

Study of Mother Tongue Negative Transfer on Senior High School Students' English Grammar Learning

-A Case Study of the Middle School of Jincheng Mining in Shanxi Province

Chen Li

Inner Mongolia University, Hohhot 010010, China

Keywords: Mother tongue, Grammar, Negative language transfer

Abstract: English grammar influences one's English proficiency, while English grammar is the most headache for most senior high school students. Nowadays, English grammar is widely checked in all different kinds of examinations. Many people think that they are not good at English for which they are bad in English grammar. In fact, negative language transfer is a major reason for poor English grammar for many senior high school students. Mother tongue's negative transfer is that the mother tongue has a negative effect on the second language learning. Because of the differences between Eastern and Western cultures as well as ways of thinking, Chinese negative language transfer on English grammar is a shared and normal phenomenon. On the basis of language acquisition theory, the grammatical errors which senior high school students often make have been classified into three kinds. By comparing the differences in vocabulary, syntax and discourse between English and Chinese, a summary on the causes of mistakes is done and relative countermeasures to improve students' confidence on English grammar learning is put forward to effectively promote English grammar learning.

1. Introduction

When the Chinese get in touch with English for the first time, it is normal for them to sigh. After learning for several months, students are allowed to learn some easy grammatical rules. Then they will realize that the grammar is the most difficult part for them to learn it well. Therefore, grammar is a major research aspect in second language acquisition. In English grammar, senior high school students usually present grammatical mistakes. After careful investigation, it is not hard to find that students do not pay attention to the differences between English and Chinese. They usually use Chinese grammatical structures unconsciously, which is called "Chinglish". This practice restricts students' grammatical ability. Accordingly, if we want to improve senior high school students grammatical ability, we have to help them be aware of the reasons for their errors in English grammar and give them concrete advice on it to help them get rid of the negative language transfer and improve their efficiency on English learning.

1.1 Background of Research

Language is a social phenomenon, and each language stands for a completely different cultures.

English and Chinese belong to two different language families: English, the Indo-European family while Chinese, the Sino-Tibetan family, which means there are too many differences between English and Chinese. The two languages also have different cultural backgrounds: Western and Chinese. As is mentioned by Lian Shuneng, there are ten pairs of major features between English and Chinese: synthetic vs. analytic; rigid vs. supple; hypothetic vs. simplex; impersonal vs. personal; passive vs. active; static vs. dynamic; abstract vs. concrete; indirect vs. direct; substitutive vs. repetitive.

Language transfer theory is a theory to study the phenomenon of language transfer. Language transfer is a common phenomenon in second language learning. When language learners use the second language, they express their ideas by means of pronunciation, meaning, structural rules or habits of their mother tongue.

There are generally two types of language transfer: positive language transfer and negative language transfer.

Positive language transfer is that if the mother tongue has similar rules with the foreign languages and it will have a positive effect on the second language learning. While if mother tongue rules are completely different from the foreign language habits, they will have a negative effect on the second language learning.

1.2 Significance of Research

It is known to us that English and Chinese belong to different language families, but there are still many similarities between them, such as sentence components. For example, there are subjects, predicates, objects, attributives both in Chinese and English sentences. Teachers can make full use of students' mother tongue and help students learn English grammar well. What's more, they can promote students to grasp new language knowledge, so as to speed up the process of students' English grammar learning. However, the most of the errors made by students in English come from the negative transfer of Chinese to English. One of the most difficult problems faced by English teachers is how to try their best to reduce the effect of the negative transfer. The influence of negative transfer of mother tongue on senior high school students is mainly reflected in three aspects: words, sentences, discourses. This research uses the theory of negative transfer of mother tongue to explain and analyze the mistakes made by senior high school students in English grammar learning in order that students can form positive attitude and active thinking about English grammar. By improving students' English grammar ability, teachers can help students to analyze long and difficult sentences and enrich their knowledge of English grammar. Students can understand the real meaning and value of learning English from English grammar, laying a good foundation for oral English communicative competence. Meanwhile, students can enjoy the happiness of learning English, laying a foundation for building up confidence in learning English.

2. Literature Review

With the fast development of economic globalization, English plays a more and more important role in the international arena. English has become a compulsory course for many people. The role of mother tongue in second language learning has been paid more attention. Many experts and scholars have studied the influence of mother tongue on English grammar.

