

Oversuppliance of the English simple past tense by Mandarin ESL learners

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Abstract

This study sought to determine if there would be L1 influence in the oral use of the English simple past tense in a semi-structured interview questions task as well as in a fill-in-the-gaps task. The rationale for this research was to investigate the oversuppliance of the simple past tense in sentential contexts in which the simple past tense was ungrammatical. The participants of this study consisted of two different L1 groups – Mandarin, which lacks a grammatical past tense, and Tamil, which has a grammatical past tense. The results indicated that the Mandarin learners oversupplied the simple past tense more frequently on the oral task, as a proportion of the simple past tense forms they produced, than the Tamil participants, but not on the fill-in-the-gaps task.

Keywords: Simple past tense, oversuppliance, L1 influence, Mandarin, Tamil.

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1. Introduction

There is SLA research indicating that Mandarin learners of English have problems accurately producing the simple past, which may be related to the lack of a grammatical past tense in Mandarin (Bayley, 1994, 1996; Hawkins & Liszka, 2003; Lardiere, 1998, 2000; Tiittanen, 2013; Witton-Davies, 2004; Wolfram, 1985). The research that has been conducted to date has analysed the undersuppliance of the simple past in obligatory contexts for its use. However, to date, no empirical studies have been conducted comparing the oversuppliance of the simple past tense, in contexts in which the simple past tense is not possible, by Mandarin ESL learners with an ESL group whose L1 does have a grammatical past tense (e.g., Tamil). This study sought to remedy this gap in the research, by comparing the oversuppliance of the English simple past tense by Mandarin and Tamil ESL learners on an oral task in which the participants would presumably not be able to access their declarative knowledge of the simple past tense. It also compared the oversuppliance of the two L2 groups on a fill-in-the-blanks task in which the learners would plausibly be able to use their declarative knowledge.

Some studies suggest that L1 transfer may possibly play a role in the oral production of the simple past tense amongst Chinese English learners (Witton-Davies, 2004), and that L1 transfer, if it exists, may possibly interact with learner awareness of the necessity of the use of the simple past tense (Yang & Huang, 2004). For instance, there appears to be research evidence that cross-linguistic influence may possibly interact with declarative versus procedural knowledge of the simple past tense. A study of L1 Chinese EFL learners found that the participants in the study had problems with the past tense in oral narratives, despite their apparently high declarative knowledge of the past tense (Witton-Davies, 2004). Other past research appears to indicate that the problems that Chinese learners have with the simple past tense is particularly acute in their oral production (Zhang & Liu, 2016). Moreover, within this oral production of the simple past tense, there is research indicating that Chinese learners are less accurate in their use of the simple past tense than L2 learners whose native languages are German and Japanese, languages which have a grammatical past tense (Zhang & Liu, 2016).

In a series of studies based on his PhD, of which this research is part, Tiittanen (2003) found that there was no statistically significant difference in the declarative knowledge of the simple past tense between the Tamil L1 group and Mandarin L1 group. However, the Mandarin learners were worse in their oral production of the simple past tense than the Tamil learners in the same interview questions as those used for this current study. However, this aforementioned study only analysed the undersuppliance of the simple past tense in obligatory environments. The accuracy of a grammatical form is instantiated by not only undersuppliance, but also oversuppliance in contexts which are not licensed by native speakers (Seog, 2015). Thus, the present study was undertaken to determine if the same Mandarin learners who had undersupplied the simple past tense in the interview questions tasks more than the Tamil learners had also oversupplied this grammatical form in this same aforementioned task.

The European Science Foundation longitudinal research project which investigated the L2 learning of various European languages by adult immigrants made a number of important generalisations about the process of adult second language acquisition. One such generalisation which is relevant to the current study is that at the initial stages of learning, morphological forms exist within the L2 interlanguage without clear functional uses. For example, learners may use both the base form of a verb and a progressive form 'without a clear and functional contrast' (Perdue, 1993, p. 108). Thus, according to this landmark study of adult L2 acquisition, the oversuppliance of forms appears to be a normal feature of the interlanguage of adult L2 learners, particularly at the earlier stages of development.

