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АНАЛИЗ КИТАЙСКИХ ИДИОМАТИЧЕСКИХ ОШИБОК НА ОСНОВЕ «МЕЖДУНАРОДНЫХ СТАНДАРТОВ ВЛАДЕНИЯ КИТАЙСКИМ ЯЗЫКОМ ДЛЯ КИТАЙСКОГО ОБРАЗОВАНИЯ»

Данная статья основана на Глобальном межъязыковом корпусе китайского языка и содержит примеры ошибок в идиомах, включенных в «Стандарты владения языком». В ней классифицируются и статистически анализируются количество ошибок в идиомах, используемых иностранными студентами, обнаруживая, что грамматические ошибки составляют 40,4 %, семантические — 36,7 %, формальные — 19,1 % и прагматические — 3,8 %. Исследуются причины каждого типа ошибок и предлагаются целенаправленные стратегии обучения по трем направлениям: преподавание в аудитории, составление учебников и создание учебных ресурсов.

Ключевые слова: китайские идиомы; анализ ошибок; корпус; стратегии обучения.

Introduction. In teaching Chinese as a foreign language, compared to general Chinese vocabulary, idioms have a concise structure, mostly in four-character forms, making them easy to say, remember, and use in expression. They are also profound in meaning, rich in connotation, and often carry strong emotional connotations. Ma Honghai [1] pointed out that idioms are the shining pearls in the treasure trove of Chinese culture and an important window to showcase Chinese civilization. Therefore, researching and analyzing the use of Chinese idioms by foreign students is of positive significance for advancing international Chinese education and cultural exchange. The academic community has achieved fruitful results in the study of errors in Chinese idioms for foreign learners (Zhang Yongfang [2]; Hong Bo [3]; Hou Chaolong [4]; Sun Zhilin [5]; Xu Zhangli [6]), providing effective guidance for teaching Chinese idioms to foreign learners. However, with the continuous development of teaching practices, especially after the release of the “International Chinese Education Chinese Language Proficiency Standards” (hereinafter referred to as the “Proficiency

Standards”), the existing research has shown some inadequacies in addressing the current evolving teaching practices. Therefore, research on idiom errors under the new syllabus and teaching practices is imperative.

This study will rely on the Global Chinese Interlanguage Corpus to retrieve error cases of idioms included in the “Proficiency Standards”, statistically analyze the number of idiom error cases, categorize them, and summarize their characteristics. The causes of these errors will be explored, and targeted teaching strategy recommendations will be proposed.

Main part. Analysis of Idiom Errors by Foreign Students

This study selected 375 idioms from the “Proficiency Standards” and retrieved 4,131 idiom usage cases by foreign students from the Global Chinese Interlanguage Corpus, involving 320 idioms. Among these, there were 267 error cases, involving 141 idioms. The error rate of idiom usage was 44 %, indicating that foreign students’ mastery of idioms still needs improvement.

We categorized idiom errors into four types: grammatical, semantic, formal, and pragmatic. The statistical analysis of each error type is shown in Table 1.

T a b l e 1 — Overview of Error Cases

Type	Formal Errors	Semantic Errors	Grammatical Errors	Pragmatic Errors	Total
Number of Cases	51	98	108	10	267
Percentage, %	19.1	36.7	40.4	3.8	100

1. Grammatical Errors

A total of 108 grammatical errors were retrieved, making it the most common type of error. These errors can be further divided into two categories: errors in sentence component roles and collocation errors. The statistical analysis of grammatical errors is shown in Table 2.

T a b l e 2 — Grammatical Error Cases

Type	Component Errors	Collocation Errors	Total
Number of Cases	68	40	108
Percentage, %	62.9	37.1	100

(1) *Errors in sentence component roles*, where idioms are used in roles they cannot fulfill.

1) * 第一, 不吃早餐让人们没有朝气蓬勃。

1) * First, not eating breakfast makes people lack [vigor and vitality]{underline}.

“朝气蓬勃” is a predicate idiom, usually serving as a predicate or attributive in sentences. In Example 1, it is incorrectly used as the object of “lack”.

(2) *Collocation errors*, where idioms have fixed descriptive objects, and using them with inappropriate objects leads to errors.

2) * 妈妈一直拥抱我, 爸爸的眼睛恋恋不舍, 看见他们这样使我流下了眼泪。

2) * Mom kept hugging me, and Dad's eyes were [reluctant to part]{underline}. Seeing them like this made me cry.

