

A Corpus-Based Study on the Acquisition of the Modal Adverb *Fanzheng* by Foreign Learners of Chinese*

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This study investigates foreign learners' acquisition of the Chinese modal adverb *fanzheng* on the basis of interlanguage corpus. We find that the sentences written by foreign learners of Chinese (hereafter simplified as FLC) with the word *fanzheng* are quite similar to those by Chinese native speakers in the distribution of the syntactic categories, semantic types, semantic functions, pragmatic or discourse functions. These characterize basically the word *fanzheng* as one of the modal adverbs in such three aspects as syntax, semantics and pragmatics. Most of the FLCs study the basic meanings and typical contexts of the word *fanzheng* at primary stage, and later the functions emphasizing reasons, summary or explaining, and then the function of textual cohesion at the intermediate and advanced stage. The main causes of errors reflect that the FLCs are not able to differentiate the usage of *fanzheng* and that of other causal or adversative conjunctions.

Keywords: Chinese modal adverb *fanzheng*, interlanguage system, acquisition process, errors, foreign learner of Chinese (FLC)

1. Introduction

As an adverb with grammaticalized meaning and strong subjectivity, *fanzheng* is one of the difficult points for foreign learners of Chinese (FLC). As a result, the frequency of using *fanzheng* is low, and it is often used wrongly. There have been a lot of research on the syntactic, semantic and pragmatic features of *fanzheng* (LI, 1999; CHEN, 2007; DONG, 2008; BO, 2012; YU, 2007; XU, 2011). However, a focused study on the acquisition of *fanzheng* is still inadequate. Therefore, based on the interlanguage corpus, this paper investigates the overall features and acquisition process of the word *fanzheng* shown by FLCs.

2. The Interlanguage System of *Fanzheng*-Clause by FLCs

2.1 The Sentence Types and Syntactic Distribution

2.1.1 The sentence types of *Fanzheng*-clause.

With evidential function, *fanzheng* emphasizes the certainty of a situation. Therefore, *fanzheng* is most frequently used in declarative sentences, scarcely used in "pro or con questions, imperative sentences or exclamatory sentences, and never used in truth-questions. Statistics from the interlanguage corpus show that 97% of *fanzheng* is used in declarative sentences. In our corpus, the number of *fanzheng* being used in pro or con

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questions, imperative sentences and exclamatory sentences is 7, 2 and 4 respectively. There is only one error sample of using *fanzheng* in truth-questions.

The sentence type distribution of *fanzheng*-clause used by FLCs is similar to that used by Chinese native speakers¹, which indicates that the FLCs have well grasped the evidential function of the word *fanzheng*, i.e. stating the certainty of a situation.

2.1.2 The syntactic distribution of *Fanzheng*.

Zhang Yisheng (2000) classifies *fanzheng* as a commentary modal adverb. He points out that commentary adverbs are syntactically varied and prepositioned. They often act as high-level predicates in sentences. Statistically, data in the interlanguage corpus also show that *fanzheng* has an absolute advantage in number as sentence-initial (92.6%). See example (1) and (2):

Example (1) 反正中国的生活对我来说有意思。

Fanzheng zhongguo de shenghuo dui wo laishuo henyou yisi.

Anyway, living in China is interesting to me.

(*fanzheng* in the subject-predicate sentence)

Example (2) 今天先回去吧，反正都找不到动物了。

Jintian xian huiqu ba, fanzheng dou zhaobudao dongwu le.

We'd better go back today, anyway, we cannot find the animals.

(*fanzheng* in the non subject-predicate sentence)

Fanzheng is seldom used behind the subject and before the predicate (1.5%) as in example (3). There is no entry of *fanzheng* at the end of the sentence in our corpus.

Example (3) 你不承认我地位比你高，你不愿意给我面子，我就反正不理你。

Ni buchengren wo diwei bi ni gao, ni buyuanyi gei wo mianzi, wo jiu fanzheng buli ni.

If you do not admit that my status is higher than you, and do not grant me face, I will ignore you anyway.

In a few cases, *fanzheng* is embedded into the object, attribute or complement of sentences (2.26%). See Example (4):

Example (4) 其实说起来容易，但做起来反正不会容易。

Qishi shuoqilai rongyi, dan zuoqilai fanzheng buhui rongyi.

Actually, it is easy to say, but it is anyway hard to do.

