules (Na-ngam, 2005). This intralingual error is influenced by teaching and learning materials (Kong, 2013). For example, \*It was happened last Sunday (Ellis, 2003:59). The learner wrongly assumed that the verb 'happen' can be used in the passive construction possibly due to negative influence from pedagogy.

## **2.2 Pastness in English and Chinese**

For this section, Pastness in English in 2.2.1, followed by Pastness in Chinese in 2.2.2.

### 2.2.1 Pastness in English

In English grammar, verbs are often used in a way that denotes the time when an event occurs. These verbs that take up different forms to indicate the time of an action, event, or condition by changing their form are called tenses.

The Simple Past Tense is used to refer to an event that happened in the past. Sometimes, the Simple Past Tense verbs are also called “past simple”, showing an action that occurred and was completed at a particular time in the past. English is an inflectional language. In English, the past verb forms were divided into two forms: regular and irregular verbs. Regular verbs follow the standard grammar rules of English in adding the inflectional morpheme “-ed” or “-d” to form the past tense. For Example: “We stayed in a hotel last week. And we crossed the Channel yesterday.”

The English irregular verbs are verbs that “follow their own rules.” (Ahmed, 2020:82-85). Irregular verbs use completely original words for their different verb forms when they are the main verb of a sentence. According to Sriphrom and Ratitamkul (2014), the irregular morphemes can be divided into total suppletion (or strong suppletion) and partial suppletion (or weak suppletion).

Total suppletion occurs when the past form requires a lexeme that is not morphologically predicted (e.g., “be”-“was” or “were”). Partial suppletion is also applied to the past-tense morphological marking. It can be divided into three types. The first is ablaut, which refers to the vowel changes within a word’s root (e.g., “grow”-“grew” or “drink”- “drank”). The second type is when the first phoneme or phonemes of a word remain the same but the word's internal structure and ending change (e.g., “buy”- “bought” or “think” - “thought”). The third type is the identical form, which occurs when present tense and past tense forms are identical (e.g., “bet”- “bet” or “cut” - “cut”).

### 2.2.2 Pastness in Chinese

Chinese is an isolating language; it does not have tenses. Instead, Chinese relied on context and time adverbials to indicate events happening in the past. For example, Chinese can use time adverbials such as "before", "yesterday" or "last year" to refer to a past event. For example:

(2) zuó tiān : Wǒ zuótiān zài shítáng chīfàn.

(Yesterday): I yesterday in canteen eat

“Yesterday I ate in the canteen.”

(3) shàng ge xīngqī: Shàng gè xīngqī wǒ gǎnmào.

(last week) : last week I have cold

“I had a cold last week.”

(4) qù nián: Wǒmen shì qùnián rènshide.

(last year): we be last year meet

“We met last year.”

It can be seen that in Chinese, a time maker appears at the beginning of the sentence or immediately follows the subject. Apart from time makers, lexical words can also express pastness, to emphasize the accomplishment of action, The Chinese lexical words “céngjīng” (once), “yǐjīng” (already) can be used. For example:

(5) 这里曾经是一个学校: Zhèlǐ céngjīng shì yīgè xuéxiào.

Here once is one school

“There was once a school here.”

(6) 他已经知道那个消息: Ta yǐjīng zhīdao nà ge xiaoxi.

He already know that CL<sup>2</sup> news

“He already knew the news.”

<sup>2</sup> ‘CL’ refers to ‘classifier’

### 2.3 Previous Studies on the Acquisition of L2 English Past Tense

Various studies were conducted on the acquisition of English past tense by L1 learners of several L1 backgrounds. Khumdee and Pongpairroj (2014) investigated the variable production of English past tense marking by L1 Thai speakers. The study attempted to locate the exact cause based on the two accounts: Failed Functional Features Hypothesis (FFFH) and Missing Surface Inflection Hypothesis (MSIH). The FFFH posits that Universal grammar (UG) is only accessible to learners through their L1, while L2 learners are unable to acquire functional features differing from those found in the L1. However, they can still acquire functional features which have been instantiated during L1 acquisition. (Hawkins & Chan, 1997:187-226). The MSIH indicates that L2 learners have unconscious knowledge of the functional projections and features underlying tense and agreement (Prévost & White, 2000:103-133). Separated FFFH and MSIH. The participants were 20 intermediate and 20 advanced L1 Thai learners. Three tests were carried out through Grammaticality Judgment Test, Fill-in-the-Blank Test, and Story-Telling. The results showed that the learners exhibited variability in their production of English past tense marking across the three tests. The participants from both proficiency groups inflected irregular verbs for past tense more frequently compared to regular verbs. The study confirmed the FFFH.

Based on the FFFH. Prapobratanakul and Pongpairroj (2019) explored variability of English past tense morphology by L1 Thai learners and L1 French learners. Thai is different from English and French in that Thai expresses pastness through contexts and lexical words. The participants of the study were thirty L1 Thai and thirty L1 French advanced learners of English. Five native English speakers were the control group of the study, Data were collected from a Fill-in-the-Blank Test. The data showed that L1 Thai learners' correct suppliant of English past-tense morphemes were significantly lower than those of L1 French learners. It is assumed that non-existence

of the past feature in the Thai learners' L1 led to such variability and asymmetry of regular and irregular past forms as L2 English pastness is unacquirable for L1 Thai learners.

Based on the MSIH, Prapobaranakul and Pongpairaj (2016) investigated variable production of past tense morphology of English by a Thai-speaking English learner. The participant was an adult, a 40-year-old Thai speaker. She was at the advanced level of English based on the Oxford Placement Test. Two procedures were carried out. The first was Forced Choice Elicitation and the second was Spontaneous Production Task. The results showed that the participant had the syntactic knowledge, but the extra-syntactic factors were the cause of the problem, which were in accordance with the MSIH that the morphemes of English past tense were acquired but the challenge in the production lay in determining the past tense morphology.

The acquisition of English past tense by L1 Chinese learners was also explored.

Hawkins and Liszka (2003) compared the spontaneous oral production of advanced L2 speakers of English from three different L1 backgrounds: Chinese, Japanese and German. Japanese is similar to Chinese in its phonotactic structure, but German is like English. The participants were advanced L2 speakers of English from these three L1 backgrounds. The tasks divided 120 contexts into 60, which were expected to elicit Simple Past Tense verb forms. The spontaneous oral data were collected from two tasks: retelling a short extract and recounting of a happy or exciting experience each informant had. The data were recorded and transcribed, and only verbs in unambiguously Simple Past Tense contexts were counted. The results showed that the Chinese informants were significantly less likely to inflect both regular and irregular thematic verbs for past tense than the Japanese or German speakers. The Chinese speakers retained the word-final -t/-d with mono-morphemes more often than with regular past tense verb forms and perfect in inflecting past participles. Chinese lacks grammaticalized tense, but Japanese and German have grammaticalized tense like



English. For L1 speakers of Chinese, tense does not have the syntactic feature [ $\pm$ past]. When Chinese speakers learned English, they were unable to establish that English Tense is specified for [ $\pm$ past]. So, the Chinese speakers might be more successful in marking irregular past forms and regular participles than in marking regular past forms.

Sharmini et al. (2009) studied the acquisition of English past tense by L1 Chinese speakers and mainly focused on whether or not the learners were successful in associating the grammatical properties with Chinese. There were various theories put forward in explaining the development of L2 acquisition. These theories can be mainly divided into two groups: those positing no L1 influence on L2 acquisition and those claiming L1 has influence on the acquisition of L2. In the research, 20 low level learners (final year students who are currently pursuing B.A.) were selected based on their IELTS results. The data indicated that regular past tense marker scores were consistently higher in the regular form compared to the irregular form in all data collection sessions. The results for the study were L1 Chinese speakers acquired the regular verb forms to some extent compared to the irregular verb forms.

Nicoladis et al. (2020) studied reasons behind problems with English tenses in bilingual children speaking Mandarin and English. Two causes behind this issue were tested, the first being the morphophonological transfer and the second reason being the explanation of -ed as the aspect marker for completion. The study was initially carried out on 40 bilingual children. The children in this study were asked to watch a 4-minute cartoon and then take the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test-III (PPVT), Version A was used to assess their receptive vocabulary of English. The Mandarin vocabulary of these participants was tested by managing a decoded edition of PPVT, version B. The results of this examination showed that the bilingual children were more accurate with irregular past forms in English than regular forms. By large, the study concluded that the bilinguals speaking English and Mandarin had problems with the -ed in English and it was due to the morphophonological transfer from Mandarin.

