Original Paper

A Corpus-based Study on Concessive Clauses Used in English Writing by Chinese Senior High School Students

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Abstract

This paper is designed to reveal the characteristics and figure out the errors in Chinese senior high students' construction of concessive clause. The study uses data from Chinese Learner English Corpus (CLEC) and a collection of concessive clauses from 499 English compositions written by senior two students in a key public high school in Beijing. The result shows that the construction of concessive clauses exhibits certain characteristics: (1) employing a wide range of linking words, "although" being the most frequently used concessive conjunction, which differs from the use of linking words in St2 from CLEC; (2) having a tendency to place the subordinate clause before the matrix and to construct the concessive clause as "Subject + Linking Verb + Predicate". Fifty-seven errors are identified in 132 concessive clauses, including: (1) errors of linking words; (2) the wrong matrix-subordinate clause relationship; (3) errors such as choosing the wrong linking words, inconsistent tense between the matrix and subordinate clauses, errors within the clauses, and incorrect use of punctuation. These errors are mainly influenced by the negative transfer from Chinese.

Keywords

Concessive Clause, Chinese Senior High Students, English Writing, Learner Corpus Research, Error Analysis

1. Introduction

Concessive clause is a difficult kind of clause for Chinese EFL learners for its construction may vary due to the clause positioning, selection of linking words, etc. The positioning of concessive adverbial clauses has been well studied by numerous researchers (Kang & Xu, 2020; Lin, 2019; Zhang, 2016; Rezaee & Golparvar, 2017) and also in synchronic and diachronic ways. (Haiman, 1974; Baschewa, 1980; König, 1985; 1986; 1988; Dancygier, 1988; Mazzoleni, 1990; 1992; 1996; Rudolph, 1996; Di, 2001). The studies of specific linking words' positioning have also been conducted: for example, the

stark difference in the positioning of while-clauses is found between Chinese EFL learners' and their British native-speaker counterparts (Zhang, 2019).

There are also some researches focusing on figuring out the construction characteristics and errors of adverbial clauses. For instance, Zhang (2022) conducts a research on Chinese senior high students' construction of the adverbial clause of cause; Ni (2022) analyzes the errors made in Chinese senior high students' constructing attributive clause and its underlying reasons. Howbeit, few researches center on the construction of concessive clause by Chinese senior high students as well as the errors they make. Thus, their use of concessive clause, the commonly constructed and taught adverbial clause in the stage of senior high, remains unclear and is worthy of more in-depth studies.

Moreover, during the researcher's two-month teaching programme in a key high school in Beijing, it is surprising to find out that in the Chinese senior high students' construction of concessive clause, many errors are made. Hence, in order to improve learners' learning efficiency and boost their learning initiative, the method of Error Analysis is indispensable for evaluating their performance, studying their errors and further exploring potential solutions. Corder (1977) points out that "errors are not just to be seen as something to be eradicated, but rather can be important in and of themselves". As the theoretical implications for psychology and linguistics suggests, there are two main types of errors within an error analysis framework: interlingual and intralingual. In English writing practice, making mistakes constantly is a prevailing phenomenon, resulting from both interlingual transfer and intralingual transfer. By digging into the Chinese senior high students' use of concessive clause, this study sets to explore how well they wield concessive clause in writing practice and what errors they tend to make. Through this study, I hope to enrich our knowledge about Chinese intermediate EFL learners' mastery of concessive clause in English writing, pave the path for further analysis on the reasons of error-making and encourage more targeted teaching in this field.

2. Corpora and Methodology

2.1 Corpora

In this study, a Corpus of Concessive Clause (CCC) and Chinese Learning English Corpus (CLEC) are used to figure out the concessive clauses' construction characteristics and analyze the errors.

2.1.1 Corpus of Concessive Clause

In this study, a Corpus of Concessive Clause (CCC) is constructed for analytical purposes. It consists of 132 concessive clauses excerpted from 499 English mid-term exam compositions written by Chinese senior two students in a key high school in Beijing. The corpus can, to some extent, reflect Chinese intermediate EFL learners' writing ability. The structure of the CCC is presented in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1 The Structure of CCC

Corpus	Resource	Text	Tokens
CCC	Self-built Corpus	499	2858

2.1.2 Chinese Learner English Corpus

In this study, St2 from Chinese Learner English Corpus (CLEC) is used for comparative purpose.

Designed by professor Gui and professor Yang, Chinese learner English Corpus is the first English learners' corpus released in China with marks of linguistic errors. It is about the corpus of written language form, ranging from high school students' composition linguistic data to college students' English composition data. The corpus includes five sub-corpus data: senior students' corpus, short for St2; S3 stands for non- English majors passing college English Test Band Four; college English band six for non-English majors, short for St4; those who take Test for English Majors-Band Four belonging to English majors in junior grade represent St5; English majors in senior grade attending Test for English Majors-Band Eight represent St6. Normally, St3, St4, St5 and St6 happen in taking the test, marked by certain scores, while St2 is taken from students' free writing. According to the data distribution in CLEC, St2 consists of 240147 tokens, which is approximately one fifth of the total number (1070602). It is believed that the corpus can offer reliable "raw compositions" from different leaner levels with its huge quantity. Last but not least, CLEC, the biggest Chinese learner English corpus, provides a set of types and marks for all kinds of errors in English compositions. The structure of the CLEC is presented in Table 2.2 and an example of retrieving data from CLEC is showed in Figure 2.1.