“恋恋不舍” means “very reluctant to leave”, usually describing a person's feelings. In Example 2, it is incorrectly used to describe eyes.

2. Semantic Errors

A total of 98 semantic errors were retrieved, which can be divided into three categories: idiom omission, where the sentence should have used an idiom but did not, leading to imprecise or incorrect expression; semantic deviation, where the idiom's meaning does not match the intended meaning of the context; and semantic repetition, where the idiom's meaning overlaps with other components of the sentence. The statistical analysis of semantic errors is shown in Table 3.

T a b l e 3 — Semantic Error Cases

Type	Omission	Semantic Deviation	Semantic Repetition	Total
Number of Cases	5	84	9	98
Percentage, %	5.2	85.7	9.1	100

(1) *Omission*

3) * 我可以无虑地回答。

3) * I can answer [without worry]{underline}.

In Example 3, “无虑” should mean “without consideration”, so “不假思索” should be used to correctly express the intended meaning.

(2) *Semantic deviation*

Semantic deviation errors can be further divided into three categories: confusion of near-synonyms, literal interpretation, and semantic incoherence.

Confusion of near-synonyms occurs when two idioms with similar meanings are confused, leading to the wrong idiom being used.

4) * 归根到底, 它在每个比赛上都输了, 别的动物都在一个比赛上取得了胜利。

4) * [In the final analysis]{.underline}, it lost every competition, while other animals won at least one.

In Example 4, “in the final analysis” means “to sum up the fundamental reason”, usually used to summarize the cause of an event. However, the sentence is summarizing the result of the event, so “in summary” should be used instead, as it means “to sum up”, fitting the context better.

Literal interpretation occurs when foreign students interpret idioms based solely on their literal meaning, leading to incorrect usage.

5) * 她每天早上不翼而飞去上课。

5) * She goes to class every morning [without wings to fly]{.underline}.

In Example 5, “不翼而飞” usually means “something suddenly disappears or news spreads quickly”, but the student interpreted it literally as “running very fast, like flying”.

Semantic incoherence occurs when the use of an idiom makes the sentence incoherent or confusing.

6) * 虽然天气很热, 川流不息的, 但是津津有味。

6) * Although the weather is hot, [the river flows incessantly]{.underline}, but [with great relish]{.underline}.

In Example 6, “川流不息”、“津津有味” have no semantic connection with the preceding “the weather is hot”.

(3) *Semantic repetition*

7) * 这条河的开端你会碰到有大有小的石头, 那要看你中途半途而废, 还是吃苦耐劳地走到尽头。

7) * At the beginning of this river, you will encounter stones of various sizes, depending on whether you [give up halfway]{.underline} or persevere to the end.

In Example 7, “半途而废” already means “stopping halfway”, which semantically overlaps with “midway”.

3. Formal Errors

A total of 51 formal errors were retrieved. Based on the retrieved data and relevant research, formal errors can be divided into five categories: omission, addition, wrong characters, wrong order, and coinage. The statistical analysis is shown in Table 4.

Table 4 — Formal Error Cases

Type	Omission	Addition	Wrong Characters	Wrong Order	Coinage	Total
Number of Cases	2	1	29	7	12	51
Percentage, %	3.9	1.9	56.8	13.7	23.7	100

(1) *Omission*, where the idiom is incomplete, such as a four-character idiom missing one character.

8) * 那天以后, 我放弃了爱不释手的手机, 我不要半途而()。

8) * After that day, I gave up my beloved phone, I don't want to [give up halfway]{.underline}.

9) * 发展经济必然要消耗能源, 不可避()地就会导致能源和资源的减少。

9) * Developing the economy inevitably consumes energy, [unavoidably]{.underline} leading to a reduction in energy and resources.

In Example 8, “半途而废” is missing the character “half”, and in Example 9, “不可避免” is missing the character “avoid”.

(2) *Addition*, where the idiom has an extra character.

10) * 保证这批货, 各个方面无万无一失, 就算发生了意外情况, 不能做到上述承诺, 你们将得到合理的赔偿。

10) * To ensure this batch of goods, every aspect must be [absolutely foolproof]{.underline}. Even if unexpected situations occur and

the above promises cannot be fulfilled, you will receive reasonable compensation.

In Example 10, “无万无一失” should be “万无一失” with “无” being an unnecessary addition.