(*fanzheng* is embedded in the complement)

Above all, the usage of *fanzheng* in sentences written by FLCs (basic, intermediate and advanced level) reflects its feature of controlling the whole sentence. But compared with Chinese native speakers, there are more sentence-initial and less predicate-preceding usage of *fanzheng* in the output of FLCs.²

2.2 The Semantic Types and Contextual Features

¹ Xu Dasong (2011) counted the corpus of Chinese native speakers and found that the usage of *fanzheng* in declarative sentence is 85%. Bo Yang (2012) counted the corpus of Chinese native speakers, and also found that even though “*fanzheng*” was used in interrogative sentence, it would mostly be used in rhetorical sentence (61%), or in questions whose speaker has obvious emotional attitude.

² Xu Dasong (2011) counted the corpus of Chinese native speakers and found that the construction of “*fanzheng* in front of subject” accounted for 63%, “*fanzheng* behind subject” accounted for 19%, “*fanzheng* in the end” accounted for 1%, and the others (such as used before clause or with a pause behind) accounted for 17%.

Li Hong (1999) and Yu Dan (2007) both consider that there is only one basic semantic meaning of *fanzheng*, i.e. emphasizing the certainty of a conclusion or result under any condition. But for its different semantic functions under different contexts, different scholars have different opinions (CHEN, 2007; DONG, 2007; BO, 2012; HUANG, 2015). With reference to the previous research, we find that in sentences written by FLCs, *fanzheng*-clause could be used as an independent sentence to express the basic semantic meaning or as a clause of a complex sentence to keep a close semantic relation with adjacent clauses or texts. The specific conditions are as follows.

2.2.1 Independent use of *Fanzheng*-sentence (hereafter referred to as *fanzheng_{single}*).

When *fanzheng* is used in an independent sentence without a clause semantically close in its context, it expresses the basic semantic meaning of emphasizing a kind of certainty under any condition. See Example (5) and (6):

Example (5) 反正吸烟者自身愿意去承担这个风险的话，别人也没有什么理由去阻止他。

Fanzheng xiyanzhe zishen yuanyi chendan zhege fengxian de hua, bieren ye meiyou shenme liyou qu zuzhi ta.

Anyway, if the smoker would like to take the risk by himself, other people have no reason to stop him.

Example (6) 反正我总算可以回家了。

Fanzheng wo zongsuan keyi huijia le.

Anyway, I can finally go home now.

2.2.2 When *fanzheng* is used in consequence clause of a complex sentence, it mainly emphasizes the determinacy of a certain conclusion or situation, aiming at the condition or uncertainty mentioned in the initial clause (hereafter referred to as *fanzheng₁*).

If the initial clause expresses the meaning of “in any condition” in sentences like “*buguan* (no matter what)/ *wulun* (in spite of).....”, “(*huozhe*) X *yehao*, (*huozhe*) Y *yehao* (whether.....or)” or indicates an uncertainty by using words like “*buzhidao* (unknown) /*buqingchu* (unclear)/ *buqueding* (uncertain)”, the consequence clause with the word *fanzheng* is used to emphasize the determinacy of a certain conclusion or situation under any condition or uncertain situation. See Example (7) and (8):

Example (7) 不管我的家乡怎么样，反正我都会在那儿过生活。

Buguan wode jiaxiang zenmeyang, fanzheng wo dou hui zainaer guoshenghuo.

No matter how my hometown looks like, I will live there anyway.

Example (8) 我真的不知道为什么我有姓，反正有了就不要管它了。

Wo zhende buzhidao weishenm woyou xing, fanzheng youle jiu buyaoguan ta le.

I really don't know why I have a family name, anyway, do not mind.

2.2.3 If *fanzheng* is used in initial clause or consequence clause of a complex sentence to state a kind of fact, the adjacent clause indicates a certain conclusion based on the fact (hereafter referred to as *fanzheng₂*).

Fanzheng-clause is often used as initial clause to manifest a kind of fact (known information), illustrating reason. The consequence clause in such situation expresses a certain conclusion based on the fact, specifically a choice, suggestion, judgment or attitude. See Example (9), (10), and (11):

Example (9) 反正正在放假，趁现在多睡一会儿吧。（建议）

Fanzheng zai fangjia, chenxianzai duo shui yihuier ba.

Anyway, it is holiday. Take advantage of it and get more sleep. (suggestion)

Example (10) 她想反正不会有多久，不如充实现在的生活。（选择）

Ta xiang fanzheng buhuiyou duojiu, buru chongshi xianzaide shenghuo.

She thought, anyway, it would not take too long. So she'd rather enrich her life at the moment. (choice)

Example (11) 反正他们俩已经为我们做很多，我也应该回报他们。（判断/态度）

Fanzheng tamenlia yijing wei women zuo henduo, wo ye yinggai huibao tamen.

