

“Although But...” A Study of Bias in the Narrative Discourse of Thai Overseas Students

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Abstract: This paper takes the Thai students in Guangxi University of Foreign Languages as the research object to investigate their application of Chinese transitional related words "although... But..." And systematically summarize their use of breaking class connective words "although... But..." The types of errors appear in time, and explore the causes of their formation. Finally, based on the research results, targeted teaching suggestions are proposed to help Thai students more accurately grasp the "although... But..." In order to provide reference for teaching transition related words in teaching Chinese as a foreign language, the correct use of these words in narrative texts can improve the writing quality and Chinese expression ability.

Keywords: Discourse; Disjunctive Connective Word; Bias Analysis.

1. Preface

From the late 1970s to the early 1980s, the study of discourse gradually emerged, and Chinese scholars began to introduce the international theory of modern discourse linguistics and tried to apply it to the study of Chinese discourse. It was not until the late 20th century, with the vigorous development of the field of teaching Chinese as a foreign language and the deepening of the research understanding of interlanguage theory on bias, that the Chinese discourse bias of international students attracted academic attention and began to make great progress [1].

As an important linguistic means to connect sentences and express complex logical relations, degenerative connective words play an indispensable role in Chinese narrative discourse. The correct use of disjunctive connective words in narrative discourse can make narrative discourse more coherent and its semantic meaning clearer. However, compared with non-native Chinese learners, it is often a difficult task to accurately grasp and flexibly use such related words, especially in the cross-cultural context, learners' negative transfer of mother tongue, over-generalization of target language, learners' avoidance strategies and other factors may lead to discourse bias.

As an important group of Chinese learners, Thai students are representative of their characteristics and difficulties in the process of language acquisition. Therefore, this paper takes the essays of Thai students in Guangxi University of Foreign Languages as the corpus, with a total of 205 essays, and selects "Although... But..." This typical transitional related word is taken as the entry point to analyze the narrative discourse samples of Thai students, systematically summarize the types of errors, and deeply analyze the causes of errors, aiming to promote the Thai students to improve their Chinese writing level and provide certain references for the teaching of Chinese writing and discourse as a foreign language. In order to show the errors of the corpus more clearly, the author needs to modify it properly without affecting the semantics and sentence meaning.

2. In the Narrative Discourse "Although... But..." Usage Analysis

Based on the collected composition materials, this section analyzes and organizes the data of the overall use of Thai overseas students' compositions. The data are as follows:

Table 1. Thai students "Although... But..." Usage statistics (unit: example)

type	correct use case	biased error
quantity	146	41
percent	78.0%	21.9%

As can be seen from the above picture, in the writing of the Thai students, "Although... But..." The correct use cases were 146 times, accounting for about 78.0%, and the incorrect use cases were 41 times, accounting for about 21.9%. According to this, "although... But..." This disjunctive connective is frequently used in narrative texts written by Thai students. "Although... But..." In the vocabulary list of the New Chinese Proficiency Test Syllabus, it belongs to the second level, and the difficulty level is low for Thai students, but many Thai students still do not grasp this group of transitional related words in place, and there are errors.

3. In the Narrative Discourse "Although... But..." Analysis of Bias Situation

According to statistics, Thai students use "Although... But..." The bias is as follows:

As can be seen from the above figure, in the narrative discourse written by the Thai students, the use of "although... But..." In this transition, four typical forms of bias - misuse of class, misaddition of class, omission of class and disorder class are reflected. In their text writing, the occurrence frequency of these four types of bias phenomena shows a significant imbalance, which is ordered from high to low according to the number proportion, namely misuse > misaddition > omission > disorder. Among the four types of errors, misuse errors rank first with 19 items, accounting for

46.34% of the total number of errors. This data clearly reveals that international students encounter significant challenges and frequent problems in this kind of errors. It is followed by the error of adding class bias, a total of 14, accounting for 34.15%, also can not be ignored; In contrast, omission and disorder errors accounted for 12.20% and 7.32% of the total

errors with 5 and 3 items respectively, which is relatively small, but also indicates the subtle omissions in the grasp of the structure of international students. This unbalanced distribution of errors not only reveals the weak links in the use of grammar and logic, but also provides a clear direction and focus for the subsequent teaching and counseling.