It is now widely acknowledged that scoring procedures to measure the accuracy of use of a grammatical form which also take oversuppliance into account are better measures of L2 acquisition than those that only measure undersuppliance (Eguchi & Sugiura, 2015; Goldschneider & DeKeyser, 2001; Lightbown, Spada & Wallace, 1980; Long & Sato, 1984; Murakami, 2011; Pica, 1983). As Seog

(2015) argues in her study of the order of acquisition of English morphemes by Korean learners, it is necessary to take account of oversuppliance within ESL learners' production.

In English, the encoding of the simple past tense may either be regular suffixal morphology, or take the form of irregular marking. The regular past tense suffix, written with an '-ed', has three allomorphs: /-əd/ occurs if the verb ends in a /t/ or /d/ sound; /d/ is found if the last sound is voiced (but not /d/); and /t/ is used if the last sound is voiceless (but other than /t/) (Avery & Ehrlich, 1992). If a past tense form does not follow the above allomorphy, it is said to be irregular (Pinker, 1999).

Tamil has a grammatical past tense. In Tamil, past tense suffixes (in positive indicative verb forms) are followed by other suffixes, which indicate person, number and gender (Lehmann, 1989).

(1) avan va-nt-an.

that.man-nom come-pst-3sm

'He came.' (Annamalai & Steever, 1998, p. 106)

As illustrated in (1), the suffix after the past tense suffix (nt) is a 3rd person singular masculine marker. Thus, unlike in English, in which the regular past tense allomorph is the final morpheme in the word, Tamil past tense suffixes (at least in positive indicative verb forms) will be followed by another suffix. In addition to regular verbs, such as the one above, there are also a small number of irregular verbs in Tamil, which cannot be assigned to these classes.

Almost all of the research into the topic asserts that standard (and written) Mandarin lacks a grammatical tense (Li & Thompson, 1981; Lin, 2001; Smith & Erbaugh, 2005; Xiao & McEnery, 2004). It has been asserted that in Mandarin past time interpretation is made via lexical means, aspectual markers or pragmatic principles or a combination thereof (Smith & Erbaugh, 2005). Past time reference may be marked lexically via time adverbs (e.g., sentence 3 below).

(3). ta zuotian you ke

He yesterday have class

'He had classes yesterday.' (Tie & Lance, 1986, p. 90)

In addition, pragmatic interpretation also plays a role, as in Mandarin, 'relation to speech time is not coded linguistically, but is conveyed by context' (Smith & Erbaugh, 2005, p. 749). Moreover, a combination of aspect, lexical items and adverbs may all contribute to (past) temporal interpretation (Smith & Erbaugh, 2005).

1.1. Research questions

The study investigated the following research questions:

1. Will there be a difference in the oral oversuppliance of the simple past tense between Mandarin and Tamil learners?
2. Will there be a difference in the oversuppliance of the simple past tense on a form-focussed task between Mandarin and Tamil learners?

2. Methods

2.1. Participants

There were 21 native speakers of Tamil and 21 native speakers of Mandarin who participated in the study. The Tamil and Mandarin groups were very similar in the gender make-up of their respective groups, their mean age at the time of the study, their mean age of arrival in an English-speaking country and their mean length of residence in an English-speaking country. In terms of gender, the

Tamil group consisted of 16 females and 5 males, while the Mandarin group consisted of 15 females and 6 males. The mean age of the Tamil group at the time of the study was 33.3 years, and the mean age of the Mandarin group was 35.7 years. The mean length of residence of the Tamil group was 2.08 years, and the mean LOR of the Mandarin group was 1.61 years. The Tamil group may have had a slight advantage, because of their greater LOR. However, it is unlikely that this had more than a slight impact on the study.