Table 2.2 The Structure of CLEC

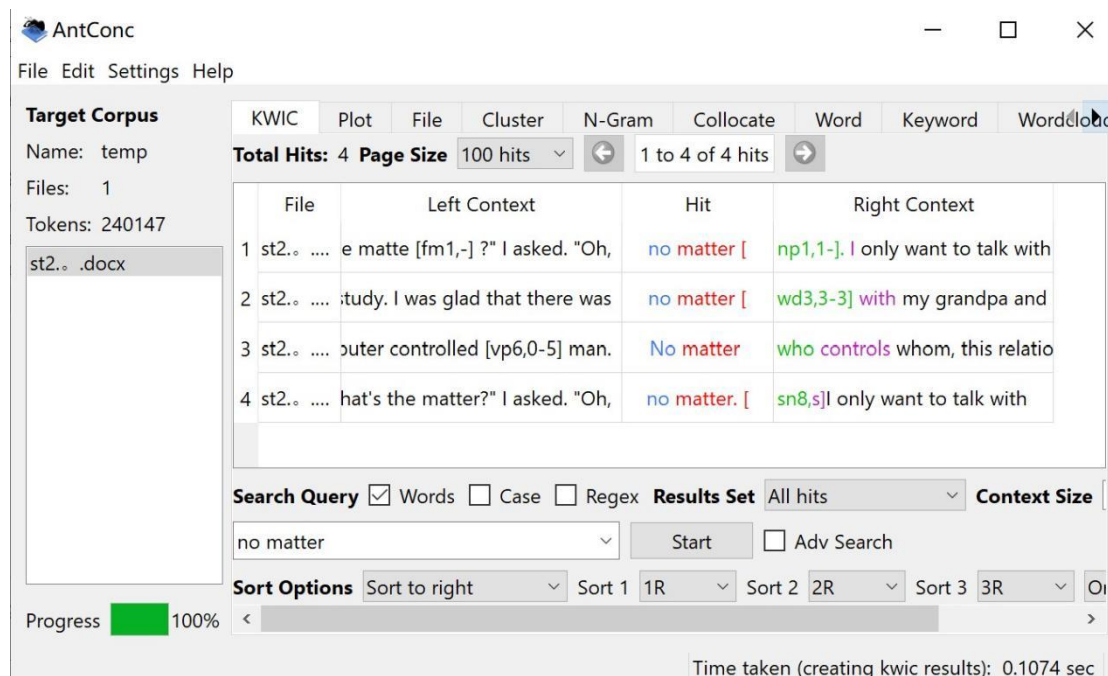| Corpus	Resource	Text	Tokens
St2	CLEC	1	240147

Figure 2.1 The Interface of Antconc Retrieving Concordance of "No Matter..."

2.2 Methodology

The objective of this study is to find out the characteristics of Chinese senior high students' construction of concessive clause, identify the errors and try to analyze them. To accomplish this objective, the construction of concessive clause is presented in a descriptive qualitative approach. Qualitative research can be described as an effective model that occurs in a natural setting that enables the researcher to develop a level of detail from being highly involved in the actual experiences (Cohen et al., 2007). The qualitative approach is used to analyze the data of a communicative text made by senior high students from a key school in Beijing in the academic year 2022-2023. Therefore, the data can be easier to understand. The descriptive method is used to collect the data and analyze, classify errors, then conclude. Compositions were viewed two times, first by English teachers, second by the researcher based on the criteria of correcting English writings of college entrance examination.

The requirement of the composition is given below:

Section 3 Composition

Suppose you are Lihua, a senior two student from Hongxing Middle School. Your British friend Jim wants to know something about your role model in a recent activity "Learning from Your Role Model" held by your school. Please reply to Jim. The content should include:

1. the introduction of your role model and the reason why you choose him/her.

2. the influence he/she has exerted on you.

Dear Jim,

_____

_____

_____

_____

Yours, Li Hua

Error marking indices are designed based on certain rules and principles provided by Chinese Learners English Corpus (Gui & Yang, 2003, pp. 4-8). The errors are typed as follows: [Sn1] run-on sentence (improper addition of clauses/fused sentence); [Sn7, a] the errors in linking words; [Sn7, a1] the faulty spelling of linking words; [Sn7, a2] the misuse of linking words; [Sn7, a3] the faulty case of linking words; [Sn7, b] errors in the concessive clause; [Sn7, b1] the error in tense of the subordinate clause; [Sn7, b2] the lengthy structure of the subordinate clause; [Sn7, b3] the structural deficiency of the subordinate clause; [Sn7, b4] the error in the form of verb of the subordinate clause; [Sn7, c] the illogical relation between the main clause and the subordinate clause; [Sn9, a] the misuse of punctuation [Sn9, a1] punctuation omission [Sn9, a2] the improper selection of the punctuation; [Sn9, a3] overuse of the punctuation.