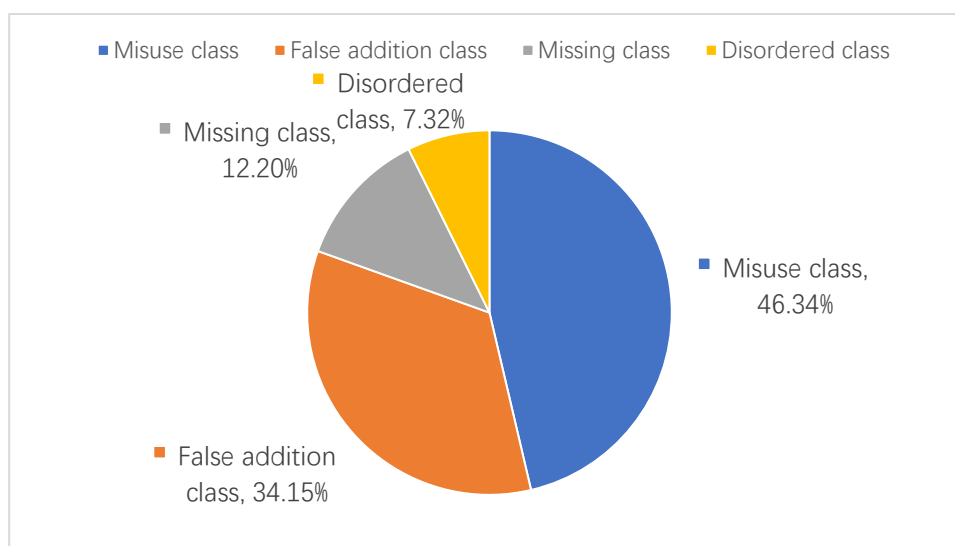


Fig 1. Thai students use the phrase "Although... But "bias case graph

4. In the Narrative Discourse "Although... But..." Bias Analysis

Previous studies have widely adopted Lu Jianji's bias classification system, which systematically divides bias phenomena into four categories: misuse, misaddition, omission and disorder. This classification framework has been widely recognized and applied in academic circles due to its logical rigor and analysis convenience, providing a solid theoretical foundation for in-depth analysis of learners' language bias. In this study, on the basis of fully respecting and inheriting the previous research results, the "although... But..." The phenomenon of bias is deeply and systematically investigated and analyzed. In this study, in order to ensure accurate identification and labeling of bias examples, the author uses the "*" symbol to mark the bias sentences, and points out the specific location of the bias directly through the underscore "_____".

4.1. Misuse

Example 1* Under the pressure of working in the holidays, no matter I am tired, sometimes I still do something I am interested in, or hang out with my friends, cook and eat together.

Generally speaking, coffee has many advantages. Although it helps prevent hepatitis B. But it helps lower cholesterol in the blood vessels.

Of the food we have eaten in many restaurants, some were very good and some were not so good. There are also restaurants where the food is expensive but not good.

In Example 1, "regardless" is misused as "although". From the point of view of the form of words, the concessory associative words of "regardless" are usually used closely with adverbs such as "do" or "also" to build a transition relationship and emphasize the universality of subsequent situations. "But" is usually used in pairs with "although". Therefore, "regardless" in Example 1 should be "although".

In Example 2 "Although... But..." For misuse. "Helps to prevent hepatitis B" and "helps to lower cholesterol in blood vessels" are both beneficial effects of coffee, and the preceding sentences are juxtaposed, not interchangeable. But... "Not only... And..." Or other connective word indicating a parallel relationship.

In Example 3, "but" is misused. The preceding "food is very expensive" expresses a derogatory evaluation of food, and the latter sentence "not delicious" is also a derogatory evaluation, and the preceding sentence is a juxtaposed relationship, rather than a transition relationship, therefore, the "but" should be changed to "also".

4.2. Misadd

Although coffee is drunk by many people, they are always popular to drink it in the morning, or when they are very sleepy.

Although coffee is what people like to drink, especially in the morning, there are many types of coffee, cold and hot, generally speaking, most people prefer to drink black coffee in the morning, because it can be made at home or bought in the store, which allows you to drink it easily and save more time.

Example 6* Lisa's talents include singing, rapping, dancing, modeling, and shooting commercials. But Lisa's most outstanding talent is not singing but dancing.

In Example 4, "although" is added by mistake. "Although" is usually used in pairs with "but" and is a common connective word to express concession and transition in sentences. Example 4 only uses "although" alone. And according to the semantics of example 4, the last sentence "they are always popular to drink in the morning" is a supplement to the previous sentence "coffee is a lot of people drink", there is no transitional meaning in the sentence, so "although" should be deleted.