In contrast to the variables mentioned above, there were some differences between the two groups. Five members of the Tamil group stated that they spoke English at home with some family members, while only two members of the Mandarin group reported speaking English with family members. In terms of how they stated that they learned English beyond their formal learning in school, there was a small difference in the number of Tamil and Mandarin participants who used English professionally, socially or at college/university. Twelve Tamil speakers reported such use of English, while eight Mandarin speakers indicated such use. In addition, four Tamil participants reported watching English language TV/movies, listening to English language radio or reading books in English. In contrast, none of the Mandarin participants reported exposure to English language movies, TV, radio or books.

2.2. Data collection and analysis

The following data elicitation techniques were utilised: (a) the grammar section of the Oxford Placement Test; (b) interview questions; and (c) a fill-in-the-gap task (see Appendix). The interview questions were intended to tap primarily the participants' procedural knowledge, while the fill-in-the-gap task was designed to allow the participants to deploy their declarative knowledge. The information below details the methods and order of data collection.

2.2.1. Student language background form

This questionnaire required the participants to answer questions about their age at the time of the test, age of arrival, length of residence and exposure to English outside the classroom.

2.2.2. Grammar section of the Oxford placement test

The OPT grammar test is a timed 50-minute multiple-choice exam, which consists of a variety of different grammatical structures. On the exam, there are 100 multiple-choice items, each of which has three different choices (Water is to boil/is boiling/boils at 100°C.). Each test item was marked as being either correct or incorrect.

2.2.3. Interview questions

The researcher asked all of the questions on the interview questions schedule (please see Appendix). However, when deemed appropriate, further questions were asked.

The present study conducted a token analysis. Thus, verb tokens which were incorrectly given a simple past tense form were all counted as oversuppliances even if the same verb token had previously been used within the course of the task. The participants' oversupplied simple past tense forms were then tabulated as a proportion of their total simple past tense productions.

2.2.4. Fill-in-the-gap task

The fill-in-the-gap task required the use of the simple past tense for 16 different verbs (see Appendix), as well as 10 distractors, for which the simple past tense was incorrect. This was an untimed activity, and no exam aids were allowed.

The correctly supplied simple past tense forms in obligatory contexts for this verb tense-aspect form were tabulated. The incorrectly supplied instances of the simple past tense out of the total possible of 10 contexts, in which the simple past tense was not possible, were also calculated.

3. Results

As shown in Figure 1 and Table 1, the OPT grammar test results of the Mandarin group and the Tamil group were very similar. The Mandarin learners had a mean score of 53.1% on the OPT grammar test, and the Tamil learners had a mean score of 49.8%. A *t*-test of independent samples revealed that this difference was statistically non-significant, $t = (1, 40) = 0.708, p = 0.483$.

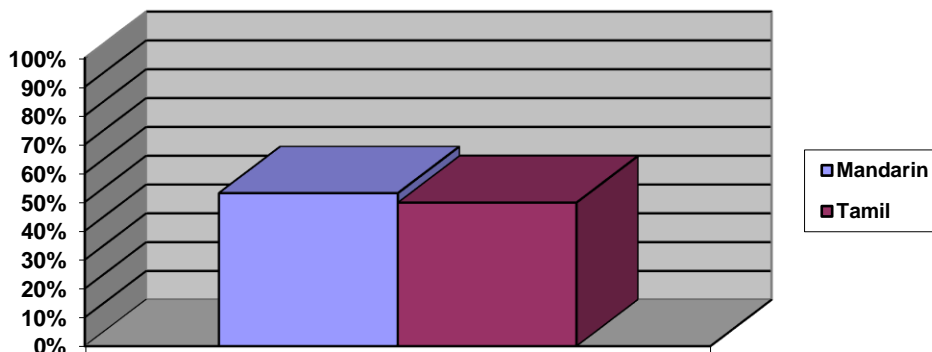


Figure 1. OPT grammar test results by L1

Table 1. OPT grammar test results by L1

L1	N	Mean score	Standard deviation	t value	p value
Mandarin	21	53.1%	15.3	0.708	0.483
Tamil	21	49.8%	15.3		

As shown in Figure 2 and Table 2, both L1 groups had a similar level of accuracy in their use of the simple past tense in obligatory environments on the fill-in-gaps task, which was not, statistically significant as measured by a Mann–Whitney test ($p = 0.427; z = -0.794$). Thus, overall, it appears that the two L1 groups had a fairly similar level of declarative knowledge of the simple past tense.