Lin (2019) analyzed problems with the past perfect tense by Chinese students

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and attempted to find reasons behind these problems. One of the most difficult points for Chinese students is when they should use past perfect. It might be quite confusing for students to make a choice between past simple tense and past perfect tense. So, to solve this problem, teachers can alleviate the situation by taking advantage of various teaching methods. First of all, it is assumed that teachers should take communicative language teaching into the class. Teachers were supposed not to focus only on textbooks, which means a variety of techniques such as videos and games can be utilized at the same time.

Zhang (2011) studied the acquisition of Simple Past Tense by Chinese University Learners of English based on the Lexical Aspect Hypothesis, which concerns the L2 tense-aspect system. Lexical aspect refers to the temporal features inherent in a verb, which can be determined by the base form or the surrounding sentential elements. Based on Lexical Aspect Hypothesis, Zhang explored whether Chinese learners followed the same developmental pattern of perfective morphology, i.e., Simple Past morphemes. The data in this study came from the Spoken and Written English Corpus of Chinese Learners (SWECCCL), from each stage of study (year 1 to year 4), Wu obtained 50 random compositions on the topic of narration, and the software AntConC was employed to search predicate verbs marked with Simple Past Tense. The results from AntConC showed that the frequency of predicate verbs in Simple Past Tense increased with the students' year of study, which suggested a plausible relationship between the use of Simple Past Tense and learning experience. The corpus findings confirmed the hypothesis, initially, learners utilize (perfective) past marking primarily with achievements and accomplishments, gradually progressing to include activities and stative verbs.

Hsieh (2009) investigated how L1 Chinese-speaking learners of English acquire three English morphemes – the third person singular –s, the regular past tense –ed, and the copula be. It is known that Chinese has no tense and agreement marking at all, unlike English. Based on MSIH, Hsieh hypothesized that L1 Chinese-speaking

learners of English will sometimes produce non-finite forms to replace finite forms in the regular past tense -ed. The participants were 20 L1-Chinese-speaking learners of English aged from 11 to 14. None of them went to a special ESL class or had a private English tutor. The data collection consisted of two parts, the first was a 15 to 20 minutes interview, and the second was a storytelling task. The participants were tested individually at their homes or schools. The results of the research showed that participants had knowledge of functional categories and features in tense and agreement, they will sometimes produce non-finite forms to replace finite forms in the 3rd person singular -s and the regular past tense -ed, which can be ascribed to the L1 interference.

Huang (2018) examined the acquisition of English past tense by Mandarin-speaking children in their first year's post migration to Australia. The study was based on the Full Transfer Hypothesis (Schwartz & Sprouse, 1996:40-72), which posits that the initial state of L2 acquisition corresponds to the ideal state of L1 acquisition (Full Transfer). The participants were 20 Mandarin-English children (10 boys and 10 girls with a mean age of 6;6), who were born and grew up in China with Mandarin as their sole language before migration to Australia. In addition, they were taught in English, but they spoke Mandarin at home. The participants were tested individually in a room with open questions and the elicited production task. The results showed that participants' overall marking rate of English past tense was quite low. However, the marking rate of the irregular verbs was much higher than that of the regular ones. The findings suggest that Mandarin-speaking children initially adopt their L1 grammar in the acquisition of English past tense.

Guo (2022) investigated the most common types of errors on simple past tense in a writing assessment made by Chinese fifth grade ESL learners. The three participants were Chinese non-native speakers in the fifth grade. They were given a specific writing evaluation that included paragraph writing and a blank-filling task. The results showed that the four most common errors in their writing were 1) not doubling the final consonant before adding the suffix -ed (e.g., "grabed" instead of "grabbed"), 2)

changing -y to -i in verbs ending in vowel+y (e.g., “We plaided games with my best friend last Saturday”), 3) using simple past tense verbs in a general question (e.g., “Did you brushed your teeth?”), and 4) failing to recognize the use of simple past tense in a sentence lacking definite past adverbials of time (e.g., “How do you know that? -- I see some of them on the table.”, the participants used “see” instead of “saw” due to the absence of a specific time marker indicating the past event “see”, although the tense could be inferred based on the context (Guo, 2022:1398)

What is more, the acquisition of English past tense with learners from different L1 backgrounds was investigated.

Rajab (2021) investigated the production of the English regular past tense morpheme by L1 Arabic ESL learners. The past tense morpheme in English has three variations (allomorphs) /t/, /d/ or /əd/. Twenty-two L1 Arabic ESL participants were divided into three groups according to their proficiency level, and 9 native speakers of English were used as a control group. The participants were asked to read sentences that consisted of regular past tense verbs and place the verbs in parentheses in the past tense. The results showed that L1 transfer was not the only source of difficulty in the production of past tense morphology and that the abstract feature of tense was problematic, particularly at the early stages of ESL development.

Maja (2004) studied the acquisition of past tense in English/Norwegian bilingual Children. English and Norwegian have a similar distribution of regular and irregular verbs and conjugational paradigms, but English only has one regular class of inflection, and Norwegian has two. The participants were three English/Norwegian bilingual siblings and two Norwegian monolingual children. The participants were tested on 60 verbs in each language. The results showed that errors of overgeneralization in Norwegian and in English did not seem to be dependent on phonological similarity.

Arifin et al. (2019) investigated the systematic order of the acquisition of past tenses by L1 Indonesian students. They hypothesized that irregular past tense verbs

were acquired earlier than regular past tense verbs. The participants were 46 students (30 females and 16 males) in three different classes at English Department of Institut Parahikma Indonesia. They were divided into three groups, the first group with 14 students, the second group with 12 students, and the last group with 20 students. All of the participants were asked to produce an essay with a minimum of 250 words on the students' personal past experiences. The results of the study showed that the three groups appeared to show consistency in terms of having the highest accuracy level for irregular past verbs. They appeared to acquire irregular past forms prior to the regular past verbs. However, it was suggested that the universal order of morpheme acquisition may not be a stable phenomenon.

Salaberry (2000) analyzed written and oral narratives from 14 L1 Spanish speakers learning L2 English in a classroom-only setting. This study provided a descriptive analysis of data that followed the lexical aspect hypothesis, which concerned that when L2 learners studied tense-aspect makers they will be influenced by lexical aspectual classes of verbs. All of the 14 participants were adults studying English as L2 and had a similar general educational background. The participants were interviewed in pairs and each session lasted approximately 45 minutes. The movie excerpts were shown only once and the narratives (written and oral) were elicited immediately after the students saw them. The results showed that irregular morphology correlated more strongly than the lexical aspect with morphological past tense marking.

Chin et al. (2019) investigated the role of noticing in the acquisition of the past tense form in English through oral corrective feedback (OCF). OCF was feedback given to students after they had produced oral work that contained errors. The participants were 105 16-years old Malaysian students, and they were divided into two categories according to their proficiency level. Four treatment tasks in this study, were a role-play and three narrative tasks. The results showed that higher levels of noticing were associated with better performance in accuracy of past tense use. Higher level of noticing seemed to boost the efficiency of both explicit and implicit oral corrective

feedback.

Shabani and Dizani (2015) investigated the effectiveness of interactional feedback and the acquisition of Simple Past Tense in speaking tasks. A key element of learning L2 was interactional feedback, which helped students focus on their output by contrasting it with that of a more proficient interlocutor. The participants were 59 upper-intermediate Iranian Persian-speaking EFL learners, and they were divided into four groups. The study was conducted within approximately two months, which applied semi-structured interviews as a pre-test, an immediate post-test, and a delayed post-test to garner adequate data. The results showed that interactional feedback could improve the acquisition of Simple Past Tense. In the beginning, learners were not able to notice the correct form produced by the teacher; however, toward the middle of the treatment sessions, they acquired the ability to not only notice their errors but also do the correction themselves or by their classmates.