Anyway, they have done a lot for us. I should also do something in return. (judge/attitude)

Sometimes, *fanzheng* is used in consequence clause. See Example (12) and (13):

Example (12) 能让妹妹帮的就留给她吧，反正她也大了，让她做一做吧。（建议）

Neng rang meimei bang de jiu liugei ta ba, fanzheng ta ye da le, rang ta zuoyizuo ba.

Let your younger sister help you if she can. Anyway, she is a big girl now. Let her try. (suggestion)

Example (13) 学多语言也没关系，反正对我们有好处。（态度）

Duo xue yuyan ye meiguanxi, fanzheng duiwomen you haochu.

It does not matter to learn more languages. Anyway, it's good for us. (attitude)

2.2.4 *Fanzheng*-clause is used to summarize or reexplain/reemphasize the situation mentioned by the preceding clause (hereafter referred to as *fanzheng*₃).

There are mainly two kinds of cases of *fanzheng*₃. The first one is that a clause stating a certain circumstance is followed by the *fanzheng*-clause to summarize and emphasize the preceding circumstance. In this case, *fanzheng* means equally to "all in all". See Example (14):

Example (14) 我们两每天一起踢足球，打篮球，羽毛球，反正是男孩子的游戏我跟他通通都不放过。

Womenliang meitian yiqi tizuqiu, dalagnqiu, yumaoqiu, fanzheng shi nanhaizide youxi wo gen ta tongtong dou bufangguo.

We two play football, basketball and badminton every day. Anyway, we won't miss any boy's game.

Example (15) (注：前一段讲流行歌曲的作用) 反正，流行歌曲的好的作用很多，让人会愉快。

(Zhu: qianyiduan jiang liuxinggequ de zuoyong), fanzheng, liuxinggequ de haode zuoyong henduo, rangren hui yukuai.

(Annotation: the preceding paragraph talks about the role of pop songs) Anyway, pop songs have plenty of merits. It is delightful.

Sometimes, *fanzheng*-clause is used at the end of a paragraph as a summary. And sometimes it is used as initial of the last paragraph of a text, as shown in Example (15).

The second situation is that *fanzheng*-clause is used to further explain or emphasize the previous statements. See Example (16):

Example (16) 很喜欢游泳，反正什么运动我都喜欢。

Henxihuan youyong, fanzheng shenme yundong wo dou xihuan.

I like swimming very much. Anyway, I like all the sports.

2.2.5 The Quantitative Distribution of the Semantic Types.

We have calculated the number and proportion of *fanzheng*-clauses output by learners of different levels

based on the semantic types. The result is shown in Table 1.

Table 1

*The Statistics of Semantic Types of Fanzheng-Clause Output by FLCs (Including the Frequency of Use and Proportion at that Level)*³

	Single sentence (Fanzheng _{single})	Complex sentence			Error sentence	subtotal
		Fanzheng ₁	Fanzheng ₂	Fanzheng ₃		
Basic level	3 37.5%	2 25%			3 37.5%	8
Intermediate level	55 23%	36 15%	70 30%	54 23%	21 9%	236
Advanced level	43 28%	16 10%	65 42%	25 16%	7 4%	156
Total	101 25%	54 14%	135 34%	79 20%	31 8%	400

Statistics from the table reveal that *fanzheng*-clauses have been most frequently used by the intermediate level students (accounting for 59%) and least used by the basic level students (accounting for 2%. *Fanzheng*-clauses take up the lowest proportion in the corpus of Jinan University). This is because the word *fanzheng* belongs to Level B vocabulary of HSK (Chinese proficiency test), so it is difficult for the basic level students. Within the group of advanced level, the use frequency of *fanzheng* decreases from level C, B to A.

From the perspective of semantic types, statistics indicate that except for *fanzheng_{single}*, which expresses the basic semantic meaning, *fanzheng₂* accounts for the highest frequency of use (34%). The second is *Fanzheng₃* (20%). *Fanzheng₁* accounts for the lowest frequency of use (14%). Theoretically, the sentence structure “*buguan* (no matter what)....., *Fanzheng₁*.....” expresses the basic semantic meaning and matches the typical context with the word *buguan* (no matter what). Language learners often use language items with basic meaning and salient features in preference because of their low cognitive difficulty. However, the usage of *fanzheng* in the corpus is not the case.

The main reason might be that the use frequency of a language item is not only related to its acquisition difficulty but also relevant to its input frequency or the demand of communication. The quantitative distribution of semantic types of *fanzheng* by FLCs has a great similarity with that of target language—Chinese. Therefore, the frequency of using *fanzheng* by intermediate and advanced level learners is more closely related to the degree of the input frequency of the target language or demand of communication. This also reflects the universal law of 2nd language acquisition, i.e. the higher the acquisition level, the more similarity shared with the target language in distribution⁴, and the less restraint by acquisition difficulty.