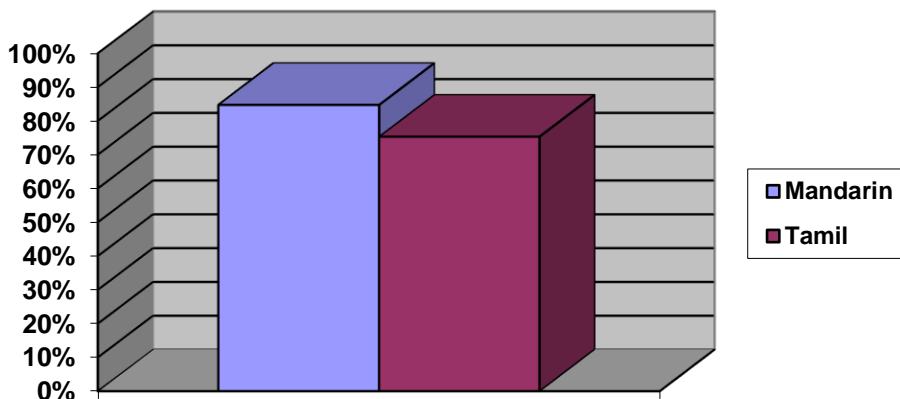


Figure 2. Suppliance in obligatory contexts by L1 on fill-in-the-gap task

Table 2. Suppliance in obligatory contexts by L1 on fill-in-the-gap task

L1	Suppliance in obligatory contexts M (SD)	Z score	Statistical significance
Mandarin ($n = 21$)	84.7% (12.8)	-0.794	$p = 0.427$ (Mann–Whitney)
Tamil ($n = 21$)	75.3% (25.1)		

In addition, the oversuppliance of the simple past tense on the fill-in-gap task was analysed. As shown in Table 3, out of a total possible of 10 items for which the simple past tense was not possible, the Mandarin participants had a mean rate of oversuppliance of 1.76 items and the Tamil learners corresponding mean was 2.26 oversupplied simple past tense forms. This difference was statistically non-significant

($p = 0.321$, independent samples t -test).

Table 3. Oversuppliance of the simple past tense by L1 on fill-in-the-gap task

Mandarin ($n = 21$)		Tamil ($n = 21$)		Statistical significance	All participants ($n = 42$)	
Sum	M (SD)	Sum	M (SD)		Sum	M (SD)
37	1.76 (1.48)	47.5	2.26 (1.74)	$p = 0.321$ Bonferroni correction = 0.176 $t = -1.004$ (ind. samples t -test)	84.5	2.01 (1.61)

As shown in Figure 3 and Table 4, on the oral task, the Mandarin participants had a greater oversuppliance rate than the Tamil participants. As a proportion of the simple past tense forms produced by the learners, the Mandarin learners had a mean oversuppliance rate of 15.0%, while the Tamil oversuppliance rate was 5.3%. The difference between the L1 groups was statistically significant ($p < 0.01$; $z = -3.084$; Mann–Whitney test) and the effect size was fairly large ($r = 0.44$).