Altaqhaine et al. (2022) examined whether irregular past verbs were acquired earlier than regular past verbs by Arabic-speaking EFL children. Ninety-fifth graders were tested through a sentence completion assignment utilizing images that represented 20 normal and 20 irregular past tense verbs. Following the delivery of the tests, an introspective session was held with 70 students to identify the areas that needed improvement. The results showed that there was a significant difference between regular and irregular verbs. The participants got high scores on the regular simple past forms because their teachers taught them the regular forms before irregular forms, depending on the Jordanian curriculum of the English language. Due to the lack of irregularities in their L1, Arabic-speaking EFL children applied regular inflection of -ed whenever their memory failed to produce an irregular verb form.

Many previous studies looked at L2 acquisition both regular and irregular English Past Tense morpheme by L2 learners from several L1 backgrounds. However, to the best of my knowledge, no previous studies focused on English irregular past forms by L1 Chinese learners. Thus, the present study aimed to bridge this gap by

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exploring the acquisition of English irregular past tense morphology by L1 Chinese learners.



## CHAPTER III

### METHODOLOGY

This chapter discusses the methodology, i.e., participants in 3.1, instruments in 3.2, data collection in 3.3, validity test in 3.4, and pilot study in 3.5.

#### 3.1 Participants

The participants were sixty L1-Mandarin-speaking learners of English. They were all English major students from China. At the time of the research, the participants had learned English for almost 10 years, and none of them had ever lived in an English-speaking country. The participants were divided into two groups according to their English proficiency level. Group One had 30 participants whose TEM-8 certificate was ‘excellent’ (Advanced level). Group Two had 30 participants whose TEM-8 certificate was ‘pass’ (Intermediate level). The reason why the researcher chose participants with these two levels is that the participants should have at least some background of the irregular past tense forms. L2 learners at the beginning level might not be aware of what these verb forms are.

TEM-8 is an assessment tool used to evaluate the English proficiency and professional knowledge of senior undergraduates majoring in English Language and Literature in China. The purpose of TEM-8 is to determine if these students have reached the English language abilities and professional knowledge standards set by the National College English Teaching Syllabus for English Majors (NACFLT, 2004). Each participating university is responsible for reporting scores to test takers. The test methods include listening, reading, proofreading, translating, and writing. Its scores are reported to the Academic Affairs Office of the participating universities. If the test



taker's score is or above 60, s/he will receive a certificate from the NACFLT. The proficiency level of test takers which is reported on the certificate includes three ranks, that is, "excellent" (score 80 or above), "good" (score between 70 and 79) and "pass" (score between 60 and 69), as can be seen in Table 1.

**Table 1 English language proficiency levels in TEM-8**

Over 80	Excellent
70-90	Good
60-69	Pass
Below 60	Fail

According to China's Standards of English Language Ability (CSE), the general scale defining the overall language ability of Chinese English language learners and users is presented in Table 2.

**Table 2 The three stages with nine levels of CSE**

English Language Ability Development Stage	Level
Advanced stage	Level 9
	Level 8
	Level 7
Intermediate stage	Level 6
	Level 5
	Level 4
Elementary stage	Level 3
	Level 2
	Level 1

The TEM-8 certificate represents three levels, that is, "excellent" for level 9 (advanced stage), "good" for level 7 (advanced stage), "pass" for level 6 (intermediate stage).

## 3.2 Instruments

This part explains the instruments of the research, with a Fill-in-the-Blank Test in 3.2.1, a grammaticality judgment task in 3.2.2, and an interview in 3.2.3.

### 3.2.1 Fill-in-the-Blank Test

A-ten-minute Fill-in-the-Blank Test was used to examine the participants' production of English irregular past-tense morphology. The participants were asked to fill in the appropriate forms of words in the blanks provided in 15 sentences by using the verbs given in the blank, and the test was examined through Tencent Meeting (VooV Meeting), which is an online meeting software. The researcher made an appointment with each learner to do the test. During the Tencent meeting, the researcher can see each participant online while s/he is doing the test. The researcher shared the file in the meeting so that the participants could see the items. The participants answered each test item through the Tencent Meeting chat box privately. The 10 sentences were equally divided among total suppletion, ablaut, internal change, and identical forms, i.e., 2 test items each, and 2 sentences for regular verbs. The reason for using regular verbs is to compare the participants' usages of using those two past tense morphologies. Another 5 sentences were distractors. The test items and the distractors were randomized.

An example of the test items in the Fill-in-the-Blank Test is shown in (7):

- (7) Birds (sing) \_\_\_\_\_ in the mature trees and there was a country  
smell of spring.

The participants were given 1 point if they provide the correct form of the verb 'sang.'

The list of English regular and irregular past tense verbs used in the Fill-in-the-Blank Test are shown in Table 3.

**Table 3 Verbs used in the Fill-in-the-Blank Test.**

<b>Types of Verbs</b>	<b>Verbs</b>	
<i>Regular verbs</i>	sail, sign	
<i>Irregular verbs</i>	Total suppletion	be, have
	Ablaut	sing, drink
	Internal change	bring, write
	Identical forms	cut, beat

All the 10 regular and irregular verbs chosen for the Fill-in-the-Blank Test were based on the vocabulary lists of the English vocabulary index in the English Language Curriculum Standard MOE (2018). To keep the variable constant, all the verbs used in the Fill-in-the-Blank Test were one-syllable value only.

Each question in the Fill-in-the-Blank Test had 1 point. Therefore, the total score was 10 points. The participants got 1 point if they provided the correct form of the verb tested. A correct answer was defined in the overall results as the use of an appropriate English simple past-tense regular or irregular morphological form, while an incorrect answer was defined as the use of the English simple past tense in an inappropriate English simple past-tense regular or irregular morphological form. For example, when “\*cuted” was used instead of “cut,” or use any answers except ‘cut,’ s/he will get 0 points. The incorrect or empty answer gave 0 points. Only if the participant gave the appropriate form, s/he will get 1 point. The criteria for scoring the Fill-in-the-Blank Test are shown in Table 4. (See Appendix A on the Fill-in-the-Blank Test.)

**Table 4 Criteria for Scoring the Fill-in-the-Blank Test**

<b>Scoring</b>	<b>Criteria</b>
1 point	Participants provided a correct answer.
0 points	Participants did not provide any answer in the blank.
0 points	Participants provided an incorrect answer.

### 3.2.2 Grammaticality Judgment Task

According to Tremblay (2005), the grammaticality judgment task (GJT) is one of the most widespread data-collection methods that linguists use to test their theoretical claims. The participants were asked to judge whether the sentence was grammatical or not. The GJT had 10 minutes and comprised 15 items, which contained 10 test sentences and 5 distractors arranged in random order. The GJT was also examined through Tencent Meeting (VooV Meeting).

The target feature items were divided into two groups: 2 items with regular and 8 items with irregular verbs, i.e., 2 items for each irregular past tense type. The list of English regular and irregular past tense verbs used in the GJT are shown in Table 5.

**Table 5 Verbs used in the GJT**

Types of Verbs	Verbs	
<i>Regular verbs</i>	cook, watch	
<i>Irregular verbs</i>	Total suppletion	go, do
	Ablaut	begin, meet
	Internal change	buy, leave
	Identical forms	hurt, read

All the 10 regular and irregular verbs chosen for the GJT were based on the same criteria as those in the Fill-in-the-Blank Test. Each question in the GJT had 1 point. So, the total score was 10 points. In the GJT, for each verb type, one correct and one incorrect item. The correct items in GJT are: ‘watch’ ‘do’ ‘meet’ ‘buy’ ‘hurt’. While the incorrect items are: ‘cook’ ‘go’ ‘begin’ ‘leave’ ‘read’.

An Example of the GJT is shown in (8):

(8) I goed to Lampang with my friends last week.

Correction \_\_\_\_\_

The participants were given 1 point only if they judged this sentence as incorrect and filled in the correction part with ‘I went to Lampung with my friends last

week.’

Each test item came with two sub-parts: the judgment part and the correction part. In terms of scoring, each item scored 1 point. If the item was correct, a  $\surd$  mark should be put in front of the sentence. The participant got 1 point if s/he judged an incorrect item correctly and provided a correct correction. The judgment had an incorrect item but without a correction, or with an incorrect correction, the participant got 0 points. (See Appendix B on the GJT).