However, the absolute advantage of “*buguan* (no matter what)....., *fanzheng₁*.....” in use frequency of basic learners in the corpus of Jinan University indicates that the learners first start to recognize and acquire

³ All sentences are correct sentences except error sentence in the table. Most of the error sentences cannot be concluded into “*fanzheng₁*, *fanzheng₂*, and *fanzheng₃*” sentences. HSK Dynamic Composition Corpus classified students into intermediate level (that is no-level in the corpus) and advanced level (including A, B, C) according to test scores. FLC’ Written Language Corpus of Jinan University classified students into basic, intermediate and advanced level according to their learning phase, making the intermediate and advanced level correspond to that of the HSK corpus.

⁴ Bo Yang (2012) counted up the data in the Anthology of Wang Shuo, and found that *fanzheng₂* has been the most frequently used (accounting for 47.6%), then the discourse marker *fanzheng₄* (accounting for 32.5%, some are corresponded to *fanzheng₃* in this paper), *fanzheng₃* (accounting for 4.7%), *fanzheng₁* (accounting for 15%).

fanzheng in its basic meaning and typical context. When learners advance to intermediate and advanced levels, there are more and more demands for communication. Therefore, the frequency of using *fanzheng*₂ and *fanzheng*₃ becomes higher and higher.

2.3 The Pragmatic and Textual Functions

2.3.1 The Application of Emphatic Functions and Modal Functions.

The result of the corpus analysis indicates that most of the learners are able to use *fanzheng* to emphasize a certain result (Example (17) emphasizes “chizao hui si (sooner or later will die)”), or emphasize the basic presupposition for anything. (Example (18) emphasizes “buyao sunhai bieren he ziji (do not harm others and yourself)” is the only premise for anything.) Besides, learners usually use specific words with strong subjectivity within the context to strengthen the speakers’ decisive attitude in confirming the issue (See the underlined *gancui*, *V jiu V*, *buzaihu*). See Example (17) and (18):

Example (17) 他跟医生说他不~~想~~活下去了, 反正迟早会死的, 干脆把他杀死好了。

Ta gen yisheng shuo ta buxiang huoxiaqu le, fanzheng chizao hui si de, gancui ba ta shasi haole.

(He told the doctor that he didn’t want to live any more. Anyway, he would die sooner or later. Just kill him.)

Example (18) 而我却正相反, 我喜欢做什么就做什么, 反正, 我的行为不要损害别人和自己~~就好了~~, 其他的~~不在乎~~。

Er wo que zheng xiangfan, wo xihuan zuo shenme jiuzuo shenme, fanzheng, wode xingwei buyao sunhai bieren he ziji jiuhaole, qitade buzaihu.

(But I am the opposite, I do whatever I like. Anyway, as long as my behavior won’t hurt others and myself, I don’t care about anything else.)

What’s more, quite a number of the *fanzheng*-clauses by the FLCs in the corpus use first person as the subject of the sentence, which implies the subjectivity of the speaker (121 cases, accounting for about 30%). This illustrates that the learners have well grasped the feature of *fanzheng* in highlighting the speakers’ subjective attitude.

2.3.2 The Discourse Function⁵.

Fanzheng has the implication of reminding listeners to pay attention to the subsequent content in the text and works as a textual cohesion device. In most cases, *fanzheng* is used in complex sentences in the written corpus of FLCs. The structure models can be roughly concluded as follows:

Typical complete mode: buguan, fanzheng B, suoyi C

regardless of A, anyway B, so C

Other modes: ① buguan A, fanzheng B (yin suoyi C)

regardless of A, anyway B (hidden, so C);

② (yin buguan A) fanzheng B, suoyi C

(hidden regardless of A) anyway B, so C;

③ suoyi C, (yin buguan A) fanzheng B

⁵ Zhang Yisheng (1996) pointed out that commentary adverbs can express information and modality in semantics, and provide textual cohesion in pragmatics. Besides conveying objective information, *fanzheng* can also express the speaker’s subjective emotion or attitudes towards the described information and play a role in textual function, connecting context.

so C, (hidden, regardless of A) anyway B;

④ C described situation separately, *fanzheng* B summary

All the models above reflect explicitly the function of *fanzheng* as a cohesive device in the text. There were 50 sentences in the form of “....., *fanzheng*, ...” in the corpus, which reveals apparently the textual function of *fanzheng* as a discourse marker. The previous clauses or paragraphs state different situations, then *fanzheng* is used to sum up the situations discussed. The phonological pause after *fanzheng* (indicated as a comma in the text) attracts explicitly the listener’s or reader’s attention to the subsequent content. See Example (19) and (20)

Example (19) 反正，无论如何，“安乐死”是不好的，法律还是应该对这件事不必留情。

Fanzheng, wulunruhe, “anlesi” shibuhaode, falv haishi yinggai dui zhejianshi bubi liuqing.