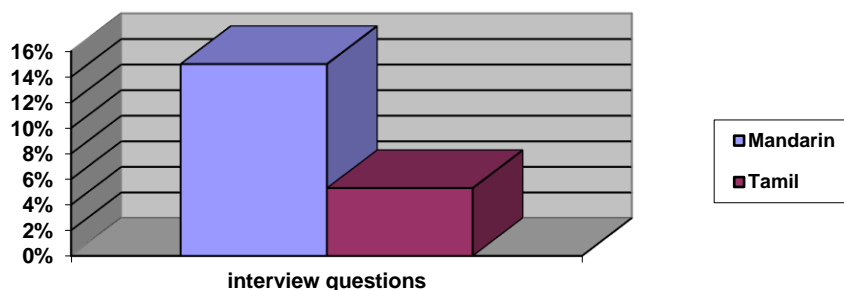


Figure 3. Oral oversuppliance of the simple past tense

Table 4. Oral oversuppliance of the simple past tense

Task type	All participants	Mandarin participants	Tamil participants	Probability of L1 difference	Effect size of L1 difference
Interview questions	Mean = 10.1%	Mean = 15.0%	Mean = 5.3%	$p = 0.002$	$r = 0.44$
	SD = 10.9	SD = 12.5	SD = 6.1	(Mann-Whitney)	
	$n = 42$	$n = 21$	$n = 21$	$z = -3.084$	

In addition to the quantitative data above, the researcher made several other observations about the participants' oversuppliance of the simple past tense. These observations are related to factors such as changes in the temporal reference of the participants' speech and their use of other tense-aspect forms related to the simple past tense. These observations are presented in the Discussion section.

4. Discussion

There was no statistically significant difference in oversuppliance between the L1 groups on the fill-in-the-gaps task. Arguably, this was influenced by the fact that this task focused on form. Previous studies of L2 verb tense-aspect use have shown that L2 learners are more accurate in their use of L2 verb forms in a fill-in-a-gap task than in more spontaneous oral tasks (Macrory & Stone, 2000). The participants in both L2 groups may have been able to rely on their declarative knowledge of the correct use of the simple past tense in the fill-in-the-gap task, including instances when it is *not* correct to use this form. They may have been aided in this by the fact that this task was untimed.

This interpretation is buttressed by the results of Tiittanen (2013), which analysed the same participants' accuracy of the simple past tense in obligatory contexts. Both L1 groups had high levels of accuracy of correct suppliance of the simple past tense in obligatory contexts on the aforementioned task. The Tamil group had a mean score of 75.3% (S.D. = 25.1) and the Mandarin group had a mean score of 84.7% (S.D. = 12.8), a difference which was statistically non-significant (100).

In contrast to the fill-in-the-gap task, the interview questions task was not focused on form. Therefore, the participants were plausibly not as focused on the accuracy of their form as on the fill-in-the-gaps task. Research on theories on the automatization of knowledge indicates that declarative knowledge sequentially precedes procedural knowledge and that it takes learners a long time to automatise their knowledge (DeKeyser, 2001). The nature of the oral interview questions task may mean that the participants needed to rely on their procedural knowledge of verb forms and that given the implicit time demands of an oral task; they may not have had time to access their declarative knowledge of the appropriacy of use of simple past tense forms.

However, given that the Tamil language has a grammatical past tense, they may have had a better implicit awareness of the inappropriateness of the use of the simple past tense for non-past temporal situations than the Mandarin L1 participants. As Zhang and Liu (2016) argue, L2 learners who have past tense morphology in their L1 appear to have an advantage in the learning of past tense use in a second language. Moreover, there is evidence pointing out that it is possible to have procedural knowledge of a skill without declarative knowledge of this skill (Carlson, 2003). Thus, it is possible that the Tamil-speaking participants may have been able to utilise their procedural knowledge of the appropriacy and inappropriacy of the use of the simple past tense without needing to access their declarative knowledge of this form. However, it must be acknowledged that little research has been done on the proceduralisation of L2 skills (DeKeyser, 2001).

In contrast to the Tamil participants, the Mandarin learners may not have had an as great an implicit understanding of the form–meaning relationship of the simple past tense to past, definite situations given the fact that Mandarin lacks a grammatical past tense. Therefore, they may have oversupplied simple past tense forms as they did not have time to think about the appropriateness of such forms in their oral contexts of use.

