

ERROR ANALYSIS AND TEACHING STRATEGIES OF CHINESE TIME ADVERBS “ZAI” AND “CAI” FOR INDONESIAN STUDENTS

Laurencia Noviana

Department of Linguistics and Applied Linguistics, School of Chinese Language and Literature,
Wuhan University
Wuhan, Hubei Province, P.R.China 430072
noviana.laurencia@yahoo.com

Received: 12th February 2019/Revised: 21st February 2019/Accepted: 15th March 2019

How to Cite: Noviana, L. (2019). Error analysis and teaching strategies of Chinese time adverbs “zai” and “cai” for Indonesian students. *Lingua Cultura*, 13(2), 93-97. <https://doi.org/10.21512/lc.v13i2.5390>

ABSTRACT

This research aimed at investigating Indonesian students' mastery of Chinese adverbs zai (再) and cai (才). Modern Chinese adverbs were a difficult point in teaching Chinese as a foreign language. The time adverb of modern Chinese, zai (再) and cai (才), was an adverbial adverb easily misused by Indonesian students because these two adverbs had the same counterpart in Indonesian language. This research conducted a questionnaire survey among 83 Indonesian students in China. The questionnaire was a test about the use of time adverbs zai (再) and cai (才). The sentences that test 10 questions all came from the BCC corpus of Beijing Language and Culture University. After investigation, it is found that Indonesian students' errors are more obvious. The researcher hopes that it can supplement the research achievements of Indonesian students in learning Chinese adverbs, and arouse more scholars to study the characteristics of learning Chinese adverbs for Indonesian students and promote the development of Chinese language teaching in Indonesia.

Keywords: error analysis, teaching strategies, Chinese adverbs

INTRODUCTION

The study of adverbs in modern Chinese has always been a hot and important topic in grammar research (张明辉 & 朱, 2019). Adverbs are one of the most important and divergent parts of word class in Chinese (王, 2017). Adverbs in modern Chinese are also one of difficult points in teaching Chinese as a foreign language (周 & 薄, 2017). The Chinese adverbs often have more than one meaning, and the usage of each meaning is quite complex, such as the time adverbs *zai* (再) and *cai* (才) in modern Chinese (宋, 2014). The adverbs *zai* (再) and *cai* (才) have five meanings in the Eight Hundred Words of Modern Chinese (吕, 1980), even the two adverbs have some similar meanings, which leads to the Chinese learners often mixing the Chinese adverb *zai* (再) and *cai* (才), and Indonesian students are no exception.

Time adverbs have always occupied an important position in modern Chinese system, and they have always been the main content of research (郑, 2017). There are many studies on Chinese time adverbs *zai* (再) and *cai* (才), but there has never been a comparative study of the two adverbs. And there has never been any study on the difficulties Indonesian students encounter in learning

Chinese time adverbs or the mixed use of these two adverbs. The objective of this research is to analyze the missuses of the time adverbs *zai* (再) and *cai* (才) among the Indonesian students in mastering modern Chinese and to find out the reasons for the errors, and propose some teaching strategies for these two adverbs.

METHODS

The data of this research are collected through the questionnaire. In order to understand the mastery of the time adverbs *zai* (再) and *cai* (才) in modern Chinese, the author designs a set of Chinese adverbs *zai* (再) and *cai* (才) questionnaire. The questionnaire is a test about the use of time adverbs *zai* (再) and *cai* (才). The sentences that test 10 questions (6 *zai* (再) sentences, 4 *cai* (才) sentences) all sentences come from the BCC corpus of Beijing Language and Culture University. Test questions are multiple choice questions. Indonesian students in China are asked to choose *zai* (再) or *cai* (才) to fill in the brackets of sentences. The author uses the online electronic questionnaire distributed to Wechat Groups of Indonesian students in China with around 500 population; 104 respondents filled in the questionnaires,

and 83 of the valid questionnaires are analyzed. This research use qualitative descriptive analysis. Classified the true and false answers of the data received, and find out the reasons. The results and analysis discuss below.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The first part of the questionnaire focuses on the background and Chinese level of Indonesian students. Among 83 Indonesian students whose mother tongue is Indonesian; 83,13%, native language is Indonesian dialect (Java, Sunda, and other dialects) 8,43%; native language is Chinese dialect (Cantonese, Minnan dialect, Chaozhou, etc.) 8,43%. Their time length in learning Chinese is divided into three categories, 1-2 years (45,78%), 3-5 years (40,96%), 6 years or more (13,25%). Their Chinese levels are respectively; beginner Chinese level (12,05%), intermediate Chinese level (50,60%), advanced Chinese level (37,35%).