### 3.2.3 An Interview

After the two tests, there was a 5-minute interview. After the Fill-in-the-Blank Test and GJT, 5 participants were selected randomly from each group. The interview consisted of 5 questions. The participants were interviewed individually through Tencent Meeting (VooV Meeting). The interview was conducted in their L1 Mandarin. Speaking in the mother tongue will enable the participants to express their freedom of speech, i.e., to avoid any potential language barriers. The interview was recorded. Questions in the interview concerned the participants’ attitudes and feelings about learning irregular past forms in English.

The questions in the interview are shown in (9):

(9) a: 你能熟练使用不规则动词吗?

(Are you familiar with English irregular verbs?)

b: 你在学习不规则过去式时有什么困难吗?

(Do you have any difficulties when you learned irregular past verb forms?)

c: 你可以正确区分两种过去式形式吗?

(Can you distinguish between English irregular and regular past verb forms?)

d: 你是如何学习英语规则过去式?

(How did you learn English regular past forms?)

e:你是如何学习英语不规则过去式?  
(How did you learn English irregular past forms?)

### 3.3 Data Collection

The data were collected in a counterbalanced manner. Group One was asked to do the GJT first, followed by the Fill-in-the-Blank Test, and the order was reversed for Group Two. This is aimed at avoiding a task impact scenario. The participants had to finish the Fill-in-the-Blank Test and the GJT within 20 minutes each. As for the interview, it was via Tencent Meeting and 5 questions within 5 minutes.

### 3.4 Validity Test

In order to ensure the quality of the instrument and whether it is in accordance with the objectives, the two tests were validated by three raters (native English lecturers) using the Index of Item-Objective Congruence (IOC), which was developed by Rovinelli and Hambleton (1976). The IOC was used to evaluate task items for acceptable and sufficient knowledge measurement. The criteria for the IOC are shown in Table 6:

**Table 6 The criteria for the IOC**

Scoring +1	=	Certain that the test item is congruent with the objectives
Scoring 0	=	Uncertain whether the test item is congruent with the objectives
Scoring - 1	=	Certain that the test item is NOT congruent with the objectives

The scores were calculated according to the following formula:

$$\text{IOC} = \frac{ER}{N}$$

‘ER’ refers to the total experts’ scores and ‘N’ indicates the number of the experts. The combined scores from the three experts were divided by three to get a final score.

The qualified items should have the IOC equal to or greater than 0.50. From the validity test, all the test items passed the IOC. That is, the Fill-in-the-Blank Test scored 0.967, the GJT scored 1, and the interview scored 0.868. (See details of IOC results from the three tests in Appendix C).

### 3.5 Pilot Study

The pilot study was the step before the main study. According to van Teijlingen and Hundley (2002), “a pilot study might give advanced warning about where the main research project could fail, where research protocols may not be followed, or whether proposed methods or instruments are inappropriate or too complicated”. In other words, a pilot study tried to identify potential practical problems.

The participants of the pilot study were 8 English major students from China. They were divided into 2 groups according to their English proficiency level. Group One had 4 participants whose TEM-8 certificate was ‘pass’ (Intermediate level). Group Two had 4 participants whose TEM-8 certificate was ‘excellent’ (Advanced level). The pilot study was conducted through Zoom Cloud Meeting. A ten-minute, Fill-in-the-Blank Test was done first, and all participants answered each test item through the Zoom chat box individually. After the Fill-in-the-Blank Test, they did the GJT. They had 10 minutes for 15 items. They completed the tests on their own without asking for any clarification from the researcher. Data collection in the pilot study took approximately 15-20 minutes. The results of the Fill-in-the-Blank Test and GJT test were showed in Table 7 below.

**Table 7 The tests’ results of every participant in the pilot study**

Total number of the participants	Total Fill-in-the-Blank Test scores	%	Total GJT test scores	%
8	40/80	50%	42/80	52.5%

The full scores for each test were 10. Out of 80, the total Fill-in-the-Blank Test score was 40 and 42 for the GJT test, which were calculated as 50% and 52.5%, respectively.

After finishing the two tests, the participants were interviewed individually in their L1 Mandarin to prevent any language barrier. All the participants felt that the tests were tricky. Some of them said they learned verbs in the English past tense as words and tried to memorize them. They also mentioned that they remembered learning English past tense rules at school, but they could not tell what the rules are.

The results of the pilot study showed that there were not any problems with the Fill-in-the-Blank Test and the GJT, therefore, there was no need to adjust the two tests.

### **3.6 Implementation of the Tasks**

The tasks were approved by the Office of the Research Ethics Review Committee for Research Involving Human Subjects: The Second Allied Academic Group in Social Sciences, Humanities and Fine and Applied Arts at Chulalongkorn University (COA No.142/66, Date of Approval: 13 April 2023).

The researcher collected data through online systems due to the participants were from several universities in China, i.e., Tencent Meeting (VooV Meeting) and WPS Office. WPS Office is an office suite that provides the Co-Editing function, allowing multiple users to edit the current document concurrently by switching the document to an online Cloud document. This way, the researcher can see the answers written by the participants. Fill-in-the-Blank Test and GJT were conducted online using the WPS Office system. Following the completion of the two tests, 5 participants were selected randomly from each group and interviewed individually via Tencent Meeting. The data was collected in a counterbalanced manner. Group One was asked to do the GJT first, followed by the Fill-in-the-Blank Test, and the order was reversed for Group Two.

The researcher sent the e-file information sheet and consent form to participants



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before beginning the tasks to make sure participants knew their rights in this study.



## CHAPTER IV

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents results of the study and provides discussions. Section 4.1 discusses results of the tasks, i.e., results from the Fill-in-the-Blank Test in 4.1.1, followed by those from the Grammaticality Judgment Task (GJT) in 4.1.2. Discussions of the results are made in section 4.2. Section 4.3 summarizes the chapter.

#### 4.1 Results of the Fill-in-the-Blank Test and Grammaticality Judgment Task (GJT)

This section presents results of the Fill-in-the-Blank Test in 4.1.1, followed by the Grammaticality Judgment Task (GJT) in 4.1.2.

##### 4.1.1 Results of the Fill-in-the-Blank Test

The results of the Fill-in-the-Blank Test, which was employed as a production task in the study, are shown in this section. The raw scores, percentages standard deviations, and standard error mean for the correct use of English past tense verb forms of each L1 Chinese-speaking participant group were shown in Table 8<sup>3</sup>.

**Table 8 Results of the Fill-in-the-Blank Test**

Groups	Raw correct scores	Percentages (%)	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Intermediate Group (n=30)	255/300	85	8.5	1.02	0.19
Advanced Group (n=30)	287/300	95.67	9.57	0.67	0.12

<sup>3</sup> The data obtained from the test were statistically analyzed via Python 3.

The findings in Table 8 demonstrated that the intermediate group's correct rate of English past tense verb forms was lower than that in the advanced group, i.e., 85%,  $M=8.5$ ,  $SD=1.02$  for the former and 95.67%,  $M=9.57$ ,  $SD=0.67$  for the latter.

To compare the participants' production of the past tense verb forms in the Fill-in-the-Blank Test, an independent-samples t-test was conducted.

The results from the independent-samples t-test showed that the intermediate group ( $M=8.5$ ,  $SE=0.19$ ) scored significantly lower than the advanced group ( $M=9.57$ ,  $SE=0.67$ ),  $t=4.69706$ ,  $p<.05$ .

Table 9 and Table 10 show details of incorrect answers in the Fill-in-the-Blank Test by the intermediate group and the advanced group, respectively.

**Table 9 Incorrect answers in the Fill-in-the-Blank Test by the intermediate group**

Test item no.	Correct answers	Past tense verb forms	Incorrect answers produced by the intermediate group	Incorrect rates	Error types
1	signed	Regular verb	has signed	1	Wrong tense
			signed <sup>4</sup>	4	Overgeneralization
2	cut	Irregular verb (Identical forms)	-	-	-
3	brought	Irregular verb (Internal change)	brings	12	Wrong tense
4	beat	Irregular verb (Identical forms)	beated	7	Overgeneralization
			beaten	2	Using past participle form
5	wrote	Irregular verb (Internal change)	written	1	Using past participle form
7	sang	Irregular verb (Ablaut)	song	2	Wrong part of speech
9	sailed	Regular verb	-	-	-

<sup>4</sup> Misspelling was not taken into account.