3. Result

3.1 Construction of Concessive Clause

In this part, the use of linking words, the position and the sentential structure of concessive clauses are presented in detail.

3.1.1 The Use of Linking Words

The diverse use of linking words is apparent in students' concessive clause using, which is illustrated by the table and chart following:

Table 3.1 Description of Linking Words

Types	Numbers	Percentage
Although	57	43%
Despite	36	27%
Whenever	11	8%
Even though	9	7%
Though	8	6%
No matter+SIW	5	4%
Even if	3	2%
Whatever	2	2%
Adj.+ as	1	1%
Total	132	100%

First, 43% of students used "although" in the composition, indicating that "although" is a predominant

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linking word used in concessive clauses. And then, "despite" comes after "although" with 27%, presumably due to its loose structure in constructing subordinate clause. "Whenever" was also used especially when students wanted to describe how role models' merits influenced them. Worth noticing is that "though" and "even though" account for approximately similar percentage, much lower than that of "although".

3.1.2 The Positioning of Concessive Clauses

The Positioning of Concessive Clauses（132）

33%···

67%
(89)

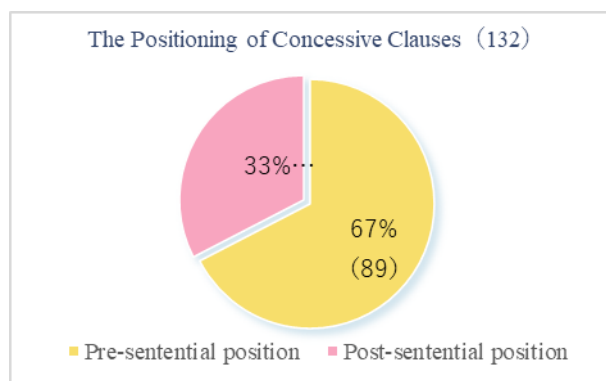■ Pre-sentential position ■ Post-sentential position

Figure 3.1 The Positioning of Concessive Clauses

According to the table, approximately 67% of students put concessive clauses at the pre-position of the sentence, while other students construct the concessive clauses at the beginning of one sentence, taking up 33%. It showcases that students are used to placing concessive clauses in the pre-sentential position, presumably due to the prevalence of subordinate clause' pre-sentential position in textbooks and teachers' teaching.

3.1.3 The Sentential Structures of Concessive Clauses

Students' construction of sentential structures are summarized and studied. Apart from the five basic syntactic structures in English, other structures like phrases, complex sentences are found in the sentential structures constructed by senior high school students, the researcher will mark at every beginning of the sentence. For instance, the symbol "<S, V, O>" stands for the structure "Subject + Verb + Object" in compositions. Here are some marks for abbreviation representing certain syntactic structures.

<S, LV, P>: "Subject + Linking-Verb + Predicative".

<NP>: "Noun Phrase".

<T, B>: "There be" structure.

<N, B>: "Not only, but also".

<S, V>: "Subject + Verb".

<S, V, O>: "Subject + Verb + Object".

<S, V, O, OC>: "Subject + Verb + Object + Object Complement".

<OC>: "Objective Clause".

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<AC1>: "Attributive Clause".

<AC2>: "Appositive Clause".

The detailed information of the use of sentential structure will be showed in the following pie chart:
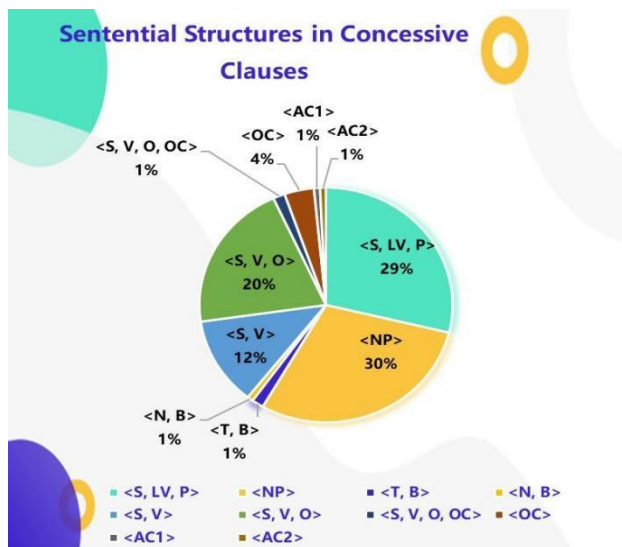

Figure 3.2 Sentential Structures in Concessive Clauses

The chart indicates that 30% of students use the structure of "Noun Phrases" in their concessive clauses, particularly with the use of "despite". Additionally, 29% of students construct their clauses using "Subject + Linking-Verb + Predicative". 20% of students use the structure "Subject + Verb + Object". It is also worth noting that a minority of students utilize other structures such as "Not only, but also", attributive clauses, and appositive clauses in their concessive clauses. The little percentage occupied by "Objective Clause", "Attributive Clause" and "Appositive Clause" may showcase students' uncertainty or non-proficiency in using complex sentences and compound-complex sentence, where errors are more likely to be made. Instead, students are inclined to use simple sentences and noun phrases to construct concessive clause.