The second part of the questionnaire is about 10 sentences contains time adverbs *zai* (再) and *cai* (才). The right answer for sentences no. 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 9 is *zai* (再).

①进来聊下()睡吧。

Only 40,96% respondents answer correctly.

②等你赚到一百万()来找我吧。

There are 57,83% respondents answer correctly.

③少开窗, 等太阳出来()开窗通风。

Only 42,17% respondents answer correctly.

⑤我终于明白, 原来旅行的意义, 是遇见一些人, ()与他们告别。

There are 67,47% respondents answer correctly, and only 32,53% answered incorrectly.

⑥饭后休息10-15分钟后.....开始散步有保健作用。

There are 51,81% respondents answer correctly.

⑦刚刚梦里饿得不行, 奶奶让等爹回来.....吃饭, 于是我就不开心地等着。

Only 43,37% respondents answer correctly.

As can be seen from Figure 1 and 2, Indonesian students are most likely to make the mistake of misusing the adverb of time *zai* (再) as the adverb of time *cai* (才).

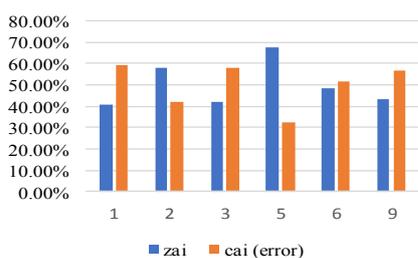


Figure 1 Misuse of *Cai*

The right answer for sentence no. 4, 7, 8 is *cai* (才).

④午餐下午4点吃, 晚餐忙到晚上11点()吃。

Only 28,92% respondents answer incorrectly.

⑦有些事情, 要等到你渐渐清醒了()明白它是个错误。

Only 19,28% respondents answer incorrectly.

⑧明明我四点下班, 主任就借故开会, 留我到现在()走。

Only 34,94% respondents answered incorrectly.

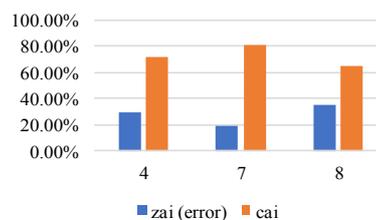


Figure 2 Misuse of *Zai*

Those are the analysis finds out that the semantics of the sentence no.10 is vague.

⑩早上不开会, 下午不开会, 偏偏选择晚上下班后()开会, 我能没意见吗?

69,88% of respondents choose '*cai* (才)', and only 30,12% of respondents choose *zai* (再). The two adverbs *zai* (再) and *cai* (才) can be used, so it will be excluded them and discussed them separately.

It is believed that Indonesian students are often misuse the adverbs of time *zai* (再) and *cai* (才) mainly because this four reasons; first is because time adverbs *zai* (再) and *cai* (才) use a corresponding word *baru* in the Indonesian language, means after that.

The adverb *zai* (再) has six meanings in the Chinese Indonesian dictionary (潘, 1995). They are; (1) *Sekali lagi, lagi, kembali* (once more, again, once again), e.g: 再试一次。(Coba *sekali lagi*) (Do it once **again**). (2) *Menyatakan lebih* (express more), e.g: 还有再大一点儿的鞋子吗? *Adakah sepatu yang lebih besar?* (Do you have any **bigger** shoes?). (3) *Menyatakan bagaimana bila diteruskan* (express what **if** you continue to do that), e.g: 再喝下去他得醉倒。 *Dia akan mabuk kalau masih minum lagi* (He will get drunk if he drinks anymore). (4) *Menyatakan suatu perbuatan terjadi sesudah perbuatan lain usai* (indicates that the next action is taken after an action is completed), e.g: 你们一定得跟群众商量后再做决定。 *Kalian harus berunding dulu dengan massa, kemudian baru mengambil keputusan* (You must consult with the masses before making a decision). (5) *Menyatakan ada tambahan* (indicates there are other things), e.g: 再则 (*lagi pula*); *selain itu* (moreover, besides). (6) *Terulang; muncul/timbul kembali; muncul lagi* (indicates repetition, appear, reappear), e.g: 青春不再。 *Masa remaja tidak akan terulang* (Youth can't come back).