10	drank	Irregular verb (Ablaut)	drunk	9	Using past participle form
			drinked	1	Overgeneralization
			drought	1	Using another part of speech
12	was	Irregular verb (Total suppletion)	-	-	-
13	had	Irregular verb (Total suppletion)	has	5	Wrong tense
Total				45/300 (15%)	

**Table 10 Incorrect answers in the Fill-in-the-Blank Test by the advanced group**

Test item no.	Correct answers	Past tense verb forms	Incorrect answers produced by the advanced group	Incorrect rates	Error types
1	signed	Regular verb	has signed	1	Wrong tense
2	cut	Irregular verb (Identical forms)	-	-	-
3	brought	Irregular verb (Internal change)	brings	5	Wrong tense
			bringing	1	Using present participle form
4	beat	Irregular verb (Identical forms)	beaten	2	Using past participle form
5	wrote	Irregular verb (Internal change)	-	-	-
7	sang	Irregular verb (Ablaut)	-	-	-
9	sailed	Regular verb	-	-	-
10	drank	Irregular verb (Ablaut)	drunk	4	Using past participle form
12	was	Irregular verb (Total suppletion)	-	-	-
13	had	Irregular verb (Total suppletion)			
Total				13/300 (4.33%)	

The data from the Fill-in-the-Blank Test revealed notable differences between the two participant groups. The intermediate participant group demonstrated a higher percentage of incorrect answers, compared to the advanced group, i.e., 15% and 4.33%, respectively.

The incorrect answers made by the intermediate group encompassed the use of wrong tenses (e.g., ‘has signed’, ‘brings’, and ‘has’), overgeneralization (e.g., ‘signed’ ‘beated’ and ‘drinked’), utilization of the past participle form (e.g., ‘beaten’ ‘drunk’ and ‘written’), misapplication of the part of speech (e.g., ‘song’) (N.), and using another part of speech (e.g., ‘drought’) (N.). The data revealed that the most prevalent incorrect answer types made by the intermediate group were the wrong use of tense (18/40, 40%), past participle forms (12/45, 27%), and overgeneralization (12/45, 27%). No error was found on the past tense form: ‘cut’, ‘sailed’, and ‘was’.

In contrast, the advanced group made only three types of incorrect answers. They were using the wrong tense (e.g., ‘has signed’ and ‘brings’) (6/13, 40%) and the utilization of past participle form (e.g., ‘beaten’ and ‘drunk’) (6/13, 40%). There was only one occurrence of using the present participle form, which was ‘bringing’. Furthermore, it is worth noticing that there were 6 items in which the advanced learners did not commit any error on the past tense verb form, i.e., ‘cut’, ‘wrote’, ‘sang’, ‘sailed’, ‘was’, and ‘had’.

#### **4.1.2 Results of the Grammaticality Judgment Task (GJT)**

The results of the GJT are shown in this section. The raw scores, percentages standard deviations, and standard error mean for correctly using English past tense verb forms of each L1 Chinese-speaking participant group were shown in Table 11.

**Table 11 The results of GJT**

Groups	Raw correct scores	Percentages (%)	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Intermediate Group (n=30)	263/300	88%	8.77	0.88	0.16
Advanced Group (n=30)	294/300	98%	9.8	0.4	0.07

The findings presented in Table 11 revealed that the intermediate group achieved a lower score compared to the advanced group, i.e., 88%,  $M=8.8$ ,  $SD=0.88$  and 98%,  $M=9.8$ ,  $SD=0.4$ , respectively.

An independent-samples t-test was conducted to compare the participants' production of the past tense verb forms in the GJT.

The results of the independent-samples t-test revealed that in the GJT, the intermediate group ( $M=8.77$ ,  $SE=0.16$ ) obtained significantly lower scores compared to the advanced group ( $M=9.8$ ,  $SE=0.07$ ),  $t=-5.8408$ ,  $p<.05$ .

Table 12 and Table 13 show details of incorrect answers in the GJT by the intermediate group and advanced group.

**Table 12 Incorrect answers in the Grammaticality Judgment Task by the intermediate group**

Test item no.	Correct answers	Past tense verb forms	Incorrect answers produced by the intermediate group	Incorrect rates	Error types
1	watched	Regular verb	-	-	-
3	hurt	Irregular verb (Identical forms)	hurts	9	Wrong tense
			hurted	3	Overgeneralization
5	cooked	Regular verb	was	2	Wrong tense

			cooking		
			had cooked	2	Wrong tense
6	went	Irregular verb (Total Suppletion)	gone	1	Using past participle form
8	met	Irregular verb (Ablaut)	meet	3	Using bare verb form
			have met	1	Wrong tense
9	read	Irregular verb (Identical forms)	was reading	1	Wrong tense
			readed	1	Overgeneralization
10	did	Irregular verb (Total Suppletion)	does	2	Wrong tense
12	left	Irregular verb (Internal change)	leaved	7	Overgeneralization
			leaving	1	Using present participle form
13	began	Irregular verb (Ablaut)	had began <sup>5</sup>	1	Wrong tense
			beginned <sup>6</sup>	1	Overgeneralization
			begined	1	Overgeneralization
15	bought	Irregular verb (Internal change)	was buying	1	Wrong tense
Total				37/300 (12.33%)	

**Table 13 Incorrect answers in the Grammaticality Judgment Task by advanced group**

Test item no.	Correct answers	Past tense verb forms	Incorrect answers produced by the advanced group	Incorrect rates	Error types
1	watched	Regular verb	-	-	-
3	hurt	Irregular verb (Identical forms)	-	-	-
5	cooked	Regular verb	was cooking	3	Wrong tense

<sup>5</sup> The error was a mixture of wrong tense (past perfect) and the wrong verb form, i.e., the past form 'began' instead of the past participle form 'begun'.

<sup>6</sup> Misspelling was not taken into account.

6	went	Irregular verb (Total Suppletion)	-	-	-
8	met	Irregular verb (Ablaut)	-	-	-
9	read	Irregular verb (Identical forms)	-	-	-
10	did	Irregular verb (Total Suppletion)	does	2	Wrong tense
12	left	Irregular verb (Internal change)	leaved	1	Overgeneralization
13	began	Irregular verb (Ablaut)	-	-	-
15	bought	Irregular verb (Internal change)	-	-	-
Total				6/300 (2%)	

Similar to the Fill-in-the-Blank Test, it was observed that the advanced group had a much lower rate of incorrect answers compared to the intermediate group, specifically 2% and 12.33%, respectively.

The incorrect answers exhibited by the intermediate group encompassed the use of wrong tense (e.g., ‘hurts’, ‘was cooking’, ‘had cooked’, ‘have met’, ‘was reading’, ‘does’, ‘had began’, and ‘was buying’), overgeneralization (e.g., ‘hurted’, ‘readed’, ‘leaved’, ‘beganned’ and ‘beginned’), using past participle form (e.g., ‘gone’), using bare verb form (e.g., ‘meet’), and application of present participle form (e.g., ‘leaving’). The data revealed that the most common incorrect answers made by the intermediate group primarily involved using the wrong tense (19/37, 49%) and overgeneralization (13/37, 35%). There was no error in the past tense verb form ‘watched’.

On the contrary, the advanced group made only two types of incorrect answers. They were using the wrong tense (e.g., ‘was cooking’ and ‘does’) (5/6, 83%), and overgeneralization (e.g., ‘leaved’) (1/6, 17%). Additionally, the advanced learners did not commit any error with the rest of the past tense verb forms, i.e., ‘watched’, ‘hurt’, ‘went’, ‘met’, ‘read’, ‘began’, and ‘bought’.



Although the research focused on the L1 Chinese learners' acquisition of the English irregular past tense verb form, it is worth comparing the acquisition of English irregular and regular past tense verb form.

Table 14 presents the correct rates of English regular and irregular past tense verb forms in the Fill-in-the-Blank Test.

**Table 14 Results of the Fill-in-the-Blank Test on English regular and irregular past tense verb forms by L1 Chinese learners**

Proficiency	Regular	Irregular
	Percentage	Percentage
Intermediate	91.67	83.33
Advanced	98.33	95

In the Fill-in-the-Blank Test, the intermediate group demonstrated higher proficiency in using regular past tense verbs (91.67%), compared to irregular ones (83.33%). However, the advanced group exhibited a little higher accuracy rate in providing regular past tense verbs (98.33%) than irregular ones (95%).