3.2 Errors in Concessive Clauses' Construction

Table 3.2 The Overall Situation of Errors in Concessive Clauses

Types of errors		Frequency of errors	
	Spelling errors of linking words (Sn7, a1)	4	
	Misuse of linking words (Sn7, a2)	9	
Errors of linking words (Sn7, a)	Case error of linking words (Sn7, a3)	1	**14**

Errors within the clause (Sn7, b)	Tense errors (Sn7, b1)	5	
	Redundancy (Sn7, b2)	2	
	Wrong structures (Sn7, b3)	6	**15**
	Ungrammatical forms of predicate verbs (Sn7, b4)	2	
The illogical matrix-subordinate clause relationship (Sn7, c)		**8**	
Punctuation errors (Sn9, a)	Punctuation omission (Sn9, a1)	8	
	The improper selection of punctuation (Sn9, a2)	5	**14**
	Punctuation overuse (Sn9, a3)	1	
Run-on sentences (Sn1)		**6**	
Total errors		**57**	

The above data are classified and counted according to the errors in students' compositions so as to figure out and better understand the errors in students' concessive clauses using.

Based on the table, the collected English composition samples of high school students reveal five types of errors in concessive clauses. These include linking words errors (14 cases, 24.6%), subordinate clauses errors (15 cases, 26.3%), the wrong matrix-subordinate clause relationship errors in the relation between the clauses (8 cases, 14%), punctuation errors (14 cases, 24.6%), and run-on sentences (6 cases, 10.5%).

The most frequent error among linking words is the misuse, accounting for 64% linking words' errors. The second most frequent error is spelling, while case error is the least common one. In terms of errors within the clause, structural errors are the most frequent, accounting for 40%, followed by tense errors. Errors of the matrix-subordinate clause relationship account for 14% of the total errors. Surprisingly, concessive clauses have a prominent punctuation error rate, accounting for 24.6% of all the errors. Punctuation omission in the concessive clause accounts for 57% of the punctuation errors, followed by improper punctuation choice which accounts for 35.7%. The remaining 10.5% of errors are due to

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run-on sentences resulting in redundancy of concessive clauses.

As mentioned above, the error rate of 132 concessive clauses has reached 42.9% (57/132), which stresses the significance of looking deeper into these errors to figure out the underlying reasons.

4. Discussion

4.1 Interpretations on Concessive Clauses' Construction

4.1.1 Comparison on the Use of Linking Words

Compared with St2 from CLEC, certain characteristics of the data from self-built corpus are revealed. Firstly, the priority of linking words' choice has shifted from "though" to "although". In the researcher's corpus, "although" has the highest percentage but is only used around 27 times in St2, much fewer than "though" (238 times in St2 of CLEC). These figures indicate that nowadays high school students tend to use "although" rather than "though", which was the dominant concessive conjunction among senior high school students twenty years ago.
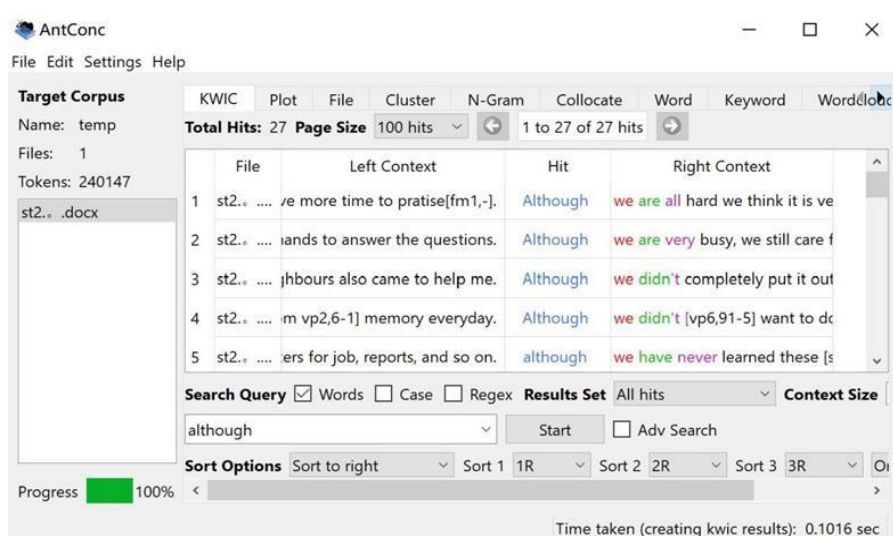