While according to Chinese Indonesian dictionary, there are four meanings of the adverb *cai* (才), the are; (1) *Menyatakan hal yang baru saja atau terlambat terjadi* (indicating something just happened or happened late), e.g: 义务劳动才开始。 *Kerja bakti baru dimulai*. (Compulsory labour **just** begins). (2) *Menyatakan sesuatu tergantung pada kondisi tertentu* (means that something can happen under certain conditions), e.g: 我们只有依靠人民群众才有力量。 *Hanya dengan bersandar kepada massa barulah kita kuat*. (We can only rely on the people for strength). (3) *Menyatakan jumlah atau frekuensinya* (denotes quantity or frequency), e.g: 一共才10个, 不够分。 *Seluruhnya baru 10, tak cukup untuk dibagi*. (There are only 10, which is not enough). (4) *Untuk penekanan* (express the emphasis), e.g: 我要是不知道才怪呢。 *Kalau saya tidak tahu barulah aneh*. (It's weird if I don't know).

Form these examples, it can be seen that the Indonesian counterpart of the time adverb *zai* (再) is *baru* (just), while the Indonesian counterpart of the time adverb *cai* (才) has two counterparts; *baru* and *barulah* (after

that). The same corresponding word baru is likely to lead Indonesian students to misuse the time adverb *zai* (再) and *cai* (才), like the following examples:

①进来聊下再睡吧。

*进来聊下才睡吧。

Masuk mengobrol sebentar baru tidur lah

(Come in and talk before you go to bed)

②等你赚到一百万再来找我吧。

*等你赚到一百万才来找我吧。

Tunggu kamu menghasilkan uang satu juta baru cari saya.

(Come back to me when you earn a million dollars)

③少开窗，等太阳出来再开窗通风。

*少开窗，等太阳出来才开窗通风。

Jangan sering-sering buka jendela, tunggu matahari muncul, baru buka jendelanya supaya ada sirkulasi udara.

(Do not open the window frequently; wait for the sun to come out before opening them for ventilation)

④我终于明白，原来旅行的意义，是遇见一些人，再与他们告别。

*我终于明白，原来旅行的意义，是遇见一些人，才与他们告别。

Akhirnya saya mengerti, bahwa arti dari perjalanan adalah bertemu dengan orang-orang, baru berpisah dengan mereka.

(I finally understand that the original meaning of travel is to meet some people and say goodbye to them)

⑤饭后休息10-15分钟后再开始散步有保健作用。

*饭后休息10-15分钟后才开始散步有保健作用。

10-15 menit setelah makan baru berjalan santai berguna untuk memelihara kesehatan.

(Rest for 10-15 minutes after meals and then take a walk is good for health)

⑥刚刚梦里饿得不行，奶奶让等爹回来再吃饭，于是我就不开心地等着。

*刚刚梦里饿得不行，奶奶让等爹回来才吃饭，于是我就不开心地等着。

Tadi di dalam mimpi sudah kelaparan sekali, nenek menyuruh tunggu ayah pulang baru makan, karenanya aku menunggu dengan kesal.

(Just in my dream, I was very hungry, and Grandma asked me to wait until Dad came back for dinner, so I waited unhappily)

Second, the semantics of the time adverb *zai* (再) and *cai* (才) are similar, which lead to the relationship between the two adverbs as synonyms (吴, 1997). Third, adverb *zai* (再) and *cai* (才) have a lot of meanings that can confuse Chinese learners. In modern Chinese 800 words, Lyu Shuxiang has listed five meanings for the adverb *cai* (才) and *zai* (再) (吕, 2015). For adverb *cai* (才); (1) Just now or it is not long ago; (2) things happen or end late; (3) the quantity is small and the degree is low, only; (4) means what happens only under certain conditions, or for some reason or purpose; (5) emphasize definite tone.

Lyu Shuxiang also gives a note to compare *cai* (才) and *zai* (再). For *zai* (再); (1) repeat or continue an action (or a state); (2) indicates that an action will occur in a certain

situation; (3) before adjectives, the degree of expression increases; (4) *zai* (再) and negative words are used together; (5) in addition.