Table 15 presents the correct rates of English regular and irregular past tense verb forms in the GJT.

**Table 15 Results of the GJT on English regular and irregular past tense verb forms by L1 Chinese learners**

Proficiency	Regular	Irregular
	Percentage	Percentage
Intermediate	93.33	84.58
Advanced	95	98.75

In the GJT, the intermediate group perceived much better on the regular past tense (93.33%) than the irregular ones (84.58%). In contrast, the advanced group correctly judged irregular past tense verbs (98.75%) at an accuracy rate a little higher than regular

ones (95%).

According to the results from Table 14 and Table 15, the intermediate group produced and perceived regular past forms much better than irregular past forms in the Fill-in-the-Blank test and the GJT, respectively. However, the advanced group demonstrated slightly higher accuracy in regular past forms in the Fill-in-the-Blank Test, and perceived irregular past forms a little better in the GJT. It is speculated that the level of proficiency might come into play. That is, a lower proficiency could lead to more problems with irregular than regular past verbs possibly due to more unpredicted forms. With higher proficiency, L2 learners could produce and perceive both the regular and irregular past tense forms better at similar accuracy rates.

#### **4. 2 Discussions of the results**

The present study aimed at exploring the acquisition of English irregular past tense morphology by L1 Chinese learners with different proficiency levels.

Hypothesis 1 of the study is that language proficiency has an impact on the acquisition of English irregular past tense by L1 Chinese learners. As reported in 4.1.1 and 4.1.2, the advanced group performed significantly better than the intermediate group ( $p < .05$ ) in both production, i.e., the Fill-in-the-Blank Test and perception, i.e., the GJT. Therefore, Hypothesis 1 was supported. The findings were in line with Dawei et al. (2016), different abilities of L1 Chinese learner with lower and higher English proficiency levels on the English past tense forms.

Since a number of errors were found, it is worth investigating rates and frequency of the different error types.

Table 16 and Table 17 illustrate the incorrect rates of the error types in the Fill-in-the-Blank Test and the GJT by both learner groups, respectively.

**Table 16 List of error types and rates in the Fill-in-the-Blank Test by L1 Chinese learners**

Error types	Correct answers	Incorrect answers produced by both groups	Incorrect rates	Frequency %
Wrong tense	brought	brings	17	42.3%
	had	has	5	
Using past participle form	beat	beaten	4	34.6%
	wrote	written	1	
	drank	drunk	13	
Overgeneralization	beat	beated	7	15.4%
	drank	drinked	1	
Wrong part of speech	sang	song	2	3.8%
Using another part of speech	drank	drought	1	1.9%
Using present participle form	brought	bringing	1	1.9%

**Table 17 List of error types and rates in the GJT by L1 Chinese learners**

Error types	Correct answers	Incorrect answers produced by both groups	Incorrect rates	Frequency %
	hurt	hurts	9	
	met	have met	1	

Wrong tense	read	was reading	1	47.2%
	did	does	4	
	began	had began	1	
	bought	was buying	1	
Overgeneralization	hurt	hurted	3	38.9%
	read	readed	1	
	left	leaved	8	
	began	beginned	1	
		begined	1	
Using bare verb form	met	meet	3	8.3%
Using past participle form	went	gone	1	2.8%
Using present participle form	left	leaving	1	2.8%

Table 16 showed that there were six types of errors in the Fill-in-the-Blank Test. The percentage of the most common errors was found in the type of wrong tense (42.3%), followed by using past participle form (34.6%), Overgeneralization (15.4%), wrong part of speech (3.8%), and using another part of speech (1.9%), as well as using present participle form (1.9%).

The data in Table 17 showed that there were five types of errors in the GJT. The percentage of the most common errors was found in the type of wrong tense (47.2%), followed by overgeneralization (38.9%), using bare verb form (8.3%), and using past participle form (2.8%), as well as using present participle form (2.8%). Note that cases of the wrong part of speech and using another noun were not found in the GJT.

Hypothesis 2 of the study states that, based on Error Analysis, L1 Chinese learners commit both interlingual and intralingual errors of English irregular past tense.

Interlingual errors arise from the influence and interference of the native language (Myint, 2020). Intralingual errors occur due to the learning process of the L2 at a stage when the learners have not acquired the knowledge and also complexity of the L2 (Liu et al., 2022:751-756) (See 2.1.1 and 2.1.2).

English is an inflectional language while Chinese is an isolating language. English has tenses with verbs in different forms that denote time. On the contrary, Chinese is a tenseless language which relies on contexts and time adverbials to indicate events. (See 2.2.1 and 2.2.2).

The errors possibly occurred because of the non-existence of the past tense morphology in Chinese. Without tenses in Chinese, it was problematic for the L1 Chinese learner to select the right tense. According to Table 16 and Table 17, wrong tense was the most common and frequent type, 42.3% in the Fill-in-the-Blank Test and 47.2% in the GJT.

Corder (1971) suggested that a learner's L1 habits, such as patterns, systems, or rules, could impede their acquisition of L2 structures and rules. It was found that the participants mixed up tenses, using wrong verb tense. This type of error is shown in the following examples.

- (10)a. \*My father has a strange experience in high school.  
b. \*The smell of the tiny church brings back every memory of my childhood.  
c. \*Yesterday I was reading the letter Susie wrote me.  
d. \*I have met him as he rode into town, and he said that he intended to stop at this hotel.

In (10a) and (10b), the participants used the simple present form 'has' and 'brings' for an event that happened in the past, instead of using the past tense form 'had' and 'brought'. Besides this, the results also showed that some participants used past continuous tense and present perfect tense, like in (10c) and (10d), respectively. Such errors showed that L1 Chinese learners were facing difficulties in tense selections. The possible cause for the learners' confusion was the interference of their L1. In Chinese,

verbs do not undergo any change in different forms. Examples of differences in verb forms between English and Chinese are shown in Table 18.

**Table 18 Examples of differences in verb forms between English and Chinese**

Verbs	English		Chinese	
	past	present	past	present
sing	sang	sing/ sings	ch àng	ch àng
drink	drank	drink/ drinks	hē	hē
play	played	play/ plays	w án	w án

Table 18 shown that the verbs, ‘sing’ ‘drink’ and ‘play’, which change their forms in the past and present. In contrast, these verbs remain the same in Chinese.

The findings were in line with Hsieh (2009) and Nicoladis et al. (2020), in which the Chinese learners encountered difficulties in accurately apply past tense inflections. The problem was probably due to the morphophonological transfer from Chinese, and also the learner's limited knowledge of the target language.

To summarize so far, the findings from both tests showed that the L1 Chinese learners faced difficulties in acquiring the English past tense, which is non-existent in Chinese. As mentioned, Chinese has no tense marking at all, using only bare verb forms, whereas English does, resulting in interlingual errors.

Besides the interlingual factor, intralingual features, which involve the influence of the target language, might also play a role (See 2.1.2). One type of intralingual error is ‘overgeneralization’, which occur when L2 learners apply grammatical rules and forms within certain contexts to situations where these rules and forms are not relevant (Richards, 1974). For example, the Chinese learners employed the past tense regular suffix ‘-ed’ for some irregular past tense verb forms, as shown in (11):

(11)a. \*The light-heavyweight champion beated his bitter rival last October.

b. \*My boyfriend hurted his left leg while running in the field yesterday.

In (11) the past tense suffix -ed was overused to the irregular past tense verbs ‘beat’ and ‘hurt’. According to the interviews, some participants said that the regular past tense was easier for them, compared to the irregular past tense forms, as it involved adding only ‘-ed’ to the bare verbs. To them, forming irregular past form was much more complicated as they involved a number of different forms.

Besides overgeneralization, a mixture of incorrect forms of irregular past tense verb form was formed, as demonstrated in (12).

(12)a. \*I gone to Lampang with my friends last week

b. \*She patted Carmen on the shoulder and leaving the room.

In (12a) and (12b), the past participle form and present participle form was used, respectively.