Figure 4.1 The Interface of Antconc Retrieving Concordance of "Although"
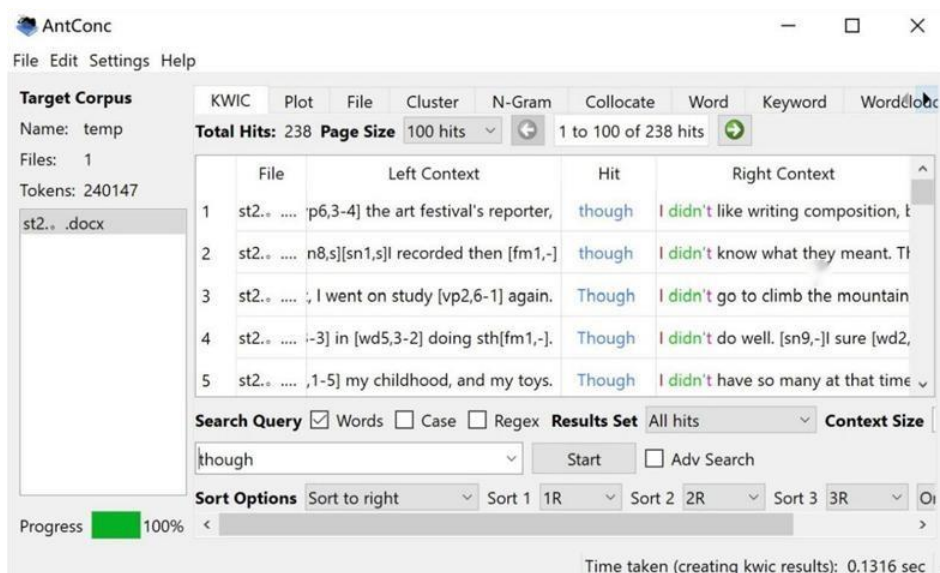
Figure 4.2 The Interface of Antconc Retrieving Concordance of "Though"

Secondly, the variety of linking words is boosted, which means the Chinese high school students' construction of concessive clauses has developed and evolved in recent twenty years. In terms of other less common conjunctions used to express concession (no matter, however, despite...), the linking words' use in self-built corpus is more diversified in kinds and frequency. Causal adverbial conjunctions, such as "even though", "even if", and "whenever" are rarely used in St2 of CLEC (with fewer than 10 hits). Worth noticing is that there was no hints of "despite" in St2, which proves the development of students' mastery of concessive clauses. However, the inclination towards the use of "although" and "though" still persists, indicating that the focus on the use of different concessive clauses' linking words in English textbooks and English teaching has not been even.

4.1.2 Analysis on the Positioning of Linking Words

As mentioned above, students are apt to put subordinate clause in the pre-sentential position, which contradicts Hawkins's (1990, 1994) "performance theory of order and constituency", claiming that there will be a general tendency for subordinate clauses to be in final position in the sentence. It is probably because of the difference between writing and speaking and how concessive.

Speech and writing differ with regard to planning, production, and processing: a speaker has less time to think ahead and anticipate complex structures than a writer and thus will tend to produce structures that are smaller and more hermetic, rather than embedded in larger complex structures. Similarly, a listener is subject to more rigid constraints than a reader; the latter can re-read and make sense of extremely complex passages, while the former is constantly confronted with new material to process and thus has little opportunity to re-interpret earlier structures. And this arrangement of 'subordinate →matrix' entails more rigorous advance planning on the part of the speaker or writer, which is why sentence-initial subordinate clauses are more likely in the written mode, in line with the results from the self-built corpus. In anticausal concessives characterized by an if-then (or cause-and-effect)

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relationship between propositions, the syntactic arrangement of clauses will be iconic of that relationship, with the subordinate clause preceding the matrix clause. In the context of concessives, the iconic arrangement of propositions is expected if this makes their surface form correspond to mental arrangements of conditionality, or cause and effect. In these cases, the subordinate clause would be expected to precede the main clause. Moreover, the concessive clauses in the self-built corpus are mostly anticausal concessives, which are commonly used in English textbooks and universally taught in English classes. Howbeit, due to the greater time constraints placed on advance planning in the spoken mode of language production, subordinate clauses are expected to follow the matrix clause in speech; in dialogic concessives, the subordinate clause will be more likely to post-qualify the matrix clause.