If the Mandarin-speaking learners within this study were less sensitive to the form–meaning connections of the simple past tense, they may also have tended not to notice the use of the simple past tense in oral input to which they had been exposed. As Schmidt (2001) argues, when the target L2 contains linguistic forms not present in the L1 of learners, these L1 learners must intentionally focus attention on these forms in order for this input to become intake. Ellis (2006) makes a similar argument. He argues that L2 learners may have problems with the use of linguistic categories in the target language which is not present in their L1, partly because they are not sensitive enough to the relevant cues of the linguistic category in the L2. Thus, it is possible that the past tense oral input exemplars Mandarin learners receive may not become intake, and to some extent, their interlanguage may be influenced by the lack of a grammatical past form within their L1.

One interesting proposal which may have relevance for the results of this study is that made by Hawkins and Liszka (2003). They suggest that Chinese ESL learners may monitor the discourse environment for ‘pastness’. However, because such monitoring may not be a reliable method for determining the appropriacy of past tense marking, they may sometimes produce what appear to be randomly produced past tense forms (i.e., oversuppliances). It may be possible that the Mandarin-speaking learners in the current study were sometimes paying attention to the discourse environment. As noted earlier, Mandarin speakers rely to some extent on contextual clues in order to infer and convey the idea of pastness (Smith & Erbaugh, 2005). Given that the interview questions task was designed to elicit the simple past tense, these participants may sometimes have noticed discourse cues to pastness in many of the questions, and have sometimes wrongly inferred the need for the simple past tense when this tense-aspect marker was not possible.

An analysis of the contexts of the oversupplied past tense forms produced by the Mandarin speakers revealed that many of these forms were uttered when they digressed in response to a question about a past event (e.g., a holiday) and referred instead to other times. However, it does appear that the Chinese learners were aware, at least some of the time, of the past temporal reference of their utterances. Seventeen out of the 58 oversupplied simple past forms were uttered when another obligatory past tense-aspect form, such as the present perfect, was required.

The Tamil learners also produced many of their oversupplied past tense when they digressed in their response to a question about a past event and referred to other times. Like the Mandarin learners, some of these oversupplied forms were uttered when another past tense-aspect form was required (e.g., present perfect). Similar to the Mandarin speakers, some of these oversuppliances were simple past tense forms on the wrong verb within a verb phrase (e.g., I can *got*).

There were indeed many temporal shifts in reference made by the participants, most of which were done by the learners themselves, as they were encouraged to expand upon their answers by the researcher-interviewer. What is the significance of the fact that the Tamil learners used oversuppliances less frequently on average when they digressed and switched topic reference times (e.g., generic, habitual action)? Possibly the Tamil speakers were more aware of the inappropriateness of simple past tense forms for habitual action and other time references. The Mandarin speakers may possibly have had less flexibility in avoiding the use of the simple past tense when they elected to change the temporal reference of their speech during the course of the conversation-like interview.

It may possibly be significant that both L1 groups produced some of their oversupplied simple past tense forms in obligatory contexts for the production of other past tense-aspect forms such as the present perfect. It is possible that these learners may not have learned or developed enough control over such other past tense-aspect forms and may, in a sense, have been using the oversupplied simple past tense forms as a kind of ‘substitute’ for the correct past tense-aspect forms. The fact that some of the oversupplied forms were incorrectly supplied on lexical verbs rather than auxiliary verbs (e.g., ‘I can *got*’) may also reflect a lack of knowledge or control on where to place the past tense marking on multi-verb verb phrases.

What are the classroom implications of the finding that Mandarin ESL learners, at least those learners at the proficiency level in the current study, sometimes oversupply past tense forms? As is now well-known, corrective feedback can help L2 learners with the accuracy of their oral grammatical production. A study by Yang and Lyster (2010) investigated the relative efficacy of two different types of corrective feedback on the oral production of the simple past tense by Mandarin-speaking ESL learners in China. Their findings indicated that both prompts and recasts were helpful. Prompts are pedagogical techniques that are designed to elicit self-repair of the incorrect form by the learner. Recasts involve some kind of implicit or explicit repair of the incorrect form by the teacher but do not seek to elicit self-repair of the grammar mistake by learner. However, overall, the group that received prompts for corrective feedback of simple past tense mistakes vastly outperformed the group that received recasts of their simple past tense. These differences between the prompt group and the recast group were particularly noticeable on the post-test results. Yang and Lyster (2010, p. 255)

attributed the difference in the corrective feedback results to the fact that ‘because learners consistently modified their output after prompts but not after recasts, production opportunities following corrective feedback could, to some extent, explain the greater benefits yielded by prompts ...’.