What is more, irregular spelling patterns also contributed to the errors. Nouns were employed instead of verbs. For example:

(13)a. \*Birds song in the trees and there was a smell of spring. (sang)

b. \*It was my birthday recently and I only drought two beers. (drank)

The errors shown in (12) and (13) indicated that the participants were possibly confused about the correct verb forms of English irregular past forms.

According to the interviews, some participants said they could only remember the irregular verbs that were frequently used or encountered in the test.

It was speculated that the factor of false concepts hypothesized according to the interlanguage hypothesis might cause these confusions among Chinese learners. As mentioned in section 2.1.2, the factor of false concepts hypothesized refers to the learners’ faulty knowledge of the target language distinctions or inaccurate ideas about language rules (Na-ngam, 2005).

English irregular past tense verbs have always been difficult to teach and learn for L1 Chinese learners (Fangjun, 2006). In China, due to a heavy emphasis on English tasks, i.e., in Gaokao, which is the most important exam in China, English is one of the

major subjects and has equal scores with Chinese and Mathematics. Teachers usually explain what is required for exams, and students merely passively listen. English teaching focuses too much on exams (Liping, 2022). Teachers often provide a list of irregular past tense forms and students are encouraged to memorize these verb forms as vocabulary. According to Liping (2022), most Chinese teachers tend to emphasize mechanical memorization and explanation of vocabulary. Chinese students commonly employ rote memorization as a method to learn vocabulary (Yang & Dai, 2011:61-64). This mechanical approach to English teaching could possibly deprive students of the autonomy to learn English knowledge proactively.

Figure 1 and Figure 2 show an irregular past tense word list and a practice exam in a 7<sup>th</sup>-grade-textbook and 9<sup>th</sup>-grade-textbook, *English* (2012) and MOE (2018), respectively.

**Figure 1 Practice in the Textbook English (2012:119)**

**Module 9 Grammar 一般过去时(3)**

不规则动词过去式的变化 (参见 P120 表格)

be _____	begin _____	build _____
buy _____	come _____	do _____
eat _____	fall _____	give _____
get _____	go _____	have _____
leave _____	make _____	meet _____
put _____	read _____	say _____
send _____	see _____	sit _____
swim _____	spend _____	take _____
teach _____	tell _____	write _____



Figure 2 Irregular verbs list in MOE (2018:184)

..... Irregular Verbs .....

### Irregular Verbs

Verb	Past tense	Past participle
be (am, is, are)	was, were	been
bear	bore	born
beat	beat	beaten
become	became	become
begin	began	begun
blow	blew	blown
break	broke	broken
bring	brought	brought
build	built	built
burn	burnt/ burned	burnt/burned
buy	bought	bought
catch	caught	caught
choose	chose	chosen
come	came	come
cost	cost	cost
cut	cut	cut
deal	dealt	dealt
dig	dug	dug
do (does)	did	done
draw	drew	drawn
dream	dreamt/ dreamed	dreamt/dreamed
drink	drank	drunk
drive	drove	driven
eat	ate	eaten
fall	fell	fallen
feed	fed	fed
feel	felt	felt
fight	fought	fought
find	found	found
fly	flew	flown
forget	forgot	forgotten
get	got	got/gotten
give	gave	given
go	went	gone
grow	grew	grown
hang (悬挂)	hung	hung
have (has)	had	had
hear	heard	heard
hide	hid	hidden
hit	hit	hit
hold	held	held
hurt	hurt	hurt
keep	kept	kept
know	knew	known
lay	laid	laid
lead	led	led
learn	learnt/ learned	learnt/learned
leave	left	left
lend	lent	lent

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Students are required to memorize a large number of irregular verbs, as can be shown in Figure 1, and then do a practice like in Figure 2. As mentioned, the focus on exams and rote memorization in China may lead students to prioritize memorization

over understanding the patterns of verb conjugation. The absence of a structured approach to teaching items often results in learners making errors due to confusion between those items. Teaching and learning materials can influence this intralingual error (Kong, 2013).

According to the interviews, some participants emphasized that rote memorization is the sole method for learning the irregular past tense. One participant said, “The number of English irregular past tense verbs is limited and can be memorized through rote learning.” Another participant from the intermediate group said, “I learned the irregular past tense by memory and accumulation. Sometimes I got confused, and I can only correctly use some irregular verbs that occur very frequently.” Most of the participants thought irregular past tense verbs were difficult to remember and sometimes they confused the use of the regular past form with the irregular past form.

As mentioned, besides the interlingual factors, the errors possibly occurred due to the intralingual factors as well, thus supporting Hypothesis 2.

Hypothesis 3 of the study states that language transfer, overgeneralization, and false concepts hypothesized are the possible factors that cause the problems of English irregular past tense morphology by L1 Chinese learners. The results of the error types and rates in the Fill-in-the-Blank test and GJT demonstrated intralingual factors of language transfer, overgeneralization and false concepts hypothesized, which possibly caused these confusions of English irregular past tense verb forms among the Chinese learners. Therefore, Hypothesis 3 was confirmed.

## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSIONS

This chapter presents the summary of the study in Section 5.1, followed by implications of the study in Section 5.2. Finally, Section 5.3 addresses the limitations and recommendations for future research.

#### 5.1 Summary of the study

This study aimed to explore the acquisition of English irregular past tense morphology by L1 Chinese learners with different proficiency levels. The participants of the study were 60 L1-Mandarin-speaking learners of English. The research instruments were a Fill-in-the-blank test, a Grammaticality Judgment Task, and an interview.

The summary of this study is based on the three research hypotheses.

Hypothesis 1 stated that language proficiency has an impact on the acquisition of English irregular past tense by L1 Chinese learners. The findings of the study confirmed the hypothesis. According to the results in 4.1.1 and 4.1.2, the advanced group performed significantly better than the intermediate group ( $p < .05$ ) in both production, i.e., the Fill-in-the-Blank Test, and perception, i.e., the GJT.

Hypothesis 2 of the study stated that, based on Error Analysis, L1 Chinese learners commit both interlingual and intralingual errors of English irregular past tense. The findings supported the hypothesis. The interlingual errors possibly occurred because of non-existence of the past tense morphology in Chinese. Due to substantial differences between the two language systems, the Chinese learners encountered challenges in accurately using English irregular past tense verb forms. Besides the interlingual factors, the errors possibly occurred due to some intralingual factors. Intralingual factors can

account for the error.

Hypothesis 3 of the study stated that language transfer, overgeneralization, and false concepts hypothesized are the possible factors that cause the problems of English irregular past tense morphology by L1 Chinese learners. In terms of language transfer, while English is an inflectional language, Chinese is characterized as an isolating language. The analysis of error types and frequency in both the Fill-in-the-Blank test and GJT revealed that overgeneralization was one of the most common types. The Chinese learners employed the past tense regular suffix ‘-ed’ for some irregular past tense verb forms. The factor of false concepts hypothesized may also have an impact. The focus on exams and rote memorization in China might cause confusion in irregular past form usage among Chinese learners. Therefore, Hypothesis 3 was supported.

## **5.2 Implications of the study**

This section presents implications of the study, i.e., theoretical implications in section 5.2.1 and pedagogical implications in section 5.2.2

### **5.2.1 Theoretical implications**

The findings from the study yielded theoretical implications by contributing to SLA on analyzing L2 learners’ challenges of English irregular past forms and explaining possible causes. In accordance with Error Analysis, interlingual and intralingual factors have negative impact on SLA. The findings therefore confirmed the notion of the Error Analysis Theory. In addition, understanding these factors as the causes of both interlingual and intralingual errors is crucial for effective language learning. L2 errors could lead to pedagogical implications, to be presented in 5.2.2.

### **5.2.2 Pedagogical implications**

The findings obtained from this study indicate the following pedagogical implications:

Firstly, English is identified as an inflectional language, while Chinese is considered an isolating language. English utilizes verb forms that change to express various tenses and indicate time. Conversely, Chinese, being a tenseless language, depends on context and time adverbials to convey the timing of events. Since the irregular past tense is absent from the participants' L1, it's important for English teachers to employ effective strategies to improve students' acquisition of irregular past forms. One valuable suggestion is to increase students' exposure to natural contexts more frequently. Teachers should also encourage students to engage in communicative activities that utilize irregular past forms. Secondly, as mentioned in 4.2, the factor of false concepts hypothesized might cause problems among Chinese learners. To solve this problem, teachers can alleviate the situation by taking advantage of various teaching methods. It is recommended that students have greater exposure to authentic contexts. Instead of focusing exclusively on textbooks, teachers should inspire students to engage in communicative activities using irregular past tense forms, thus improving their ability to use these past tense forms effectively.