(3) *Wrong characters*, where a character in the idiom is replaced by another character. These errors can be further divided into near-synonyms, near-homophones, similar shapes, similar sounds and shapes, and traditional character misuse. This type of error is the most common among formal errors, with 29 cases.

11) * 无云的夜空, 点缀着数以万计的小星星, 仿佛一颗颗小眼睛, 此起彼伏地眨个不停。

11) * The cloudless night sky, dotted with countless stars, like little eyes, [rising and falling]{underline} as they blink.

In Example 11, “此起彼伏” should be “此起彼伏”, with “落”与“伏” being near-synonyms.

12) * 但是, 你也是半心半疑, 可是你已经知道我是个不撞南墙不回头的人。

12) * But you are also [half-hearted and half-doubting]{underline}, though you already know I am someone who won't give up until I hit a wall.

In Example 12, “半心半疑” should be “半信半疑”, with “心” and “信” being near-homophones.

13) * 如果你生病的话, 那你怎么办? 无夸奈何只能戒烟。

13) * If you get sick, what will you do? [No choice but to]{underline} quit smoking.

In Example 13, “无夸奈何” should be “无可奈何”, with “夸” and “可” being similar in shape.

14) * 因为我觉得歌曲不但悦耳动听, 有些词句还意味深长, 扣人心弦。

14) * Because I think songs are not only pleasant to listen to, but some lyrics are also profound, [tugging at heartstrings]{underline}.

In Example 14, “扣人心弦” should be “扣人心弦”, with “玄” and “弦” being similar in sound and shape.

15) * 奖赏的方式与方法都大同小异, 不是难题。

15) * The methods and ways of rewarding are [largely similar]{.underline}, not a difficult problem.

In Example 15, “largely similar” is a case of traditional character misuse, where the student used traditional characters “異” instead of simplified characters “异” .

(4) *Wrong order*, where the characters of the idiom are all present but in the wrong order.

16) *不管你是迷了路还是出了事故，汉堡本地人一定会设方想法帮助你。

16) * Whether you are lost or have an accident, the locals in Hamburg will definitely [think of ways]{.underline} to help you.

“设方想法” should be “想方设法” , with the characters in the correct order.

(5) *Coinage*, where foreign students subjectively create four-character words that resemble idioms.

17) *虽然中道而废，但是真的是很好的经历。

17) * Although [giving up halfway]{.underline}, it was really a good experience.

In Example 17, “中道而废” is a subjectively created word by the student, resembling an idiom. From the context, it is clear that the student intended to write “半途而废” .

4. Pragmatic Errors

A total of 10 pragmatic errors were retrieved.

18) *活动结束后，同学们都夸夸其谈，说中国人如此的好客，热情，勤奋，怪不得中国的发展如此的快。

18) * After the event, the students were all [boasting]{.underline}, saying how hospitable, enthusiastic, and hardworking Chinese people are, which is why China is developing so fast.

19) *当她走进教室里，学生们就呆头呆脑的。

19) * When she entered the classroom, the students were [dull and slow]{.underline}.

“夸夸其谈” means “talking boastfully or writing in an exaggerated, unrealistic manner”, carrying a negative connotation. Similarly, “呆头呆脑” means “slow in thought or action”, also carrying a negative connotation. Both examples show pragmatic errors due to a lack of understanding of the idioms’ emotional connotations.

Through the analysis of idiom error cases in the Global Interlanguage Corpus, we have gained a general understanding of idiom errors made by foreign students. The main types of errors are formal, semantic, grammatical, and pragmatic, with grammatical errors being the most common, followed by semantic and formal errors, and pragmatic errors being the least common.

Through the analysis of the retrieved error cases, we can identify several major issues foreign students face when using Chinese idioms: first, a lack of understanding of the grammatical functions of idioms and their collocation objects; second, a lack of understanding of the cultural connotations behind idioms, especially their extended meanings; third, a high frequency of wrong characters.

Exploration of the Causes of Idiom Errors by Foreign Students and Suggestions

Lu Jianji [7] in “Error Analysis of Vocabulary Learning by Foreigners in Chinese” proposed that foreign students’ Chinese errors mainly arise from “interference from their native language and culture, interference from previously learned Chinese knowledge, learning attitudes, and mistakes in teaching explanations and training”. In summary, in teaching Chinese as a foreign language, the causes of idiom errors by foreign students are multifaceted.