The trend of learning English is irresistible. Many experts and scholars both at home and abroad have studied the influence of mother tongue on English grammar learning. It is the focus for many scholars to reduce the negative language transfer and help Chinese say better English. From the domestic point of view, Zhou Ying pointed out that positive transfer is that learners make full use of their mother tongue in learning a second language acquisition. Negative transfer phenomenon is

easy to appear when the two languages are different in a certain structure. Yang Huijuan held that negative transfer of mother tongue in English learning should attract the attention of teachers who are struggling on the front line of teaching so as to fully understand the phenomenon of transfer with high ideological awareness, avoid negative transfer, promote positive transfer and comprehensively improve the quality of language transfer. Cui Yan pointed out that there are some similarities and differences between Chinese and English in syntactic structure. In foreign language learning, learners should carefully compare the similarities between the two language. Domestic studies have shown that mother tongue has both positive and negative effects on second language acquisition. Some scholars have also tried to reduce mother tongue's negative transfer, while mother tongue thinking is deeply rooted. We need to do more research in this area to help students minimize the negative transfer of mother tongue and help them speak more authentic English.

Foreign studies in this field are much earlier. Odlin^[1] has concluded that due to the target language's similarities and differences between any language that has been acquired or has not yet been fully acquired, and the consequent impact is called language transfer. According to Rod Ellis,^[2] language transfer refers to learners' knowledge of the mother tongue that have existed. Foreign scholars have known the phenomenon of language transfer for many years in advance of China, but they have not given corresponding countermeasures.

Based on the research of scholars at home and abroad, there are similarities and differences between mother tongue and English. Domestic scholars have given corresponding countermeasures to the negative transfer of mother tongue, while foreign scholars have not studied it in depth. However, research about mother tongue's negative transfer on English grammar learning is very limited. And senior high school is the most important part of students' learning career. Therefore, it is necessary to study the phenomenon of negative transfer of mother tongue in senior high school students' English grammar learning and give corresponding countermeasures.

3. Research Design

In order to know negative effect of language transfer, a survey is made.

3.1 Research Purpose

On the basis of the previous research results, this study takes mother tongue's negative transfer on English grammar as the research content, and takes the survey papers and examination as the main research tools to study Chinese senior high school students. This paper explores the mother tongue interference for foreign language acquisition and puts forward the corresponding measures to reduce the mother tongue's negative effects.

3.2 Research Subjects

In order to ensure the effectiveness of the study, the subjects were strictly selected. The following restrictions were imposed on the subjects: (1) they were all senior high students in the middle school of Jincheng Mining. (2) they have learned English for more than five years.

3.3 Data Collection and Questionnaire Analysis

After sending out and collecting questionnaires, the data collection and questionnaire analysis are made. Here are the consequences:


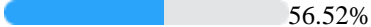
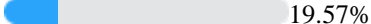
3.3.1 Research Method: a Comparative Analysis

This paper studies the mother tongue's negative transfer on senior high school students' English grammar learning. Language transfer is that one language is influenced by another language for language learners. Therefore, it is necessary for people to know the differences between Chinese and English, for comparative analysis is used to sum up the reasons of mistakes made by Chinese senior high school students and some ideas are put forward to help them improve current situation.

4. Results and Discussion

From the results of the questionnaire, it is obvious that there is negative language transfer for senior high school students' English grammar learning, especially when they are memorizing words, making sentences, and talking with others in English. However, it is easy for senior high school students to keep the changeless phrases exactly in their minds. And it is easy for most of them to make small mistakes, such as: missing " the", "a"... There are examples selected from the questionnaire:

Table 1 : People's Attitude Towards Language Transfer

Question: After finishing the above questions, do you think Chinese has an effect on your English grammar's learning? If so, do you think it's positive or negative?		
Options	Number	Percentage
A.Yea, it's positive.	11	 23.91%
B.Yea, it's negative	26	 56.52%
C.No.	9	 19.57%

This chart shows that most senior high school students are obviously influenced by negative transfer and they just know the superficial methods to reduce the negative effects but have no idea of the virtual reason for that phenomenon.

4.1 Negative Transfer Errors

According to results of questionnaire, there are mainly three kinds of errors: words, syntax and discourses.