On the adverbs *cai* (才) and *zai* (再), Lyu Shuxiang has also added a note that *zai* (再) means that the action has not yet been achieved, but will be achieved at some time. While *cai* (才) means that the action has been achieved, and emphasizes that the action has been realized late. This note also shows that Lyu Shuxiang has long noticed this linguistic phenomenon and that the second meaning of the adverb *zai* (再) is quite similar to that of *cai* (才). Wu Zhongwei has also discussed this issue in his paper *On the Procrastination Meaning of Adverb Zai - also on Strengthening the Pragmatic Study of Chinese Adverbs* 《论副词“再”的拖延义——兼论加强对汉语副词的语用研究》. In his opinion, the generalization of the meaning of *zai* (再) and *cai* (才) in Lyu Shuxiang's *800 Words of Modern Chinese* (吕, 1999) is basically correct, but it cannot explain all the problems, such as:

[1] 我明天再去吧。

[2] 我明天才去呢，（你着什么急！）

Adverbs *zai* (再) and *cai* (才) can both appear in “t1_VP”, which means that the action happens later. Therefore, he thinks that *zai* (再) and *cai* (才) are synonyms, and they have differences. The differences are *cai* (才) can be used for what has already been, or for what has not been; *zai* (再) cannot be used for what has already been, but only for what has not been. Beside that, “t1 cai (才) VP” expresses the subjective evaluation of the narrator, and holds that “t1VP” is too late, while “t1 cai (才) VP” reflects the willingness of the arranger to arrange VP at a later time (吴, 1997).

Sentence 9 should use the adverb *zai* (再) to indicate that VP2 (eating) will occur or end after VP1 (father's return).

⑦刚刚梦里饿得不行，奶奶让等爹回来再吃饭，于是我就不开心地等着。

*刚刚梦里饿得不行，奶奶让等爹回来才吃饭，于是我就不开心地等着。

Most Indonesian students (56,63%) chose adverb *cai* (才) to fill in the blanks, probably because they thought VP2 (eating) happens late, so the speaker (I) express dissatisfaction (unhappy). It is worth noting that the word *cai* (才) can be used as already, but the sentence containing the adverb *cai* (才) cannot add the auxiliary word *le*. Some Chinese sentences have vague semantics and non-native speakers sometimes find it difficult to distinguish between the adverbs *zai* (再) or *cai* (才), as in the following two sentences:

⑧午餐下午4点吃，晚餐忙到晚上11点才吃。

In this sentence, the adverb *cai* (才) means VP happens late.

*午餐下午4点吃，晚餐忙到晚上11点再吃。(才)

Some Indonesian students (28,92%) chose *zai* (再) incorrectly. Maybe they think that *zai* (再) should be used here to express action (eat) repetition. In fact, the sentence ‘eat’ is not the same ‘eat’. The first ‘eat’ is lunch, the second ‘eat’ is dinner, not action repetition.

⑨早上不开会，下午不开会，偏偏选择晚上下班后再开会，我能没意见吗？

⑩早上不开会，下午不开会，偏偏选择晚上下班后才开会，我能没意见吗？

This sentence is one of the sentences with *zai* (再) VP in the BCC corpus. 69,88% of the respondents fill in 'wrong'. The author observes this sentence carefully and finds out that it can use the adverb *zai* (再) and the adverb *cai* (才). By interviewing 20 native speakers of Chinese, it is found that they all think the sentence could use both *zai* (再) or *cai* (才), but 18 people prefer to use the adverb *cai* (才) to indicate that VP2 (meeting) happens late, and the speaker is not satisfied (Can I have any comments?). Two people prefer to use the adverb *zai* (再) to indicate that VP2 (meeting) would occur after VP1 (off duty). Thus, the Chinese adverb *zai* (再) and *cai* (才) also have a 'cross' relationship. In some cases, both can be used and can be substituted for each other, but the meaning is different.

Fourth is there are only few comparative studies on Chinese adverbs *zai* (再) and *cai* (才), so the explanations of these two adverbs in TCFL textbooks are not comprehensive enough. Most of the vocabulary in the Elementary Textbooks of Chinese as a foreign language is accompanied by a translation. There are some problems in the processing of translation (张喜芹, 2014). These problems will lead to negative language transfer, resulting in errors in word understanding, and then lead to errors in Chinese vocabulary especially adverb learning of foreign students.