1. Causes of Errors

(1) Causes of Grammatical Errors

Idioms have diverse grammatical functions. Zhang Yongfang [2] mentioned that most textbooks and teachers do not introduce the “part of speech” of idioms when teaching them, leading to many foreign students knowing the meaning and origin of idioms but not their actual usage, resulting in errors when constructing sentences. Errors in sentence component roles are caused by this.

Additionally, Chinese expresses grammatical meaning in a unique way, mostly through word order and function words, making it even more important to grasp the collocation and combination of words.

(2) Causes of Semantic Errors

First, the complexity of idioms themselves poses difficulties for foreign students in learning their meanings. The meanings of idioms are profound, and their true connotations are often not the simple sum

of their constituent parts. If foreign students only interpret idioms literally, they are prone to the literal interpretation errors mentioned earlier.

Moreover, idioms contain profound Chinese cultural connotations, representing the essence of Chinese language and culture. Therefore, learning idioms requires an understanding of Chinese culture, which raises the threshold for foreign students learning idioms.

(3) *Causes of Formal Errors*

Idioms are special fixed phrases with fixed components. Foreign students must learn and use them as a whole, which tests their familiarity with the idioms. This can lead to omission, addition, and wrong order errors when using unfamiliar idioms.

(4) *Causes of Pragmatic Errors*

Although pragmatic errors by foreign students are relatively few, they should not be underestimated, as they can easily cause communication barriers and misunderstandings, affecting emotional communication between parties. Pragmatic errors are often caused by cultural differences.

2. Teaching Suggestions

(1) *Grammatical Aspect*

For grammatical errors, two approaches can be taken: first, emphasize the explanation of the grammatical functions of idioms. Teachers should supplement the explanation of idiom meanings with their grammatical properties, i.e., the sentence components idioms can serve. Additionally, many idioms can serve different sentence components, so teachers should provide targeted comparative exercises for these idioms. Second, supplement common collocations for idioms with fixed collocation objects. In the language input for foreign students learning idioms, try to present as many idiom collocations as possible to reinforce memory, and use exercises like matching and fill-in-the-blanks for training.

(2) *Semantic Aspect*

For semantic errors, teachers can use methods like character explanation and semantic explanation.

Pei Jianbo and Huang Xiaoping [8] mentioned that character explanation starts with the literal meaning of words, moving from part to whole until the complete meaning is grasped. Semantic explanation emphasizes the extended meanings of idioms prone to literal interpretation, guiding students to associate concrete things with abstract concepts, expanding the semantic range of idioms.

Additionally, for idioms rich in cultural connotations and meanings embedded in historical allusions or myths, teachers should appropriately introduce the traditional Chinese cultural knowledge contained in the idioms, allowing foreign students to be influenced by idiom culture. This can deepen students' interest in learning idioms and help them better understand idiom meanings. Comparative exercises for near-synonym idioms are also essential.

(3) *Formal Aspect*

To reduce formal errors, Chen Lingling's [9] structural exercise method can be referenced. This method uses structurally correct or incorrect idioms as a basis for extensive exercises, strengthening foreign students' memory of idioms and reinforcing their understanding of idiom structural stability, serving as a warning to avoid such errors. Specific practices include using multiple-choice fill-in-the-blank exercises, where students select the correct idiom from structurally correct and incorrect options, or identifying and correcting structurally incorrect idioms in sentences, thereby deepening students' memory.

(4) *Pragmatic Aspect*

At the pragmatic level, Liu Kai mentioned that "for idioms with different stylistic and emotional connotations, we can use contextual teaching and cultural contrast methods" [10]. Contextual teaching involves understanding idioms within a specific context, which can be demonstrated through multimedia or simulated scenarios in the classroom, combining idiom teaching with application. In demonstrations, teachers can show how idioms are appropriately used, while students can be given opportunities to set scenarios and use idioms, with teachers correcting any issues during student presentations.

This paper relies on the Global Interlanguage Corpus to retrieve idiom error cases based on the "Proficiency Standards", obtaining 267 idiom error cases by foreign students, involving 141 idioms. The error cases were categorized and statistically analyzed, revealing that grammatical errors are the most common, accounting for 40.4 %, followed by semantic errors at 36.7 %, formal errors at 19.1 %, and pragmatic errors at 3.8 %. The causes of various types of idiom errors by foreign students were further explored, and targeted teaching strategies for Chinese idiom teaching were proposed, aiming to provide references for teaching Chinese idioms to foreign learners.

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