4.1.1 Words

Words are basic components of articles, but there are some different rules of using them. Therefore, it is the first step to know the words well. Though words look shorter and easier than phrases and sentences, there are still some errors.

A.Misuse of part of speech

It is known that English and Chinese belong to different language families, which mean that there are many obstacles in front of senior high school students. In Chinese, a word plays many roles in different situations while in English there is clear classification of different part of speech and they play different roles. English is an alphabetic writing system, while Chinese is ideographically writing system, that is, there is no variation. Therefore, many Chinese students usually get confused in a different part of speech in English for which they are accustomed to ways of thinking in China. For example:

(1)You will feel sadness. ("sadness" is noun. We should use "sad" instead.)

(2)It could help you when you get confuse. ("confuse" is a noun. So there lacks of an adjective.)

B.Misuse of articles

There are many articles in English, and articles can be divided into two kinds: definite articles and indefinite articles.

Table 2 : Definite Articles and Indefinite Articles

Question: People cannot distinguish definite articles and indefinite articles		
Options	Number	Percentage
A.Always	11	23.91%
B.Often	14	30.43%
C.Sometimes	16	34.78%
D.Never	5	10.87%

Articles are function words which modify nouns. English usually is “an apple”, “a man”, “a bird”, “the park”...As everyone knows, for English articles, if the author mentions something for the first time, he or she should use “a” while he or she says it the second time, he or she will use “the”. With deep root in Chinese ways of thinking, there are some errant sentences:

(1)He is farmer. (The right sentence is: He is a farmer.)

(2)She is businesswoman. (The correct sentence is: She is a businesswoman.)

C.Confusing countable nouns and uncountable nouns

In English, there are countable nouns: tree, book, pencil, person, dog, city, cloud, chair, train, pear, bus, teacher, apple, wolf, shelf, dictionary, window... If you want to change the singular nouns into plural forms, you can plus “s” or “es” at the end of the singular words. But there are some words ending up with “s”, for example: news, glass, progress, success... and other uncountable nouns: chicken. fish, science, water, bread, meat, snow, tea, hair, age, music, ice, food...When encountering with these words, people will take them as plural nouns unconsciously. There are common mistakes: a fish, a chicken, a snow, a success, a news...

D.Memorizing words

When students get in touch with English they are asked to memorize many words. Although they have learned it for a long time, they still have no idea on it’s reason. In their daily life, they usually hear that it’s beneficial for you. So, they do it day by day. But no one tells them that their way of memorizing words is wrong. The following are current situation:

Table 3 : the Way of Memorizing Words

Question: Do you usually memorize English words with the help of Chinese?		
Options	Number	Percentage
A.I remember words in this way.	4	8.7%
B.Sometimes	26	56.52%
C.I never do this.	16	34.78%

The result records the data of ways in memorizing English words. It is obvious that more than half of the investigated people usually memorize English words by Chinese similar characters.

E. Chinese has hanyu pinyin system, while English has phonetic symbol. With poor knowledge of international phonetic alphabet, Chinese students get in touch with English at the first time, they usually memorize English words by writing pinyin or characters beside them.

F.Misuse of “be” or auxiliary

According to five basic sentence patterns, it is known that there must be a predicate or copula in a sentence. The function of the auxiliary verb is to help the main verb to form the predicate, which only has grammatical meaning but no lexical meaning. But Chinese students usually forget this point to make wrong sentences. In addition, they will miss verbs in writing sentences. There are some incorrect sentences:

(1)The book very interesting. (This sentence for lack of the copula “is”)

(2)He not plays basketball. (This sentence is short of auxiliary)

G.Misuse of model verbs

In English, modal verbs are used to show one's ability in some certain aspect. Applying the traditional thinking ways, the Chinese take the translation of similar sentences into "I can/should/must..." for granted and see them as the properest way to express themselves. While foreigners hear these sentences, they will be perplexed.

H.Chinglish

Chinglish is a language phenomenon that people write English with Chinese thinking way, which does not exactly exist in English and even do not correspond with English grammatical rules. The following are some examples:

- | | | |
|----------------------|-------------------|----------------------|
| (1) infamous actor | (2) big rain | (3) skin shallow |
| (4) leadership level | (5) red tea | (6) guess out |
| (7) big man | (8) no zuo no die | (9) long time no see |
| (10) open the light | | |

I.Phrase

When learning English for the first time, Chinese students are asked to memorize words, phrases and beautiful sentences. During this period, it is hard for them to keep all the information exact in minds. There are always errors, especially a set phrase. It's normal to mix up a phrase with another similar one or make up some phrases according to their learned knowledge. For example: say the truth instead of telling the truth, serve for somebody instead of serving somebody, enter into a room instead of entering a room, deal a problem instead of dealing with a problem, knock the door instead of knocking on the door, reply a letter instead of replying to a letter...