4.2 Interpretation of Errors

4.2.1 Interlinguai Errors

The term "interlanguage" was coined by Selinker (1969, 1972) to refer to interim grammar constructed by second language learners on their way to the target language. (Mc Laughlin,1987). Interlingual errors mean that errors made by students in second or foreign languages are influenced by their first language or native language. Errors can be divided into five types, which are omissions, additions, double markings, misformations and misorderings (Hu, 2017, p. 269). The definition of misformations is the use of the wrong form of the morpheme or structure (Hu, 2017, p. 270). Sentences like "The woman finishes to do housework" and "The woman comed to the party the day before yesterday" belong to misformations in the perspectives of the syntactic structure and morpheme. Such errors are quite common in the collected English compositions. There are four types of interlingual errors occurring in the compositions.

※ The first is loose sentence structures, consisting of run-on sentences and sentence fragments.

Table 4.1 The Examples of "Loose Sentence Structures"

(a). Although the road of discovery was not easy, they failed again and again, Tu Youyou had never thought of giving up.
(b) Although many medical workers have failed on it. But Tu Youyou has never give up.
(c) Although she has become well-known. She doesn't care about money or honor.
(d) Beside, she is very modest, although she became successful, she continue to work, she don't like the money or the reputation.
(e) He study hard and lead his team searching through China to find a nature hybrid rice, no matter how tough it is he always stay in the frontline.
(f) Yuan Longping spend whole his life in agriculture, no matter how old he was, he usually finished things by himself, with his passionate and the long time effort, he did things that he wanted in his life.

As there are several errors with the same types, three examples are demonstrated here. These sentences are incorrect based on English grammar rules. Sentences can be connected by commas to complete the meaning in Chinese sentential grammar owing to its the looseness and flexibility of the Chinese syntactic structures; Howbeit, English grammar is more strict in terms of grammatical rules and simple sentences must be connected by conjunctions to form a complete sentence. For instance, a run-on sentence is a sentence in which two or more independent clauses are written one after another with punctuation (Oshima & Hogue, 1998). In this sense, sentence (a), (d), (e), (f) are not grammatical for being run-on sentences as compound-complex sentences.

Also, sentence fragments occur in the construction of concessive clause. A sentence fragment is a structurally incomplete sentence or part of the sentence (Oshima & Hogue, 1998, p. 169). An incomplete sentence will express incomplete thought and cannot stand alone as sentence and the concessive clause should make no exception for it cannot be divided from the matrix. In another words, they should be in the same sentence. Therefore, sentence (b), (c) are ungrammatical for using period to split the concessive clauses. Having learned various kinds of parallel subordinate structures, clauses and non-predicate verbs, students are inclined to construct concessive clauses with overfull modifiers, which can increase the occurrence of the redundancy in the whole sentence, thus fall into loose sentence structures.

※The second is the influence of Chinese use of conjunctions.

Owing to the interference of the mother tongue, Chinese students used wrong collocations when constructing concessive adverbial clauses, such as using "although" or "though" together with "but" in one sentence.

Table 4.2 The Examples of "the Influence of Chinese Use of Conjunctions"

(a) Though he is about 80 years old, <u>but</u> he still fighting for the safe of the human's safe and future.
(b) Although he is old enough to retired, <u>but</u> he still keep the job of doctor.
(c) Although Yuan Long Ping have passed away, <u>but</u> the spirit of him will last　forever.
(d) Although, LiuYang not only a successful person, <u>but</u> also a female hero.
(e) Althouh, my dream is not similar to him, <u>but</u> I remember his spirit.
(f) Although many people didn't think he could success, <u>but</u> LinDan won　many golden medals proved himself.
(g) Although many medical workers have failed on it. <u>But</u> Tu Youyou has never give up.

In Chinese, the linking words to express concession are always used together and they both lead an independent sentence. However, in English, "although" and "though" can express the concessive meaning by themselves without the aid of "but".

Therefore, using "although", "though" with "but", to which some Chinese students are accustomed in writing, is ungrammatical in English syntax. This can be ascribed to the Chinese Syntax Culture and the negative transfer from Chinese.

※The third is the influence of Chinese grammar.

Due to the negative transfer of the mother tongue, Chinese students used wrong collocations when constructing concessive adverbial clauses, such as the misuse of "although" and "despite":

Table 4.3 The Examples of "the Influence of Chinese Grammar"

(a) Although <u>facing many difficults</u>, he never beaten by them.
(b) Despite <u>the reasearching condition wasn't so good</u>, she never thought of giving up.

In Chinese, the word "Jinguan (尽管)", the mostly used concessive conjunction, can be used to express concession alone, and it can be followed either by a noun phrase or a sentence. However, in English syntax, these structures differ. The conjunction "although" should be followed by a sentence while the conjunction "despite", shall be followed by the noun or noun phrase.

In sentence (a), "he never beaten by them" is the main clause, and the subordinate clause marked by "Although" should be followed by a complete sentence. The student used a gerund phrase "facing many difficults", making this clause ungrammatical without a subject. Thus, the right version can be "Although he faced many difficulties, he was never beaten by them".