### **5.3 Limitations and recommendations for future research**

The study had some limitations and provided some recommendations for future research as follows:

Firstly, the present study employed two controlled elicitation tasks, i.e., the Fill-in-the-Blank test and the GJT. A suggestion for future research is to utilize natural production tasks, i.e., speaking tasks and/or writing activities, to explore how L2 learners process and produce English irregular past tense morphemes. Secondly, the study focused on exploring types of errors on the English past irregular verb forms.

Consequently, it is recommended that future studies investigate and compare the error patterns and incorrect rates of irregular past form types.



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**APPENDICES**

จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย  
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## Appendix A: Fill-in-the-Blank Test

### Fill-in-the-Blank Test

**Instructions: fill the appropriate forms of words in the blanks.**

1. He (sign) \_\_\_\_\_ the paper with a flourish and returned the pen to its holder.
2. The tide came in and (cut) \_\_\_\_\_ off his route to dry land.
3. The smell of the tiny church (bring) \_\_\_\_\_ back every memory of my childhood.
4. The light-heavyweight champion (beat) \_\_\_\_\_ his bitter rival last October.
5. She not only (write) \_\_\_\_\_ the text but also researched the photographs.
6. September is the (nine) \_\_\_\_\_ month of the year.
7. Birds (sing) \_\_\_\_\_ in the trees and there was a smell of spring.
8. I must go now; it is time I (pick) \_\_\_\_\_ up my daughter from school.
9. John Cabot (sail) \_\_\_\_\_ to America in 1498.
10. It was my birthday recently and I only (drink) \_\_\_\_\_ two beers.
11. He called upon alexander to (review) \_\_\_\_\_ the situation.
12. Jessi (be) \_\_\_\_\_ very young when she met the queen.
13. My father (have) \_\_\_\_\_ a strange experience in high school.
14. The water (pollute) \_\_\_\_\_ is very serious in our country.
15. Many (travel) \_\_\_\_\_ come to China every year.

## Appendix B: Grammaticality Judgment Task (GJT)

**Instruction: Read each sentence carefully, if an item was judged as grammatical with a  $\checkmark$  mark put in front, no correction was required. However, if the item being judged was marked with a  $\times$  mark, a correction was needed.**

\_\_\_ 1. Carmen leaned on her pillow and watched him dress for bed.

**Correction** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ 2. We've called several time about Cleo's early morning barking.

**Correction** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ 3. My boyfriend hurt his left leg while running in the field yesterday.

**Correction** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ 4. My parents allow me to choose between staying at home and take a trip

**Correction** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ 5. After she had finished her homework, she cooks dumplings for dinner.

**Correction** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ 6. I goed to Lampang with my friends last week.

**Correction** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ 7. I became interesting in playing football thanks to a small accident.

**Correction** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ 8. I met him as he rode into town, and he said that he intended to stop at this hotel.

**Correction** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ 9. Yesterday I readed the letter Susie wrote to me.

**Correction** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ 10. Lisa did the best she could to draw a map on the small piece of paper.

**Correction** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ 11. It is difficult to understanding why she barks every minute she's outside.

**Correction** \_\_\_\_\_

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\_\_\_ 12. She patted Carmen on the shoulder and leaved the room.

**Correction** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ 13. The day Jonathan went to camp, she begined working on her plan

**Correction** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ 14. I have a new roommate name Louis.

**Correction** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ 15. Grasso bought a dark blue van on the Internet and the guy delivered it here.

**Correction** \_\_\_\_\_



## Appendix C: IOC Results of the Fill-in-the-Blank Test, GJT and interview

**Description:** The index of congruence is to validate the quality of this instrument. Please indicate your agreement according to the following scale by placing a tick mark (✓) in the box.

Scoring +1	=	Certain that the test item is congruent with the objectives
Scoring 0	=	Uncertain whether the test item is congruent with the objectives
Scoring - 1	=	Certain that the test item is NOT congruent with the objectives

1.Fill-in-the-Blank Test				
Items	Analysis of IOC from Experts			Score
	1	2	3	
1.He (sign) <u>signed</u> the paper with a flourish and returned the pen to its holder.	+1	+1	+1	1
2.The tide came in and (cut) <u>cut</u> off his route to dry land.	+1	+1	+1	1
3. The smell of the tiny church (bring) <u>brought</u> back every memory of my childhood.	+1	0	+1	0.67
4. The light-heavyweight champion (beat) <u>beat</u> his bitter rival last October.	+1	+1	+1	1
5. She not only (write) <u>wrote</u> the text but also researched the	+1	+1	+1	1

photographs.				
6. Birds (sing) <u>sang</u> in the trees and there was a smell of spring.	+1	+1	+1	1
7. John Cabot (sail) <u>sailed</u> to America in 1498.	+1	+1	+1	1
8. It was my birthday recently and I only (drink) <u>drank</u> two beers.	+1	+1	+1	1
9. Jessi (be) <u>was</u> very young when she met the queen.	+1	+1	+1	1
10. My father (have) <u>had</u> a strange experience in high school.	+1	+1	+1	1
Mean Score: 0.987				
2. Grammaticality Judgment Task      Score: 1				
Items	Analysis of IOC from Experts			Score
	1	2	3	
1. Carmen leaned on her pillow and <u>watched</u> (✓) him dress for bed.	+1	+1	+1	1
2. My boyfriend <u>hurt</u> (✓) his left leg while running in the field yesterday.	+1	+1	+1	1
3. After she had finished her homework, she <u>cooks</u> (cooked) dumplings for dinner.	+1	+1	+1	1
4. I <u>goed</u> (went) to Lampung with my friends last week.	+1	+1	+1	1
5. I <u>met</u> (✓) him as he rode into town, and he said that he intended to stop at this hotel.	+1	+1	+1	1
6. Yesterday I <u>readed</u> (read) the letter Susie wrote to me.	+1	+1	+1	1



7.Lisa <u>did</u> (√) the best she could to draw a map on the small piece of paper.	+1	+1	+1	1
8.She patted Carmen on the shoulder and <u>leaved</u> (left) the room.	+1	+1	+1	1
9.The day Jonathan went to camp, she <u>begined</u> (began) working on her plan	+1	+1	+1	1
10.Grasso <u>bought</u> (√) a dark blue van on the Internet and the guy delivered it here.	+1	+1	+1	1
Mean Score:1				
3.Interview				
Items	Analysis of IOC from Experts			Score
	1	2	3	
1.你在学习不规则过去式时有什么困难吗? (Do you have any difficulties when you learned irregular past forms?)	+1	+1	+1	1
2.你可以正确区分两种过去式形式吗? (Can you distinguish English irregular and regular past verb forms?)	0	+1	+1	0.67
3.你是如何学习英语规则过去式?	+1	+1	+1	1

(How did you learn English regular past forms?)				
4.你是如何学习英语不规则过去式? (How did you learn English irregular past forms?)	+1	+1	+1	1
5.你能熟练使用不规则动词吗? (Are you familiar with English irregular verbs?)	+1	0	+1	0.67
Mean Score: 0.868				

## Appendix D Details of Participants

Participants	TEM-8 score	Proficiency
1	80	Advanced
2	91	
3	80	
4	81	
5	80	
6	80	
7	80	
8	81	
9	80	
10	80	
11	86	
12	88	
13	86	
14	81	
15	86	
16	86	
17	81	
18	88	
19	90	
20	80	
21	80	
22	80	
23	85	
24	86	
25	80	
26	80	
27	80	
28	80	
29	80	
30	82	
31	60	
32	60	
33	60	
34	65	
35	60	
36	60	

37	60	Intermediate
38	60	
39	65	
40	66	
41	65	
42	60	
43	61	
44	64	
45	62	
46	65	
47	60	
48	64	
49	60	
50	69	
51	60	
52	60	
53	64	
54	60	
55	60	
56	61	
57	60	
58	64	
59	66	
60	60	

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