Anyway, in any case, “euthanasia” is not good, the law shouldn’t have mercy on this matter.

Example (20) 反正，一年多的这段时间里，发生了很多的事。

Fanzheng, yinianduode zheduan shijianli, fasheng le henduode shi.

(Anyway, during the past around one year, a lot of things happened.)

In Example (19), the preceding paragraph in the original text points out the disadvantages of “euthanasia”. It is followed by *fanzheng* sentence in the last paragraph as a summary of the whole text. In most cases, *Fanzheng* in the beginning of a paragraph serves as an evident cohesive device between the preceding and the subsequent texts.

Some examples from the Spoken Corpus of Jinan University by FLCs show the feature of *fanzheng* as a typical discourse marker: firstly, *fanzheng* is usually followed by a pause; secondly, *fanzheng* is used twice sometimes; and thirdly, *fanzheng* is sometimes used at the end of a sentence.

2.4 Types of Error in Using *Fanzheng*

2.4.1 Adding *Fanzheng* wrongly while the using conditions are absent.

Fanzheng emphasizes the determinacy of a certain conclusion or result. But the premise is “being immune to various conditions”. In the absence of this premise (implicitly or explicitly), *fanzheng* cannot be used to express emphasis. For example:

Example (21) ? 其实说起来容易，但做起来反正不会容易。

?Qishi shuoqilai rongyi, dan zuoqilai *fanzheng* buhui rongyi.

? Actually it is easy to say, but it is not easy to do anyway.

Example (22) *我通过这次考试必须向你们要说：对不起！反正我爱你们，请原谅我。

*Wo tongguo zheci kaoshi bixu xiang nimen yaoshuo: duibuqi! *fanzheng* wo ai nimen, qing yuanliang wo.

* I must say to you through this exam: sorry! Anyway, I love you, please forgive me.

The two examples above have no presupposition for using *fanzheng*, which thus should be removed. In expressing emphasis, *fanzheng* in Example (21) should be replaced by “*zhende/dique* (really/indeed)” and in Example (22) by “*zhende* (really)” and be moved to the position behind “wo (I)”.

2.4.2 Mistaking *Fanzheng* for other similar functional words.

(1) Mistaking *Fanzheng* for *yinwei* (because)/*bijing* (after all)

Example (23) *虽然父母的想法当中也可能存在一些不符合现实的地方，可他们反正（应：毕竟）是过来人，所以孩子们得先倾听父母们的意见。

*Suiran fumu de xiangfa dangzhong ye keneng cunzai yixie bufuhe xianshi de difang, ke tamen fanzheng (ying: bijing) shi guolai ren, suoyi haizimen dei xian qingting fumumen de yijian.

* Although some of parents' ideas may be unrealistic, they have, anyway (here should be: after all), a lot of experiences. Therefore, children should listen to their parents' suggestion first.

Although both *bijing* (after all) and *fanzheng* emphasizes a certain situation, there are subtle differences in the using conditions between them. *Bijing* (after all) is used under negative condition against the conclusion (often follows sentence with the word *suiran* (though)) to emphasize the positive condition, which is the most essential characteristic of the object, and thus comes to the corresponding conclusions (*suiran* A (*ke yin*) (although A (hidden sometimes)), *bijing* B (after all B), *suoyi* C (so C)). *Fanzheng* applies to any condition and uncertain situation to emphasize the determinacy of a situation and gets a corresponding conclusion/result based on that situation (*buguan* A (regardless of A) *fanzheng* B (anyway B), *suoyi* C (hidden sometimes (so C))). Consequently, only *bijing* (after all) is suitable for the context of Example (23).

Without native-like sensitivity, the subtle differences between *bijing* (after all) and *fanzheng* discussed above are almost indistinguishable to the second language learners.

Example (24) *他们(注: 指父母) 不知不觉地给我们很多语言。反正(应: 因为) 我们只能学他们, 所以可以说他们是我们的老师。

*Tamen (zhu: zhi fumu) buzhibujue de gei women henduo yuyan. Fanzheng (ying: yinwei) women zhineng xue tamen, suoyi keyishuo tamen shi women de laoshi.

*They (note: refers to parents) unconsciously gave us a lot of suggestions. Anyway (here should be: because) we can only learn from them. So we can say that they are our teachers.