Thus, it may be beneficial for ESL teachers to prompt ESL students to modify their production of oversupplied simple past tense forms rather than simply correcting them. They may do this in a variety of ways, such as asking them to correct oversupplied past tense forms students have produced (e.g., ‘what is correct’ – ‘went’ or ‘go’) or giving them metalinguistic feedback (e.g., ‘is the past tense correct here?’). As Yang and Lyster argue, prompts push learners to reanalyse their answer and to increase their awareness of the correct form or rule. It is possible that prompts are an effective pedagogical technique in helping ESL learners to bridge the gap between their declarative knowledge of the simple past tense forms, which are often evinced on in-class written exercises and tests, and their oral use of simple past tense forms in real time.

In addition, given the fact that the learners within this study sometimes oversupplied the simple past tense in contexts for other past tense-aspect forms, it may be useful for ESL teachers to judiciously point out the differences between the simple past tense and other past tense-aspect forms (e.g., present perfect), when the teacher feels that the learners may be developmentally ready to understand such an explanation. Furthermore, when students oversupply the simple past tense form on lexical verbs rather than on auxiliary verbs in multi-verb verb phrases, it may be useful for ESL teachers to teach the students, in a level-appropriate manner, that in such situations the auxiliary verb needs to be marked for past tense and not the lexical verb.

5. Conclusion

This study found that both task and L1 played a role in the oversuppliance of the simple past tense. There was not a difference in the rate of oversuppliance of this form in the form-focussed task (the fill-in-the-gap task) between the Tamil-speaking ESL learners and the Mandarin-speaking ESL learners. However, on the oral task designed to elicit the simple past tense (semi-structured interview questions), the Mandarin L1 group oversupplied the simple past tense more often than the Tamil L1 group. This may be due to the structural differences between the L1s – Tamil has a grammatical past tense while Mandarin does not. Also, this result might have been influenced by the fact that this task was not focused on form, and the participants may not have had time to access their declarative knowledge of the simple past tense.

The pedagogical implications of this study suggest a greater role for form-focused grammar instruction. In particular, teachers of ESL classes with many students whose native language does not have a grammatical past tense (e.g., Mandarin) may wish to give their students some form-focused instruction on oversupplied simple past tense forms. Such ESL teachers may also want to give appropriate form-focused pedagogical feedback to such students when students produce such oversupplied forms. Previous research indicates that students with errors in the use of the simple past tense in their oral production benefit from prompting them to self-correct their grammar. ESL teachers may wish to sometimes prompt ESL students of sufficiently high grammatical proficiency who oversupply the simple past tense to edit such spoken errors. This may aid the ESL students in raising their self-awareness of the incorrectness of their oversupplied forms.

In terms of research, SLA researchers who specialise in L2 tense-aspect acquisition may wish to do future studies on the oversuppliance of verb tense-aspect forms by L2 learners. Such studies may possibly shed more light on the possible role of L1 in such oversuppliance as well as which verb tense-aspect forms L2 learners tend to mix up.

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Appendix

Fill-in-the-gaps task

Please fill in the correct forms of the verbs in the blanks below:

I really 1. like (like) traveling. My friends often 2. _____ (ask) me why I enjoy traveling so much. I usually 3. _____ (tell) them that I 4. _____ (believe) that traveling to other countries is a good experience. I have visited many countries, but until last year I 5. _____ never _____ (be) to England. I 6. _____ (know) people in England who often ask me to visit them there.