Many experts and scholars have discussed the problem of adverb *zai* (再) and *you* (又), or the problem of adverb *jiu* (就), *cai* (才), including comparison and error analysis, but there are only few comparisons between time adverb *zai* (再) and *cai* (才). In the researcher's opinion, the adverbs *zai* (再) and *cai* (才) have never been mentioned and explained in the textbooks of Teaching Chinese as Foreign Language (TCFL), and the difference between the two adverbs has never been noticed by teachers of TCFL to make it easy for Chinese learners to misuse the adverbs *zai* (再) and *cai* (才) (曾, 2014).

In order to help Indonesian students master the difference and usage of the adverb *zai* (再) and *cai* (才), the researcher puts forward some teaching strategies; the first is translation. The students are asked to translate Chinese sentences into Indonesian as far as possible. The standard Indonesian language is different from the daily spoken Indonesian language. One of the reasons why most Indonesian students misuse adverbs *zai* (再) and *cai* (才) is that some of the Indonesian counterparts of the two adverbs are the same (*baru*). In fact, if someone translates Chinese sentences into standard Indonesian, it may be able to solve this problem, for examples:

①进来聊下再睡吧。

Masuk mengobrol sebentar baru (kemudian) tidurlah.

②等你赚到一百万再来找我吧。

Tunggu kamu menghasilkan uang satu juta baru (kemudian) cari saya.

③少开窗，等太阳出来再开窗通风。

Jangan sering-sering buka jendela, tunggu matahari muncul, baru (kemudian) buka jendelanya supaya ada sirkulasi udara.

④我终于明白，原来旅行的意义，是遇见一些人，再与他们告别。

Akhirnya saya mengerti, bahwa arti dari perjalanan adalah bertemu dengan orang-orang, baru (kemudian) berpisah dengan mereka.

⑤饭后休息10-15分钟后再开始散步有保健作

用。

10-15 menit setelah makan baru (kemudian) berjalan santai berguna untuk memelihara kesehatan.

⑥刚刚梦里饿得不行，奶奶让等爹回来再吃饭，于是我就不开心地等着。

Tadi di dalam mimpi sudah kelaparan sekali, nenek menyuruh tunggu ayah pulang baru (kemudian) makan, karenanya aku menunggu dengan kesal.

The standard Indonesian equivalent of *zai* (再) in these five sentences should be '*baru kemudian*', because Indonesian students seldom use '*kemudian*'. It is normal for Indonesian students to misuse *zai* (再) and *cai* (才). Therefore, Chinese teachers should pay special attention to this point in the process of teaching, and try to use the standard Indonesian language to translate Chinese sentences.

The second is the comparison. Special attention should be paid to the comparative teaching of Chinese adverbs *zai* (再) and *cai* (才). Chinese adverbs *zai* (再) and *cai* (才) have several meanings. The most confusing one is the adverb *zai* (再) which means that the second action will take place after the first action occurs or ends. These two adverbs are similar in meaning, so they belong to the synonym relationship here and should be compared in the teaching process, such as:

⑦早上不开会，下午不开会，偏偏选择晚上下班后再开会，我能没意见吗？

Pagi tidak rapat, sore tidak rapat, malah memilih malam hari setelah jam pulang kantor baru kemudian rapat, bagaimana mungkin saya tidak protes?

⑧早上不开会，下午不开会，偏偏选择晚上下班后才开会，我能没意见吗？

Pagi tidak rapat, sore tidak rapat, malah memilih malam hari setelah jam pulang kantor baru rapat, bagaimana mungkin saya tidak protes?

Sentences use the adverb *zai* (再) to indicate that a meeting (VP2) is delayed until after work in the evening (VP1). In the process of sentence teaching, students should try their best to compare and analyze such sentences. Students should remember the different usages of adverbs *zai* (再) and *cai* (才), so that they will not easily misuse the adverbs *zai* (再) and *cai* (才).