In example (24), there is no semantic implication of *buguan zenyang* (no matter how) in front of the *fanzheng*. Hence, *yinwei* (because) should be used instead of *fanzheng* here.

(2) Mistaking *Fanzheng* for *dan* (but)/*fan'er* (instead)/*xiangfan* (in contrast) etc.

Example (25) *你们一直向我说大孩子, 反正(应: 但) 我是成人

* Nimen yizhi xiang wo shuo dahaizi, fanzheng (ying: dan) wo shi chengren.

* You are always telling me that I'm a big child, anyway (here should be: but), I am adult.

Example (26) *但是找一位中国辅导老师很不容易而且学费很高。反正(应: 不过) 我找到了一位辅导老师。

*Danshi zhao yiwei zhongguo fudaolaoshi hen burongyi erqie xuefei hengao. Fanzheng (ying: buguo)wo zhaodaole yiwei fudaolaoshi.

*But finding a Chinese tutor is not easy and the tuition is expensive. Anyway (here should be: but), I found one.

In example (25), "A, *dan* (*qishi*) *fei* A (A, but (in fact) not A)" states two opposite situations. In example (26), "(*suiran*) A, *dan* B ((although) A, but B) "refers to "condition—opposite result". Both of the As in the two syntactical constructions above refer to certain situations. Similarly, there is a reversal relationship between the preceding and subsequent clause in structure "*buguan/buzhidao* A, (*dan*) *fanzheng* B (No matter/do not know A) (but) anyway B". But the A in this structure refers to uncertain situation or any condition, which is different from the other two As in structures above. Errors are made when learners only notice the similarity between *fanzheng* and *dan* (but) in clauses with inverse relationship, but cannot distinguish the differences

between these different syntactical structures.

Besides, because *fanzheng*, *fan'er* (instead) and *xiangfan* (in contrast) have a same morpheme—*fan*, they are misused sometimes by learners.

Example (27) *终于人多了, 反正 (应: 反而) 没有水喝了。

*Zhongyu ren duo le, fanzheng (ying: faner) meiyou shui he le.

* Finally more people come, anyway (here should be: but) there is no water to drink.

Example (28) *比如父亲爱喝酒, 所以孩子也爱喝酒, 或者反正 (应: 相反) 讨厌喝酒。

*Biru fuqin ai hejiu, suoyi haizi ye ai hejiu, huozhe fanzheng (ying: xiangfan) taoyan hejiu.

* For example, if father likes drinking, the child will also like drinking or anyway (here should be: on the contrary) hate drinking.

2.4.3 Lacking Semantic Relations with Adjacent Sentences or Semantic Premise of *Fanzheng*.

When the natural semantic relation between the *fanzheng*-clause and the former clause is absent, conditional clause with *buguan* (regardless of) as the premise should be present, otherwise, *fanzheng*-clause is not acceptable. For example:

Example (29) *可是她不听也不管我的理由, (缺少: 不管怎样/尽管这样,) 反正我一定要陪她, 因为我跟她约好了。

*Keshi ta buting ye buguan wode liyou, (queshao: buguan zenyang/jinguan zenyang) fanzheng wo yiding yao pei ta, yinwei wo he ta yue hao le.

*But she neither listens to nor cares about my reason (absent: regardless of this/despite this), anyway, I must accompany her because I have made an appointment with her.

2.4.4 Confusing *fanzheng*-clause with “*suiran...*, *dan fanzheng* (although...but anyway)...” and “*buguan...*, *fanzheng* (regardless of...anyway...)”.

Firstly, *buguan* (regardless of) might be wrongly used to replace *suiran* (although) in the sentence structure of “*suiran...*, *dan fanzheng* (although...but anyway)...” such as:

Example (30) *我怎么评价我妹妹, 不管 (应: 虽然) 她有时候很粗心, (但) 反正她是个温柔, 聪明, 善良, 耐心的女孩子。

*Wo zenme pingjia wo meimei, buguan (ying: suiran) ta youshihou hencuxin, (dan) fanzheng ta shi ge wenrou, congming, shanliang, naixin de nvhaizi.

* How I think of my younger sister: regardless of (here should be: although) her carelessness sometimes, (but) anyway, she is a gentle, smart, kind and patient girl.

Secondly, the term *buguan* (regardless of) in sentence structure “*buguan...*, *fanzheng* (regardless of...anyway...)” is followed wrongly by a non-interrogative form, or absent.

Example (31) *大家都哈哈大笑, 我们不管打扰到顾客呢, 反正我们过得很开心。

* Dajia dou hahadaxiao, women buguan darao dao guke ne, fanzheng women guode hen kaixin.