Last year my brother was working in England, and he 7. _____ (tell) me he missed me very much. I 8. _____ (decide) to go there to visit him during my winter holidays. My brother often writes to me but I 9. _____ not _____ (see) him for several years. This way I could see my brother and also see England.

My brother was in London at that time, so I 10. _____ (call) the travel agency where my friend worked to buy a ticket to London on the date I preferred (July 2). The travel agency did not have any more flights to London on July 2, so I went to look on the internet. On the internet I could not find any more flights on that date, but I 11. _____ (continue) looking for some time. I still couldn't find any flights with available seats on that date, so I 12. _____ (choose) a flight on July 3 instead. I 13. _____ (see) that Air Canada offered the best price. Because Air Canada offered the best price, I purchased a ticket with them. However, I was a little worried because I 14. _____ (need) to pay with my credit card and I am generally worried about the security of my credit card number. But I 15. _____ (buy) a ticket on this flight because I 16. _____ (know) I could not afford anything more expensive.

On the day of the flight, my friend 17. _____ (drive) me to the airport. I 18. _____ (get) to the airport early. The first thing I did at the airport was I went to the Air Canada desk. At the Air Canada desk, the Air Canada employee 19. _____ (ask) to see my electronic ticket. Unfortunately, I had lost my ticket. I was really worried that I would 20. _____ (miss) my flight. However, I was worried for nothing. I 21. _____ (show) the Air Canada employee my passport. Then he 22. _____ (give) me another ticket.

Before my flight, I had to find something to do, so I 23. _____ (watch) TV in a bar at the airport. I also 24. _____ (play) some video games and 25. _____ (write) in my diary. I was also a little bit hungry, so I 26. _____ (eat) in a coffee shop. At the coffee shop, I 27. _____ (study) my university textbook. An hour and a half before my flight, I 28. _____ (walk) to the security gate. At the security gate, I 29. _____ (stand) in line for a long time. When it was finally my turn, I handed the security guard my ticket. He examined it very carefully. I 30. _____ (feel) nervous because I didn't know why he was looking at it like that. Finally, he said in a loud voice, 'The date for this ticket 31. _____ (be) wrong!' He 32. _____ (look) angry. I 33. _____ (start) to talk, but before I could finish my sentence, he 34. _____ (stop) me at once by saying 'Oh, I'm sorry! I made a mistake! I 35. _____ (think) it was Saturday.'

I was really angry! I was going to make a complaint about him, but I didn't because I just 36. _____ (want) to go to the gate that my flight was leaving from. So, after going through the security gate, I just 37. _____ (find) the gate that my flight was leaving from. While I was waiting there, I talked to one of the other passengers waiting there. He was from France, so I 38. _____ (speak) French with him to practice my French.

The flight was mostly OK, but as the first movie was ending, the plane began to shake up and down, and one of the passenger's bags 39. _____ (fall) down. All this caused me 40. _____ (feel) scared.

When the flight finally 41. _____ (arrive) in London, I was so happy. I can't honestly say that I 42. _____ (enjoy) this flight. When the plane was finally on the ground, I said to myself 'I 43. _____ never _____ (forget) this trip!'

Interview Questions

1. What's your (full) name?

2. a) What do you normally like to do on the weekend?

b) What did you do your last weekend?

c) What sort of hobbies do you have?

3. a) Let's talk about school now. What was your favourite subject in high school? (Why?)

- b) i. Did you study English in your first country?
 - ii. (If 'yes' to above question) Did you like studying English in (country)? Why/why not?
 - (If 'no' to above question) When you first started studying English in Canada, did you like studying English? Why/why not?
- 4. a) Where were you born?
 - b) When did you immigrate to Canada?
 - c) Do you remember your trip to Canada? Can you tell me about it?
 - d) Do you remember your first day in Canada? What happened?
 - e) If you don't mind my asking, why did you immigrate here?
- 5. Can you tell me about a trip you took to another country or city?
- 6. Are you married?
 - i. (If yes) Can you tell me about your wedding day?
 - ii. (If no) Can you tell me about another person's wedding celebration you attended?