The third is separation. The time adverbs *zai* (再) and *cai* (才) should be supplemented and explained separately. Adverb *zai* (再) in elementary Chinese teaching means repetition of actions. Most students may remember the meaning better. The time adverb *zai* (再) marked with procrastination is almost impressive, because the meaning appearing in the textbook is in the sentence pattern 先.....再..... (first... then...), there is no separate supplementary explanation for the time adverb *zai* (再), such as:

⑨等你赚到一百万再来找我吧。

Come back to me when you earn a million dollars.

Which adverb *zai* (再) in the above sentence? Does it mean repetition of action VP (来) or VP2 (来) occur after VP1 (earn up to 1 million)? This may be a problem that many Chinese learners do not understand. The researcher thinks that because the sentence has the word '等wait' at the beginning, *zai* (再) should be meant procrastination, VP2 (来) will occur after VP1 (earn up to one million). In order to

make it easier for students to analyze sentences containing *zai* (再), the researcher thinks that sentences that can use the structure of ‘先……再……(first...then...)’ belong to the meaning of procrastination, such as:

- ①进来聊下再睡吧。——先进来聊下再睡吧。
- ②等你赚到一百万再来找我吧。——先等你赚到一百万再来找我吧。
- ③少开窗，等太阳出来再开窗通风。——少开窗，先等太阳出来再开窗通风。
- ⑤我终于明白，原来旅行的意义，是遇见一些人，再与他们告别。——
我终于明白，原来旅行的意义，是先遇见一些人，再与他们告别。
- ⑥饭后休息10-15分钟后再开始散步有保健作用。——饭后先休息10-15分钟后再开始散步有保健作用。
- ⑨刚刚梦里饿的不行，奶奶让等爹回来再吃饭，于是我就不开心的等着。——刚刚梦里饿的不行，奶奶让先等爹回来再吃饭，于是我就不开心的等着。

CONCLUSIONS

The scope of this research is limited to part of Indonesian students that studying in China, with 12,05% beginner Chinese level, 50,60% intermediate Chinese level, and 37,35% advanced Chinese level.

Through research and analysis, it is found that most Indonesian students do not understand well the use of Chinese time adverbs *zai* (再) and *cai* (才). Its main reason is that the adverb *zai* (再) and *cai* (才) have the same corresponding word ‘baru’ in Indonesian, resulting in Indonesian students who often misuse these two adverbs. Besides, the textbook of teaching Chinese as a foreign language mainly emphasizes the adverb *zai* (再) as repetition, such as再见, 再来, 再读一遍, while the adverb *zai* (再), which denotes procrastination is less spoken.

Therefore, the researcher believes that it is necessary for teachers of Chinese as a foreign language to compare the adverb *zai* (再) with *cai* (才) while teaching adverb *cai* (才), and to list some sentences of the adverb *zai* (再) with different meanings.

As a preliminary study of the misuse Chinese adverbs *zai* (再) and *cai* (才) by Indonesian students, it still needs a more comprehensive research on this field. Future research on this field, could be conducted on broader respondents with different levels of Chinese language.

REFERENCES

- 曾俊一. (2014). 《跟副词“才”有关的偏误分析》. 甘肃高师学报, (6), 48–51.
- 吕叔湘. (2015). 《现代汉语八百词》. 北京: 商务印书馆.
- 潘智启. (1995). 《汉语印度尼西亚大词典》. 北京: 商务印书馆.
- 宋琼瑶. (2014). 《副词“再”的义项研究》. 武陵学刊, (3), 114–120.
- 王坤. (2017). 《汉语副词研究综述》. 西华大学学报(哲学社会科学版), (04), 43–51.
- 吴中伟. (1997). 《论副词“再”的拖延义——兼论加强对汉语副词的语用研究》. 世界汉语教学, (3), 18–25. <https://doi.org/10.13724/j.cnki.ctiw.1997.03.003>
- 张明辉, & 朱红雨. (2019). 《21世纪现代汉语副词研究综述简》. 云南师范大学学报(对外汉语教学与研究版), 17(1), 45–56.
- 张喜芹. (2014). 《对外汉语初级教材副词翻译及教学对策研究》. 文学教育(中), (03), 130–131.
- 郑尔君. (2017). 《现代汉语时间副词研究》. 湖北函授大学学报, (10), 119–120.
- 周小兵, & 薄巍. (2017). 《时间副词“才”与句尾“了”共现偏误的跨语言分析》. 华文教学与研究, (01), 1–8.