* Everyone laughed out loud, regardless of disturbing customers. Anyway, we enjoy ourselves.

2.4.5 Summary of Errors in Using *Fanzheng*.

In general, the error rate (7.8%) of using *fanzheng* by FLC is not very high. Learners of basic level have a low frequency (only 8 cases) of using *fanzheng*. Error rate is high (37.5%) in basic level but similar between intermediate and advanced level. The main reason of errors is that the meaning or using context of *fanzheng* is

similar to that of some other adverbs or cohesion words. Learners do not know their subtle differences, which are specifically stated as follows.

Firstly, learners know only the emphasizing function of *fanzheng*, but ignore its semantic premise. For example, in the sentences in 2.4.3 and 2.4.1, *fanzheng* is misused in the sentence where *zhende* (indeed)/*dique* (really) should be used.

Secondly, learners have only the knowledge of *fanzheng* as a cohesive device in causal and reversal condition—result sentences. But they do not know the nuances in the semantic presupposition between *fanzheng* and other cohesive words like *bijing* (after all) and *ran'er* (however).

In addition, in a few cases, the cohesive words in *buguan* (regardless of)/*suiran* (although) clauses are wrongly used, or the subsequent question and non-question form following *fanzheng*-clauses are wrongly used, both of which belong to the confusing of similar items.

3 The Analysis of Acquisition Process of *Fanzheng* by FLCs

3.1 Three Stages in Acquisition of *Fanzheng*

The acquisition of *fanzheng* starts at primary stage, accelerates at intermediate stage and consolidates at advanced stage. The primary stage is characterized with single semantic type (only include *fanzheng₁* and *fanzheng_{single}*), low frequency (only 8 cases) and high error rate (3 out of 8 cases of errors, lacking of semantic prerequisites). At the intermediate stage, all the semantic types are used with significant increase in frequency (236 cases) and low error rate (9%). The using of *fanzheng₁*, *fanzheng₂*, *fanzheng₃* and *fanzheng_{single}* at this level ranges from 36 to 70 cases, among which *fanzheng₂* indicating fact or reason is the most frequently used (30%). The number of using *fanzheng* decreases (156 cases) and error rate continues to decrease (4%) at advanced stage. The proportional disparity of different semantic types at the advanced level is slightly higher than that at the intermediate stage. The rate of using *fanzheng₂* remarkably increases to 42%.

3.2 The Semantic and Contextual Cognitive Development of *Fanzheng*

At primary stage, FLCs begin to use *fanzheng*-clause with simple structure and function. They try to use the basic meaning of *fanzheng* in the typical context model of “*buguan*.....*fanzheng*...”, or only try to use *fanzheng* in simple independent sentence. The high error rate in this stage indicates that they only have an obscure understanding of *fanzheng*'s basic semantic meaning.

At the intermediate level, with the increase of language input and language knowledge, FLCs began to further understand the basic meaning of *fanzheng*. In addition to using “*buguan*....., *fanzheng*...”, they begin using context model of “*buzhidao* A, *fanzheng* B”. Both of the two models emphasize the certainty of a conclusion to a specific uncertain variables (“*buguan* X *bu* X” and “*buzhidao* A”). The subtle difference between them is that the A in *buguan* A refers to all the variable uncertain situations in form of different questions; while the A in *buzhidao* A refers to an uncertain situation in a specific aspect. FLCs refine semantic function through defining changes in contexts.

At the same time, with the advance of learning, FLCs gradually realize from the input that *fanzheng* can also be used to emphasize a known situation or cause and its subsequent clause is the result/conclusion. Or, *fanzheng* is used to summarize or further explain or emphasize a certain situation after listing different circumstances. Therefore, at this stage, learners began to learn another two semantic functions of *fanzheng*: (1) *fanzheng₂* showing a fact as a reason for a conclusion; (2) *fanzheng₃* summary or further explaining the

aforementioned situation.

Wang Jianqin (1999) said: “At the primary stage of the acquisition, the cognition of language is basically the cognition of form, pronunciation and meaning. At the intermediate and advanced stage, the cognition of context becomes a main issue for learners” (p. 70). It is found from the investigation of corpus that intermediate and advanced learners already have a clear understanding of the contextual characteristics of different semantic functions and the contextual forms of *fanzheng* is evidently richer than those at primary stage. Thus, semantic functions expressed with different contexts are refined correspondingly. For example, based on the key words commonly used in the intermediate and advanced learners’ corpus, the contextual format and the corresponding specific functions of *fanzheng*₂ are summarized in Figure 1:

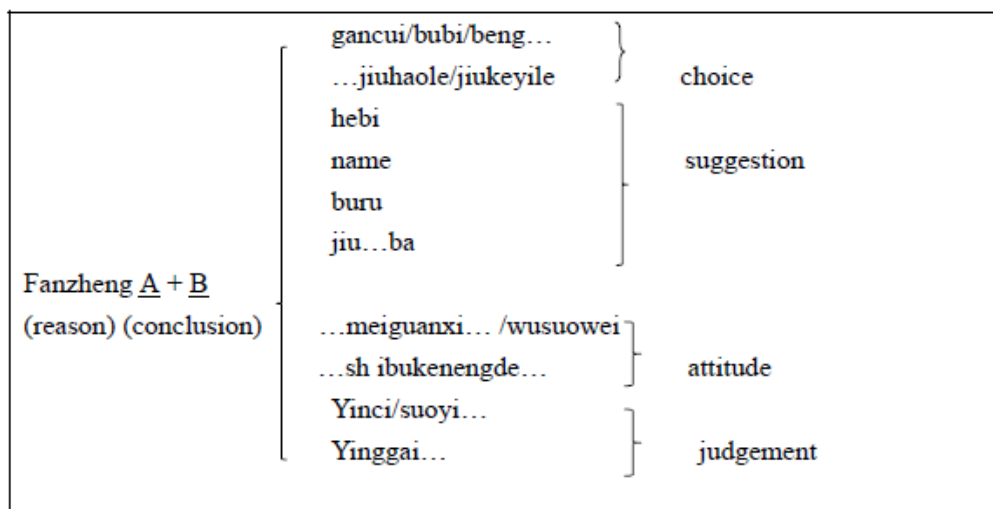


Figure 1. The contextual format and the corresponding specific functions of *fanzheng*₂.

It shows that the context where *fanzheng*₂ occurs is pretty rich and the “conclusion” clause is varied and flexible. Learners use various typical words or sentence patterns to express different functions like suggestions, attitudes, judgments and choices etc.

As for the acquisition of modal adverbs such as *fanzheng*, FLCs at the intermediate and advanced stage had a clearer understanding of the basic meaning. In addition, they also paid attention to the context of *fanzheng* from the input. By identifying characteristics of contexts and commonly used markers, they try to understand the basic meanings and the corresponding communication functions of the modal adverbs. These concerns and knowledge understood will be stored in memory. When language output is required, appropriate contextual formats in the brain will be retrieved according to the needs of expressing specific function.

Besides, on the basis of the acquisition of *fanzheng*’s semantic functions, FLCs of intermediate and advanced stage further expand its discourse function. They realize the discourse function of *fanzheng* in connecting the preceding and subsequent texts by paying attention to the context characteristic of “paragraph 1 (narrative separately), *fanzheng*, paragraph 2 (summary)” in the input corpus. That is why it is possible in quite a number of cases in the output corpus, *fanzheng* is located in the beginning of paragraph 2, with a link to paragraph 1.

4. Conclusion

Through statistical and quantitative analysis of the two interlanguage corpus, we discover that the FLCs start to use the modal adverb *fanzheng* at primary stage but use them more commonly at intermediate and advanced stage. We find that the sentences with the word *fanzheng* output by FLCs at intermediate and advanced stage are quite similar to those written by Chinese native speakers in terms of the distribution of syntactic categories, semantic types, semantic quantity, pragmatic or discourse functions. Their using of *fanzheng* basically reflects the characteristics of its being a modal adverb: (1) Syntactically, it controls the whole sentence and occupies the initial position. (2) Semantically, specific conditions and appropriate contexts are required. (3) Pragmatically, it reflects emphasized modal function of subjectivity and the discourse function of text cohesion.

The acquisition process is that FLCs start from the basic meaning and the typical context of *fanzheng* at the primary stage. Then the acquisition gradually expands to the function of emphasizing the reasons and summary/re-explanation at intermediate and advanced stage. Finally learners acquire the pure discourse function with a clear understanding of the matching contextual characteristics of different semantic meanings.

However the differences in using conditions between *fanzheng* and other similar cohesive words in causal and transitional complex sentences are still obscure to the learners. Meanwhile, they do not fully understand the premise of *fanzheng* in implying “will not change under any condition”.

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Source Corpus:

HSK Dynamic Composition Corpus of Beijing Language and Culture University. 191 entries of *fanzheng*-clauses have been collected at advanced level A, level B, level C and no-level (counted as intermediate level).

FLCs' Written Language Corpus at the College of Chinese Language and Culture, Jinan University. 209 entries of *fanzheng*-clauses have been collected at basic level, intermediate level and advanced level.