In sentence (b), similarly, "Despite", expressing concession, should be followed by a noun or noun phrases, not a sentence. Therefore, it can be corrected as "Despite the fact that the researching condition wasn't so good, she never thought of giving up".

※The fourth is the wrong form of predicate verb.

Owing to the interference of the mother tongue, there are some errors in the form of predicate verbs.

Table 4.4 The Examples of "the Wrong Form of Predicate Verb"

(a) Leading the group, he persistently <u>do</u> research although there are so many difficulties.
(b) Although he is old enough to retired, but he still <u>keep</u> the job of doctor.
(c) Although Yuan Long Ping <u>have</u> passed away, but the spirit of him will last forever.
(d) Although success never comes so easily, Yuan always <u>keep</u> optimistic and never stop trying.
(e) Althoug his works has many bugs, he never <u>give</u> up.
(f) Although the injuries are part of his career, He toughly <u>strugged</u> against it all the time[Sn7,c].[cs]

In English, the predicate verb must agree with its subject in person and number. Nevertheless, there are few grammatical rules regarding the form of predicate verbs in Chinese. Even when the person of subject changes, the form of predicate verbs scarcely changes accordingly.

For example, sentence (a) to (e) demonstrate the errors of third person singular form. In English, a "s" should be added to the predicate verb if the subject is in third person form and the tense is simple present. In sentence (f), the predicate verb in the main clause should be spelled as "struggled" rather than "strugged". However, there is no change of predicate verbs' form in Chinese regardless of tenses and subjects.

II. Intralingual Errors

Intralingual errors are errors within the target language system by either overgeneralizing the grammatical rules or wrong association lexical items, usually manifesting itself in inconsistent use of tenses, misuse of parts of speech, etc. Here are five primary types of errors: the misuse, illogical matrix-subordinate relationship, the ungrammatical structure of predicate verbs, punctuation errors and singular-plural.

※ The first is the misuse, containing two aspects: the misuse of tense and the misuse of part of speech. As for the misuse of tense, the composition requires students to write a passage to describe their role model, the reasons and the influence exerted upon them. Therefore, the tense when describing the role model's experiences should be the simple past tense. Here are some errors in the misuse of tense:

Table 4.5 The Examples of "the Misuse of Tense"

(a) Although he won a lot of price, he <u>isn't</u> interested in wealth and fame.
(b) Besides, she continued her research and uninterested in fame though she <u>become</u> popular.
(c) As my hero, I<u>'d</u> think about her positive attitude and persistence whenever I <u>wanted</u> to give up, which motivate me to keep going.
(d) He <u>thought</u> it's his duty to win for the country even if he is not young.

As can be seen from the above, the situation where the tense between subordinate clause and the main sentence do not jibe is not rare. Simple past tense and simple present tense are used in the matrix and the subordinate clause in sentence (a), (b) and (d), which may cause readers' perplexity of the time sequence of the events. In sentence (c), the tense of the whole sentence should be simple present to illustrate a fact or a regular behavior.

The combination of simple past tense and simple present tense is particularly prevailing in these compositions, indicating that students lack the mastery of the two tenses, and they pay not enough attention to the consistency of tense in a compound sentence. Presumably, they are not clear which tense should be used to describe the past events and introduce people's ideas respectively.

The misuse of part of speech is another type of misuse. Some examples are as follows:

Table 4.6 The Examples of "the Misuse of Part of Speech"

(a) The reason why I admire him is although he is a normal man, he never lost <u>passionate</u> for life.

(b) Although facing many <u>difficults</u>, he never beaten by them.

(c) Though he is about 80 years old, but he still fighting for the <u>safe</u> of the human's <u>safe</u> and future.

In sentence (a), "passionate" is an adjective but "lost" is a verb. As a result, "passionate" should be changed into its noun form, which is "passion". In sentence (b), "difficult" should be changed to "difficulties", the plural form of "difficulty", and act as a noun following the adjective "many". Similarly, in sentence (c), "safe" should be "safety", as a noun following the definite article "the".

※ The second is the illogical relationship between the main clause and the subordinate clause that fails to express concession. For example:

Table 4.7 The Examples of "the Illogical Relation Between Clauses"

(a) Even if he had a simple life, he would deal with it seriously.

(b) The reason why I admire him is although he is a normal man, he never lost passionate for life.

It can be seen from the above that there are many cases where the relationship between the main clause and subordinate sentence does not constitute a concessive relationship.

For example, in sentence (a), there is no concession between the two sentences either; A man who would rather live a simple life doesn't necessarily mean that he would take things less seriously. In the sentence (b), no concessive relationship between one's lifestyle and his/her passion for one particular thing can be perceived. It's apparent that some students have little comprehension of concessive relationship.

※The third type of errors is the ungrammatical structure of predicate verbs.

Table 4.8: The Examples of "the Ungrammatical Structure of Predicate Verbs"

(a) Finally, although she <u>awarded</u> Noble Prize, she is uninterested in fame and perfers to continue her research.