4.1.2 Syntax

Words and phrases make up sentences and sentences constitute articles. Sentences play a connective role between words and articles. It is difficult for Chinese students to learn grammar well, especially when they are confused for English grammatical rules. So, it is usual to make errors.

A.Negative transfer of predicates

Generally speaking, most sentences are composed of subjects, predicates and object.^[3] It is obvious that verbs play a necessary role in sentences. Therefore, the misusing of verbs is enough important to attract the attention of the research group. Negative transfer of predicates involves part of speech, morphology as well as tenses and so on. English is a kind of inflectional languages, which means components of the sentences should keep in correspondence with each other in voice, gender, number. Therefore, subject-verb agreement is essential for correcting English sentences. There are some wrong sentences appearing in students assignments:

(1) Li Ming like playing basketball. (The correct sentence is that Li Ming likes playing basketball.)

(2) He go to school yesterday. (The correct sentence: He went to school yesterday.)

There are no inflectional variation in Chinese, so senior high school students should pay attention to this difference when they write something.

B.Negative transfer of subjects

There is no definite subject in Chinese. The Chinese always employs general terms, for example: someone, people, other people... while in English there must be subjects in sentences and only noun or pronoun can be subjects. So it emphasizes on impersonal while Chinese is personal. There is another kind of mistake: Now is completely free.

C.Negative transfer of adverbs

In Chinese, people often put adverbs first while Englishmen say the adverbs at last. For example:

(1) He yesterday went to school. (The correct way is: He went to school yesterday.)

(2) In the day after tomorrow morning, I will wait for you at the gate of the museum. (The correct

sentence is: I will wait for you at the gate of the museum the day after tomorrow morning.)

D. Negative transfer of disjunctive questions

When Chinese initially learn something of English, they know that “yes” indicates positive attitude and “no” is negative. While in disjunctive questions, what the meaning is of yes and no is completely opposite with the first impression. So, there are some mistakes as following:

You aren't a student, are you?

Yes, I am not a student. (The correct answer is: No. I am not a student.)

After knowing wrong examples, it means that students should try to pay more attention to the differences between similar or the same words.

E. Non-predicate verbs

Non-predicate verb and predicate are relative words. They are verb forms that act as various sentence components except predicates, which can work as subjects, objects, predicates, determinants, adverbs, complements and so on. There are three main kinds of non-predicates: to do (infinite) which indicates future, -ing (present participle) which states active and -ed (past participle) which shows passive. Non-predicate verbs are different from predicates which must be consistent with the person and number of the subject. Firstly, learning something on non-predicate verb, Chinese students will feel it is much more difficult and they even cannot distinguish them clearly. They cannot help but choosing each of them casually. In other words, they often make mistakes in this part. There are some examples:

(1) Swallowed delicious diner, the wolf went to bed and slept. (The subject is “the wolf”, and it can swallow diner. So the word “swallow” should apply its -ing form. That is: Swallowing delicious diner, the wolf went to bed and slept.)

(2) Let me to do English exercises, which make me become crazy. My dear English teacher, I have no idea about it. (Let somebody do something. It is obvious that correct one is: Let me do English exercises, which make me become crazy.)

(3) Dressing in her most beautiful clothes, that girl tried to make herself notice by one boy whom she has fallen in love with secretly for a long time. (Make herself be noticed by the boy. “That girl” are subjects of main sentences and clause. Hence, we can delete the word “be”. That is: Dressing in her most beautiful clothes, that girl tried to make herself noticed by one boy whom she has fallen in love with secretly for a long time.)

F. Chinglish

Pinkham, an American professional translator who worked in China for eight years, describes Chinglish in her film “A Guide to Chinglish” as “This kind of syntactic structure, though wrong...”^[4] This chart shows the percentage of how many people say “good good study, day day up” in their daily life.