Although... But..." Added by mistake. The sentence after "although" introduces a phenomenon that "coffee is what people like to drink", the sentence after "but" indicates a

supplementary explanation to the first two clauses, there is no transition relationship between the clauses, should be "although... But..." Remove it.

In example 6, "but" is added by mistake. The last sentence of "Lisa's most outstanding talent is not singing but dancing" is to emphasize one of the outstanding talents of the previous sentence, and the sentence has no transitional meaning. Therefore, it is not enough to use "but" to connect the preceding and following sentences, and the "but" should be removed.

4.3. Leave Out

The restaurant is beautiful, the food is delicious, and the price is too high.

The first time I ate Chinese food, I could eat anything, but I think Chinese food is a little greasy, maybe it is cold in China, want to warm body, cook a little greasy food.

Example 7 omitted the connective for the transition "although... But..." . The first two clauses in the sentence "this restaurant is very beautiful, the food is very delicious" are the advantages of the restaurant, the last clause "too expensive" is the disadvantage of the restaurant, the relationship before and after should be a transition, so here the application of "although... But..." Add "although" at the beginning of the sentence and "but" before "too expensive".

The connective word "although" for the transition is missing from Example 8. The clause "I can eat anything" and the last clause "but I think Chinese food is a little greasy" are the reverse results, and the concessionaries such as "although" should be added before them.

4.4. Disordering

Every morning, I often see my parents get up and make coffee. Although people can avoid fatigue and feel energetic by drinking coffee, it is not good to drink too much coffee.

Although my life is very happy, but she is not like me, her life is very painful, is full of bitterness and sadness.

The problem in Example 9 and Example 10 is that the "although" is in the wrong position. When the subject of the current second clause is different, "but" is placed before the subject, and "although" should also be placed before the subject of the first clause. Therefore, put "though" before the subject of the first clause.

5. Thai Students Use the Phrase "Although... But..." Causes of Bias

5.1. Negative Transfer of Native Language

The native language background of Chinese learners will profoundly shape their specific path of learning the target language, and also have a specific degree of influence. The similarities and differences between two languages will pose challenges to learners and bring positive and negative influences to the second language acquisition process respectively, which are also called positive and negative transfer of the first language [2]. The primary Chinese learners who have just come into contact with Chinese are more deeply affected by this factor. The positive transfer effect of mother tongue is like a key, which opens the door of efficient learning for primary Chinese learners, helps them to master Chinese knowledge more quickly and improve their language skills. On the contrary, the phenomenon of negative transfer of mother tongue is like a stumbling block on the plane, which inevitably brings certain troubles and challenges

to primary Chinese learners, requiring them to distinguish and adapt more carefully, overcome the interference brought by mother tongue habits, and integrate into the different world of Chinese with a more skilled attitude. For example, there are two words in Thai that represent the transition relationship, one is equivalent to the Chinese "but" and "but", and the other is equivalent to "but", and the two conjunctions that represent the transition are placed before the subject of the clause. Since the words that represent "but" and "but" in Thai are not equivalent to the Chinese "but" and "but", Due to this asymmetry, international students tend to unconsciously rely on the knowledge framework and grammar rules of their mother tongue to understand and apply Chinese when learning Chinese, resulting in usage bias in their actual application [3].

5.2. Negative Transfer of Target Language

The acquired knowledge of the target language also influences the discourse bias of Thai Chinese learners. Xun Liu mentioned in his Introduction to Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language that "learners use the acquired knowledge of the target language to learn the new target language." The rules between the target languages are not fully applicable, and errors occur due to their differences, which is called generalization or overgeneralization of the target language [4]. This phenomenon is more obvious in the intermediate and even advanced stage of Chinese learning, and becomes the focus of teaching that teachers need to pay special attention to. Under the significant role of this factor, international students tend to choose transition related words that they are particularly proficient in, and they are easy to ignore the restrictive conditions attached to them, which virtually promote the over-extensive application of such words in expression.