(b) Although facing many difficults, he never <u>beaten</u> by them.

(c) He always keeps passionate with pingpong and keeps going on although he <u>was</u> <u>won</u> a lot of prizes.

Active voice and passive voice have different structures in English. The latter one should be used as "be + done". However, in the first two sentences, the students forgot to add "be" before "done" when passive voice of predicate verbs were used; In the third sentence, the subject "he" and predicate verb "won" constitute an active voice; However, the student used passive voice, which results in the faulty structure of predicate verb use.

※ The fourth type is punctuation errors, which can be classified into omission, misuse and overuse of punctuation. Cases in point are displayed below:

Firstly, the sentences with punctuation omission are as follows:

Table 4.9 The Examples of "Punctuation Omission"

(a) She even test the medicine on her own although she knew the danger!
(b) She gave all her heart to education although she is old and weak, which results of her serious sickness, and she never stops, which touches me most.
(c) He always keeps passionate with pingpong and keeps going on although he was won a lot of prizes.
(d) He broke the orthodox method on growing hybrid rice and created his own way although others thought it was impossible.
(e) Leading the group, he persistently do research although there are so many difficulties.

The above five sentences all lack comma before the linking word "although" and are separated from the main sentence. This can be attributed to the language habit of English: if the concessive adverbial clause is placed after the main clause, native speakers are used to adding a comma before the linking word, especially when "although" leads the concessive adverbial clause. In writing, punctuation plays a crucial role in constructing sentences. It is not only used to make clear the layers and logic of a sentence, but also contributes to clarifying semantics.

Secondly, the misuse of punctuation is also one of the high-frequency types of punctuation errors:

Table 4.10 The Examples of "the Misuse of Punctuation"

(a) Firstly, despite limited resources and hundreds of failed experiments. Tu Youyou didn't give up.
(b) Although many medical workers have failed on it. But Tu Youyou has never give up.
(c) Although, LiuYang not only a successful person, but also a female hero.
(d) Althouh, my dream is not similar to him, but I remember his spirit.
(e) Although she has become well-known. She doesn't care about money or honor.

Secondly, the misuse of punctuation is also one of the high-frequency types of punctuation errors:

It can be seen from the above that the period is between the main clause and the subordinate clause in sentence(a), (b), (e). The comma are added in sentence(c), (d), between the linking word and the subordinate clause. In the use of the adverbial clause, the main clause and subordinate clause should be separated by commas, rather than a period. Worth noticing is that there should be no punctuation following the linking words. Therefore, the comma in the subordinate sentence (c), (d) is redundant.

And if the period divides the matrix and subordinate clause into two individual ones, the concessive relationship cannot be expressed. Furthermore, the linking word should be followed directly by the concessive clause without a comma.

The overuse of punctuation occurs in the following sentence:

(a) I'm motivated by him so much, whenever I'm likely to fail.

A comma in front of the linking word "whenever" is unnecessary. Having searched in various corpora, it is common that native speakers rarely add a comma before the linking word "whenever" to separate it from the matrix. Therefore, the uncommon characteristic of certain linking words should be noticed and emphasized.

※The last type of error is singular-plural:

(a) Although the environment and situation was hardly available, he went through those difficulties and finally succeed.

In this sentence, the subject contains two countable nouns; hence, the predicate verb should take its plural form, which is "were" instead of "was".

5. Conclusion

Corpus data and collected English compositions from senior high school students are included in the research. The findings during the whole research are as follows:

(1) Concessive adverbial clauses constructed by Chinese senior high school students have some characteristics. The majority of students tend to use "although" and "despite" to express concessive, while conjunctions like "even if", "as", and "no matter+special interrogative words" are less frequently considered. In general, the diversity of concessive linking words has increased compared to CLEC, the corpus that was constructed 20 years ago. Second, 67% of students construct pre-positional concessive adverbial clauses, 33% of students post-positional, indicating that they are partly influenced by Chinese syntax habit and mode of thinking. Third, in English writing, senior high school students tend to use the "Noun Phrase" pattern, followed by the "Subject + Linking-Verb + Predicative" and the "Subject + Verb + Object" structure. It is surprising to find that students are willing to produce more complex and longer concessive clauses in English writing despite of the fact that currently simple sentence structures are preferred to construct concessive clause than complex sentence and compound-complex sentences. Additionally, various syntactic structures and concessive linking words are applied.

(2) Errors in linking words, clauses and punctuation are commonly found; negative transfer from Chinese has greatly contributed to the occurrence of the errors. More attention should be paid to some typical and representative errors in the construction of concessive clauses: the most common error is within the concessive clause, including errors in tenses, redundancy, sentence structures and predicate verbs; the second most common error is the errors of linking words and punctuation, the former one consists of spelling errors, misuse and case error; the latter one includes omission, improper selection and punctuation overuse. Moreover, errors in run-on sentences and illogical matrix-subordinate clause

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relationship can be better understood and explained in further studies and prudent investigations.

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