Table 4 : the Frequency of Using Chinglish

Question: How often the Chinese use Chinglish		
Options	Number	Percentage
A. Always	7	15.22%
B. Sometimes	29	63.04%
C. Never	10	21.74%

There are Chinglish appearing both as phrases and sentences. There are some typical sentences:

- (1) You see see you.
- (2) Long time no see.
- (3) I will give you some color see see.
- (4) Good good study, day day up.
- (5) I like you very much.
- (6) How are you? How old are you?

- (7) We two who and who.
- (8) Watch sister
- (9) People mountain people sea
- (10) You to look look.

G. Word order

Word order refers to the order in which the elements of a sentence are arranged, which reflects the relationship between words and sentences and author's logical thinking. Chinese word order is greatly different from English. English expresses grammatical meaning and logical relationship by prepositions and conjunctions and so on. While Chinese pay attention to semantic collocation.

(1) From home to hospital is three kilometers. (The right form is: It is three kilometers from home to hospital.)

(2) I usually by bike to school. (The exact sentence is : I usually go to school by bike.)

(3) I take ten minutes to get to school. (The correct form is: It takes me ten minutes to get to school.)

H. Lack of conjunctions

In English, conjunctions are words which link one word, phrase, or sentence with another. In Chinese, conjunctions are used to combine words and words. So it is common for Chinese to take no conjunctions between sentences. English teachers usually say that: "Commas cannot connect two sentences." Thereby, there are common mistakes made by Chinese students:

(1) He comes back home, it takes him five minutes. (This sentence lacks of conjunction "and".)

(2) He works very hard, he failed at last. (This one is short of conjunction "but".)

I. Consistency of subject and predicate

Consistency of subject and predicate refers to that predicates must keep the relevant form according to the number and tense of subjects. It is difficult for most people to master the rules on consistency of subject and predicate. Generally, the consistency between subject and predicate is governed by their three principles: grammatical concord, notional concord and subject-predicate consistency. Chinese is one kind of inflectional languages, which means there are no confirmed rules between predicates and subjects. While English predicates must be correspond with their subjects in person and number. However, due to the negative transfer of mother tongue, the Chinese often forget to use their person singular in their expressions which leads to grammatical errors. For instance:

(1) I like playing basketball and he also like it. (Chinese will see this sentence as exact one, while English will not. "He" is the third person, so the subsequent verb should take third person singular form. Thereby, this sentence is improper. The just one is: I like playing basketball and he also likes it.)

(2) My family are going shopping. (There the word "family" is a collective noun not the each member in my family, so it should be viewed as singular number. The true one is: My family is going shopping.)

(3) Are everyone there? (According to the rules of consistency of subject and predicate, when everyone, someone, anyone, nobody and other indefinite pronouns work as subjects, the predicate must employ it's singular form. Thus, the correct sentence is: Is everyone there?)

(4) Neither her father nor her aunt are a doctor. (According to the principle of proximity consistency, the form of predicate must be consistent with the closest subject. Therefore, the closest subject for predicate in this sentence is "her aunt", that is, the "are" there is incorrect. The right form of this sentence is: Neither her father nor her aunt is a doctor.)

J. End Weight

In English, it is normal to put the complex elements at the end of sentences in order to maintain the balance of the sentence. However, there are no such restrictions in Chinese. Therefore,

influenced by their mother tongue, Chinese students usually make sentences by putting complex elements in front of the sentences which is called top-heavy sentences. There are some examples cited from their homework or tests.

(1) Trying to memorizing all the English words, phrases, and grammatical rules is difficult. (To keep the balance of sentences, Englishman come up with one new way which is called “formal subject” that it is not the actual the subject in the sentences but just the substitution of the true subject. Hence, people say that it is difficult to master all English grammatical rules.)

(2) Playing computers game for a long time is bad for your vision. (The valid sentence is: It is bad for your vision to play computer games for a long time.)

(3) Doing morning exercises every day is good for our health. (The true sentence is: it is good for our health to do morning exercises every day.)

K. Abuse attributive clauses

There are many clauses in English, which is subject to main sentences. There are mainly three kinds of clauses: adjective clauses, substantive clauses and adverb clauses. When senior high school students get in touch with these clause for the first time, they will refuse to accept them. But after they know more about them, they will feel it is more advanced to express their ideas. Thus, Chinese students will try their best to use these clauses in their articles, especially attributive clauses to show that they are good at English. Actually, it is monotone for readers to read just one kind of sentence pattern for which there are many other methods to improve their English, for example: they can make use of advanced words and abundant sentence patterns. There are some counterexamples extracted from Chinese students’ daily homework:

(1) You tell me the event is very boring. (In fact, the student wants to say: The event you tell is very boring.)