5.3. Avoidance Strategy

The importance of learning strategy as the key factor driving learning effect is self-evident. In the process of Chinese learning, in order to avoid mistakes, international students often adopt a series of avoidance strategies, which tend to avoid the complicated and simple, avoid the easy, avoid the new and avoid the old, showing a self-protection and strategic adjustment of learners in the face of challenges. [5]. There are several reasons for the avoidance of international students in learning. On the one hand, due to the complexity of transitional related words and the differences in cultural background, it is difficult for international students to grasp the correct usage of these words, which leads to the deviation and deficiency in understanding. On the other hand, students with advanced Chinese level have built a cognitive framework of grammar and pragmatic rules to a certain extent, and can clearly realize what specific aspects they are weak in. Therefore, when faced with difficult related words, they will unconsciously adopt avoidance strategies and deliberately reduce the use of these related words. In the practice of text writing, we will try to avoid using those connective words with low familiarity. Because of the low degree of mastery, it is chosen to avoid use, and because it is not commonly used, it is more difficult to use flexibly. Because they know their weaknesses, in the process of daily writing, they always skillfully avoid those related words that they are not familiar with or have not mastered comprehensively, and adopt avoidance strategies to deal with them.

6. Teaching Advice

6.1. Cultivate Textual Awareness

Teachers should firmly establish the consciousness of discourse teaching and carry it through the teaching practice. At present, there is a misunderstanding in teaching Chinese as a foreign language, that is, writing is required only in middle and advanced stages, so writing training has become the watershed between elementary and middle and advanced Chinese teaching [6]. However, the cultivation of discourse competence is actually a process of gradual improvement from shallow to deep. If the training of sentence coherence, interlanguage echo and paragraph cohesion skills is neglected in the primary stage, when it comes to the middle and advanced stage, international students will often encounter many obstacles, they may doubt their own ability, and then fall into the bottleneck of Chinese level. Therefore, teachers should cultivate students' discourse awareness from the primary stage and integrate it into the whole process of teaching Chinese as a foreign language.

6.2. Multi-class Linkage

In other class types, such as oral class, comprehensive class and reading class, teachers should not only emphasize its French-language function, but also emphasize the cohesion and coherence between clauses and paragraphs, and consciously carry out relevant analysis and training [6]. For example, after reading a simple essay, lead the students to analyze the logic between paragraphs and understand the main idea of the whole essay. Then, the teacher picks out related words and asks the students to summarize the content of the article in their own words according to the prompts of key words. In this way, teachers can gain insight into students' thinking path and cultivate students' ability to grasp the whole discourse. At the same time, pay attention to listening training, listen to some simple conversations and stories. In the process of listening, students pay attention to the tone and pause of the speaker, and try to understand the context and logical relationship of the dialogue. In addition, students are encouraged to recite an excellent model essay every week, adhering to the old adage of "familiar reading becomes reciting, meaning is clear". Reciting can promote the internalization of discourse cohesion skills, so that students can unconsciously master and flexibly use these skills, and then write articles naturally in writing.

6.3. Comparative Teaching of Chinese and Thai

Teachers should compare the two languages in the necessary discourse teaching, and find out the similarities and differences between Chinese and Thai through the comparative analysis of the two language systems. For example, comparative teaching of related words expressing transition in Chinese and Thai can not only deepen students' understanding and cognition of the differences between the two languages, but also effectively reduce the adverse effects of negative transfer in Thai. Through such comparative learning, students can more clearly understand the unique features of Chinese transitional expression, so that they can naturally integrate into and follow Chinese grammar habits and expression norms in writing and expression, so as to make language use more authentic and smooth. Teachers should pay full attention to students' native language background. When Thai students have discourse bias, they should judge whether

the bias is affected by Thai thinking and expression habits. When students cannot completely correct the bias caused by negative transfer of mother tongue, teachers should give a comprehensive comparative explanation of Chinese and Thai in time to clearly reveal the differences and connections between the two languages. Reducing the obstacles caused by negative transfer of Thai language to learning will become an important driving force for students to overcome language barriers and achieve success [7].

7. Brief Summary

Based on the interlanguage corpus of Thai students studying abroad, this paper discusses the question of "although... But..." The bias of the situation is investigated. We found that "although... But..." Although as a HSK-2 vocabulary, the difficulty is relatively small, there are still some Thai students who have errors in the writing of narrative texts. The author divides the types of errors into misuse, misaddition, omission and disorder. The misuse type has the highest frequency of bias. The ranking of the four types of errors from high to low is: misuse > error addition > omission > disorder. We find that the main causes of bias are negative transfer of mother tongue, negative transfer of target language and learners' avoidance strategies.

Therefore, in teaching, teachers should actively cultivate the discourse awareness of Thai students, consciously carry out the cohesion exercises between clauses and paragraphs in various classes, pay attention to the contrast teaching between Chinese and Thai, guide students to gradually perceive, understand and finally master discourse skills, and realize the steady improvement of language ability.

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