(2) He is a kind man who offers his help to others who are in the soup. (This sentence is a compound sentence which contains two attributive clauses. If you want to improve your writing, what you need to do is change your sentence patterns rather than just write attributive clause for many times to make your sentences longer.

4.1.3 Discourse

Words makes up sentences, and sentences take shape articles. When small mistakes accumulate in each sentence, the article will leave a bad impression on readers. So the mistakes appear everywhere.

A. Voice errors

As is known that English is impersonal while Chinese is personal. Thus, there are more passive voice used in English than Chinese. Paying no attention to this difference between English and Chinese, Chinese students usually make sentences in their traditional thinking ways which leads to impure English. There are some examples: known to

(1) After knowing their final exam’s grade, students feel frustrated. With great effort in learning English, but they got a lower grade than their expectation. Hence, they decided to ask teachers for some help. So the teacher give some advice to students in learning. (The correct sentence is: After knowing their final exam’s grade, students feel frustrated. With great effort in learning English, but they got lower grade than their expectation. Hence, they decided to ask teachers for some help. So some advice is given to students by the teacher.)

(2) Today’s class we have learned something about the subjunctive mood , including it’s definition, functions, and structures. Next class we will discuss these questions on page 25 in detail. (The perfect sentence is: Today’s class we have learned something about subjunctive mood , including it’s definition, functions, and structures. These questions on page 25 will be discussed next class.)

(3)After graduating from Shanghai University of Electric Power, I enter a state grid corporation of China. Though I have worked in this company for three months, I am not familiar with electric engineering. I usually ask Tony some questions in electrical engineering when I feel confused during the work period. (The right sentence is: After graduating from Shanghai University of Electric Power, I enter a state grid corporation of China. Though I have worked in this company for three months, I am not familiar with electric engineering. Some questions in electrical engineering are asked by me when I feel confused during the work period.)

In addition, it is obvious that English articles are accustomed to putting important ideas at first, and the main meaning of paragraph is put in the first sentences. Influenced by the Chinese “scattered form and spirit”, Chinese students lack of topic sentences and central sentences when they write English. As a result, they usually make loose sentences to form no logic essays.

As is mentioned in above examples, when students write, they are not aware of the high degree of hypotaxis of English language. So, there is no necessary cohesion between the paragraphs they write. There is no transitional conjunctions between the sentences. There are no parallel conjunction in the juxtaposition and there is no subject-clause in the juxtaposition sentences.

B.Mood error

English mood includes declarative mood which states the fact and something may happen in the future, imperative mood which indicates some order, requirement, request, invitation, and advice, subjunctive mood which expresses something is not a fact, but only a wish, guess, hypothesis, suggestion and that wish, suggestion and other possibilities of realization are impossible.

There are some rules on subjunctive mood:

Subjunctive mood	Clause	Main sentence
The opposite of the present fact	If+subject+be/were	Subject+would/should/could/might+V. prototype
The opposite of the past fact	If+subject+had+past participle	Subject+would/should/could/might+V. prototype
The opposite of the future fact	1.If+subject+were to+verb prototype 2.If+subject+did	Subject+would/should/could/might+V. prototype

When learning subjunctive mood, students may think it is pretty hard to understand them and they cannot make a distinguish between them. It’s common that they rarely write sentences in subjunctive mood for which they can not guarantee their accuracy. In order to master the usages of subjunctive mood, students need to keep this chart in their mind and try to make sentences in subjunctive mood to overcome the fear of making mistakes.

4.2 Reasons for Making Mistakes

There are many reasons why Chinese senior high school students make mistakes in English. To start with, they pay no attention to learning. What’s more, they neither work hard nor revise timely. Last, the negative language transfer is one important element. As for negative, there are still some elements for us to discuss.

4.2.1 Different Ways of Thinking

It is known that thinking comes from and reflects objective things. Language promotes the formation and development of thinking mode. Language is main part of thinking. The different thinking mode decides the different language. In the long history, different nationalities have formed different ways of thinking because of different cultures, historical backgrounds, and differences in world outlook and ways of understanding. The Chinglish of Chinese students exist not only due to the interference of negative language transfer, but also to the differences between

Chinese and Western thinking.

4.2.2 Different Cultural Backgrounds

Culture can be divided into two categories: in a broad sense, it includes everything people create during they transform nature and society. In a narrow sense, it belongs to social ideology. Cultures has distinct individuality. There are differences among different cultures when reflected in language. The ignorance or misreading of the cultural habits in daily life of English-speaking countries is another important reason for Chinglish in Chinese students' writing, and the jokes are also emerging.

5. Reflections on Negative Language Transfer

From the above, it is known that mother tongue has a negative effect on the second language learning. Thus, some reflections based on the results of questionnaire have been made.

5.1 Influential Factors

As is mentioned, the different ways of thinking, different cultural backgrounds and the differences between Chinese and English cause negative language transfer. However, there are other elements which have an effect on language transfer. For example, first, the existing linguistic basis. It is beneficial for learners to summarize the rules. It is known that English and Chinese are also closely related. They are interlinked in semantics and other aspects. When learning English, students can link Chinese with English. Therefore, the established mother tongue knowledge has a important role in English learning. Second, learning process and learning style. In teaching, consciously guiding students to find common ground between different knowledge, inspiring students to summarize, guiding students to monitor their own learning or teaching students how to learn will have a good impact on students' learning. English is composed of a large number of words by alphabetic alphabet, including monosyllabic, disyllabic and polysyllabic words. However, no matter what syllables there are, the letters are always combined into one unit. While Chinese is different, one word is a word, which can be used to express a certain meaning. It can be used as a morpheme. The way of learning determines the mother tongue' direction and degree. Nowadays, with the increasingly close cultural exchanges, and the collision and exchange between different cultures, mother tongue transfer has become more mobile, increasing the exchange and integration between the two languages.

Thus, some measures are taken to reduce the negative language transfer of mother tongue.

5.2 Measures to Reduce the Negative Language Transfer

Faced with the negative language transfer on English learning, many experts and scholars have conducted in-depth studies. For example, Odlin. T. concluded in *Language Transfer* that there are similarities and differences between any language that have been acquired or have not yet been fully acquired, and then resulting impact is called language transfer. In combination with the research results of experts as well as scholars and the actual situation, it is believed that effective measures taken from the following aspects to avoid the negative transfer of mother tongue and realize students' scientific and effective English learning.

5.2.1 Word

Both teachers and students should be aware of the impact of negative transfer of mother tongue,

psychologically and subconsciously making a comparative study of similar grammar. For example, firstly, students can make a list on the similar words or phrases which they have been taught. Secondly, they should pay more attention to look for new words they are unsure their exact meaning or usage in the English-English dictionaries. Only in this way can Chinese senior high school students have precise definitions and distinguish synonyms. Based on the fact that Chinese senior high school students are accustomed to use the English-Chinese dictionaries, they are easily misled by those dictionaries when they learn English.^[5] Thirdly, teachers can make a comparisons between English and Chinese to explain some lexical collocation. At last, vocabulary can be placed in a certain article. To memorize words in a discourse and to understand the meaning and usage of words more accurately through the discourse is an effective way to help students know the meaning of words. All kinds of opportunities to use vocabulary are combined, because most vocabulary is not learned by looking up dictionaries, but by listening, speaking, reading, writing and other experiences. By using such vocabulary, subtle differences in vocabulary meanings will be formed, so that students can truly appreciate the differences in the semantics and concepts of words, turning the influence of their mother tongue into a positive shadow brush, and then learn to use the items.

5.2.2 Syntax

First, facing with these grammatical errors, it is necessary for teachers to find a breakthrough in the conflict between the Chinese and Western language, so as to find some solutions to the problem and achieve the twice result with half the effort.

Second, teachers need detailed and comprehensive analysis of grammar knowledge point especially error-prone points, so as to avoid negative transfer of mother tongue. With the help of teachers, senior high school students can master English grammar rules well and lay a foundation for English learning. For example, the choice of relative words in attributive clauses: Your bag is still ___ you left. A. in where B. where C. there where D. the place where It is necessary to judge which grammar knowledge point is from the big direction, and then analyze each option thoroughly so that students can correctly understand the specific use of grammatical rules.^[6]

Third, teachers should have a correct understanding and tolerant attitude towards the grammatical errors made by students due to the transfer of knowledge system. Faced with the deep-rooted conflict between the Chinese grammar system and some grammar rules in English, it is inevitable for students to make mistakes. After a long time the original exercises reproduction, so many students still choose wrong answers. The reason may not be that students do not work hard enough, which is likely that the negative language transfer of mother tongue is too serious. At this time, teachers can be patient and tolerant, helping students to recognize errors, and correcting their thinking. Helping English grammar rules also occupies a place in the students' language system to gradually solve the problem.

Fourth, students are allowed to read a lot of English articles and recite English beautiful sentences to cultivate the sense of English, improving the accuracy of English expressions.

Last but not least, learners should make a contract of English and Chinese grammar, reflecting the causes of errors and summarizing their learning experience, especially pay attention to collecting and sorting out typical mother-tongue errors caused by language interference, and doing targeted error correction exercises to enhance awareness of prevention and effectively overcome negative transfer of mother tongue.^[7]

5.2.3 Discourse

To begin with, guiding English teaching uses the view of culture. Language and culture are inseparable. In teaching, it's teachers' responsibilities to change the past practice of paying attention

to language forms while neglecting the use of language in practical situation, and strive to cultivate students' awareness of cultural acquisition so as to synchronize the teaching of cultural norms with the training of language skills. In addition, English teachers should read more books on sociolinguistics, pragmatics and cross-cultural communication extensively to improve their own culture and effectively carry out cultural cognitive teaching in the process of teaching.^[8]

Furthermore, it is particularly important to guide students to read extensively. Extracurricular reading is pretty important which includes history, geography, social culture, and so on. Through extensive reading, students' understanding of cultures are more comprehensive and specific, and students can understand the values and cultural customs of English-speaking countries to a wider extent.

Finally, teachers should actively encourage students to use English frequently during their small talk. Students can be provided a wide range of opportunities to communicate in English through weekend English forums, given by foreign teachers speaking competitions. Students can learn language and culture, such as audio-visual, audio-visual lectures and multimedia foreign language software applications.^[9]

6. Conclusion

All in all, although the negative transfer of mother tongue is an urgent problem to be solved in English learning. It is a long-term process for beginners which requires learners to pay more attention to.^[10] As for Chinglish, teachers should work hard with students to create a pleasant and natural learning environment in order to minimize the impact of negative transfer of mother tongue on grammar. What's more, both teachers and students should pay more attention to the influence of cultural differences between China and West on language expression. Either teachers or senior high school students should follow the law of mother tongue transfer, using the positive role of mother tongue transfer scientifically and reasonably, and control the negative transfer of mother tongue where possible. It is hoped that through this paper, both teachers and students can have a better understanding of the origin and nature of mother tongue transfer, so as to help English educators teach English in China, and provide some insights, references and more appropriate guidance for English learners .

References

- [1] Odlin. T. *Language Transfer. Cross-linguistic Influence in Language Learning [M]*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989.
- [2] Ellis R. *The Study of Second Language Acquisition [M]*. Oxford: OUP, 1994.
- [3] Bright, J & McGregor, G. *Teaching English as a Second Language: Theory and Techniques for the Secondary Stage [M]*. London: Longman, 2010.
- [4] Pinkham. J. & Jiang, G. *The translator's Guide to Chinglish [M]*. Beijing: Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press, 2000.
- [5] Dorothy S. Strickland, Lee Galda, Bemice E. Cullinan. *Language Arts: Learning and Teaching [M]*. Peking: Peking University Press, 2005.
- [6] Guilherme D Garcia. *Language transfer and positional bias in English stress*. 2020, 36(4):445-474.
- [7] Jan Vanhove. *Metalinguistic knowledge about the native language and language transfer in gender assignment*. 2019, 9(2):397-419.
- [8] Zhenyan Ye. *Chinese to English Lexical Transfer Errors in the Writing of Rural Senior High School Students*. 2019, 9(6):645-654.
- [9] Maonan Chen. *Strategies to Overcome the L1 Negative Transfer in Students' English Writing*. 2019, 4(1)
- [10] Wei Chenxu. *Influence of Chinese Language Transfer on English Vocabulary Learning[J]. Campus English*, 2017(48):213.