

# A Study on the Errors of Korean Students’ “shì” Sentences Based on HSK Dynamic Composition Corpus

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## Abstract:

This article is based on 255 examples of Korean students’ incorrect “shì” sentences selected from the HSK dynamic composition corpus, and divides the types of errors into five categories: omission, misaddition, misplacement, misuse, and disorder. Provide detailed examples and corrections for each type of error, and analyze the reasons for the errors from both intralingual (Chinese itself) and interlingual (Korean language issues) perspectives. Finally, targeted teaching strategy suggestions are proposed, including teachers’ teaching methods and textbook development, aiming to improve the learning effectiveness of Korean students’ Chinese “shì” sentences and provide a reference for international Chinese language teaching.

**Keywords:** Korean students, “shì” sentence errors, reasons for the errors, international Chinese language teaching

## 1. Introduction

In international Chinese language teaching, the “shì” sentence, as one of the basic sentence structures in Chinese, has a high frequency of use and diverse grammatical functions, making it a key grammar item that learners must master. However, Korean students often make various errors when using the “shì” sentence due to the dual influence of the grammar rules of their native Korean language and the complexity of Chinese itself.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 Research on Errors in Korean Students’ Grammar Learning Based on Corpus

In corpus-based research on Korean students’ Chi-

nese grammar learning errors, there are many studies on the “bǎ” and “bèi” sentences.

Research has shown that Korean students often make errors when acquiring the “bǎ” sentence due to factors such as negative transfer from their mother tongue, generalization of target language knowledge, and avoidance strategies (Shen, 2014; Pan, 2023). The types of errors mainly include predicate errors, complement errors, omissions, and incorrect order (Li, 2021). Researchers propose strengthening the teaching of the ontology knowledge of the “bǎ” sentence, adopting a gradual teaching design, increasing contextualized exercises, and comparing and analyzing Korean and Chinese grammar differences (Shen, 2014; Pan, 2023).

Korean students also face many challenges in acquiring the phrase “bèi”. There is evidence that they often make errors due to negative transfer of

their mother tongue, insufficient knowledge of the target language, and teaching factors. Error types include omission, redundancy, misplacement, and misplacement (Jia, 2012; Wang, 2017; Kong, 2013). Researchers recommend strengthening the teaching of ontology knowledge of the “bèi” sentence, adopting a phased and spiral teaching approach, and implementing semantic field intervention during teaching (Wang, 2017; Cui, 2011).

However, it is worth noting that the “shì” sentence, as an important sentence structure in Chinese, has a relatively high error rate among Korean students (Wei, 2015), but there is relatively little research on this topic.

## 2.2 Research on the Ontology of the “shì” Sentence

Wang (2000) regards “shì” as a copula and clarifies that the “shì” sentence consists of a subject, a copula, and an epitope, which are used to construct a judgment sentence and express judgment, laying the foundation for subsequent research. In addition, Lv et al. (1999) analyzed the preceding and following components of “shì” as the core in “Eight Hundred Words of Modern Chinese”, making the research more detailed. Huang and Liao (1998) further pointed out that the sentence structure of “shì” varies under different parts of speech. Furthermore, Guo (2023) conducted a systematic study on the arrangement of “shì” sentences in the comprehensive textbook “Developing Chinese”, classified them based on their grammatical and semantic characteristics, and analyzed their arrangement order and reproduction. Despite ontology research’s considerable achievements, most of these studies have not been fully integrated into teaching practice and have not solved practical problems effectively. Therefore, students

still face many difficulties and frequent errors when learning “shì” sentences.

## 3. Analysis of Error Types in the “shì” Sentence Structure

Select relevant language materials of Korean students’ “shì” sentences from the HSK dynamic composition corpus, extract erroneous examples through the method of “incorrect sentence retrieval”, and record and organize them in detail. Meanwhile, based on the research foundation of bias by Lu (1994) and combined with the analysis method of Zhou (2022), the types of bias are subdivided into five categories: omission, misaddition, misplacement, misuse, and wrong order. Based on the HSK dynamic composition corpus, 255 cases of errors were retrieved and summarized according to the five types of errors mentioned above.

From the data in the figure, it can be seen that among various types of errors, omission is the most common type, with a frequency of 129 occurrences, accounting for 50.59%, more than half. The second is the misaddition, with a frequency of 73 occurrences, accounting for 28.65%. The frequency of misplacement is 33 times, accounting for 12.94%. The frequency of misuse and wrong order is relatively low, with 15 occurrences (accounting for 5.88%) and 5 occurrences (accounting for 1.96%), respectively. This indicates that in the process of language use or learning, omissions are the most prominent, followed by errors in misaddition and misplacement. In teaching or research, attention can be focused on omissions while also considering other types of errors. The proportion of various types of errors is shown in the figure:

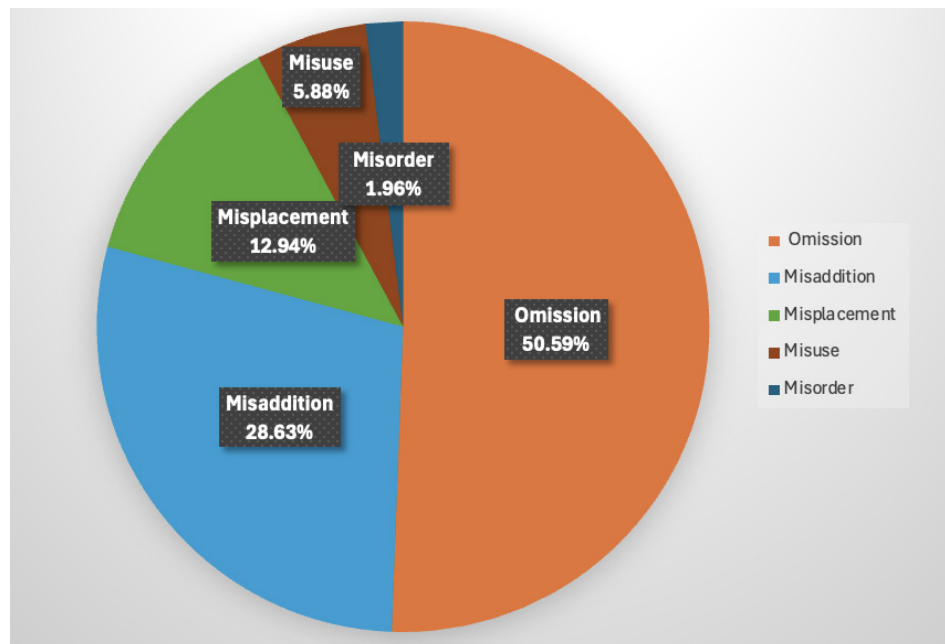


Figure 1: Types and proportions of errors

### 3.1 Omission

The omission of the necessary word “shì” in a sentence, resulting in incomplete sentence structure or unclear semantic expression. According to corpus analysis, omission can be further divided into the following three types.

#### 3.1.1 Simply Omitting “shì” in a Simple Sentence

A wrong example: běi jīng yě fā dá de chéng shì

Correct: běi jīng yě shì fā dá de chéng shì

Analysis: This sentence is a typical “subject+shì+object” structure. If the “shì” is omitted, the sentence loses its judgment function and its semantics become ambiguous.

Reasons for error:

The Korean word “입니다” corresponds to the Chinese word “shì”, but Korean students often ignore the mandatory use of the Chinese word “shì” due to negative transfer from their mother tongue.

#### 3.1.2 Missing “shì” After Adverb

A wrong example: tā men dōu bǐ wǒ yōu xiù de xué shēng

Correct: tā men dōu shì bǐ wǒ yōu xiù de xué shēng

Analysis: The omission of “shì” after the adverb “dōu” results in incomplete sentence components, making it difficult to accurately express the meaning of “they are all excellent students”.

Reasons for error:

Korean adverbs can directly modify nouns (such as “모두 내보다동수한학생들”), while Chinese requires the use of “shì” to establish a logical connection between adverbs and nouns, making students susceptible to syntactic interference in Korean.

#### 3.1.3 Missing “shì” After the Word “de”

A wrong example: duì mā mā yī yàng jié hūn yǐ lái yī zhí zài jiā zuò jiā wù de rén lái shuō, gèng nán jiē shòu de shì qíng

Correct: duì mā mā yī yàng jié hūn yǐ lái yī zhí zài jiā zuò jiā wù de rén lái shuō, shì gèng nán jiē shòu de shì qíng

Analysis: This sentence lacks the predicate verb “shì” and cannot form a complete “word phrase (subject)+ shì+verb phrase” structure, resulting in an incomplete sentence.

Reasons for error:

The structure of the Chinese “shì” sentence is flexible and varied, making it difficult for learners to fully grasp all the structures. At the same time, there are a large number of judgmental sentences in Chinese without a “shì”, such as “běi jīng hěn měi lì”, which also increases the difficulty for learners to determine when to use “shì”. The structure of judgmental sentences in Korean is different from that in Chinese. Korean usually uses the ending word “-이다” to indicate judgment, rather than the verb “shì” as in Chinese.

### 3.2 Misaddition

Misaddition refers to the incorrect addition of “shì” in a sentence that does not require the use of the word “shì”, resulting in redundant sentence structure or semantic changes. According to corpus analysis, misaddition can be further divided into the following two types.

#### 3.2.1 Misaddition of “shì” in “Subject+shì+Noun”

A wrong example: wǒ de xīn shì lǐ zǒng shì yǒu duì nǐ men gǎn xiè de xīn qíng

Correct: wǒ de xīn lǐ zǒng shì yǒu duì nǐ men gǎn xiè de xīn qíng

Analysis: Adding “shì” incorrectly makes the sentence appear redundant.

Reasons for error:

In Korean, the term “음속에는” needs to be marked with “은 / 는” to indicate the topic, while in Chinese, “xīn lǐ” does not need to be marked with “shì” as a directional noun. Students may easily confuse the topic marking methods of the two languages.

#### 3.2.2 Misaddition of “shì” Before Predicate

A wrong example: wǒ shì xǐ huān xué xí hàn yǔ

Correct: wǒ xǐ huān xué xí hàn yǔ

Analysis: In Chinese, the judgmental verb “shì” usually used to indicate judgment or emphasize identity or attributes (such as “wǒ shì xué shēng”). But when expressing habits, preferences, abilities, etc., simply use verbs (such as “xǐ huān”) without adding “shì”.

Reasons for error:

The character “shì” in Chinese is sometimes used for emphasis, but not all situations require emphasis. Learners may overgeneralize the emphasis function of “shì”, leading to incorrect additions. Some structures in Korean require the use of particles or suffixes corresponding to the Chinese word “shì” to indicate emphasis or theme, but these structures do not require “shì” in Chinese. Therefore, Korean students may have been influenced by their mother tongue and mistakenly added “shì” in sentences that do not require emphasis.

### 3.3 Misplacement

Misplacement refers to the confused use of “shì” with other verbs or prepositions.

A wrong example: tā shì zài běi jīng xué xí

Correct: tā zài běi jīng xué xí

Analysis: In this sentence, “shì” is mistakenly used as a preposition, but in reality, the preposition “zài” should be used directly to indicate the location. After misplacement, although the sentence is grammatically correct, there is semantic redundancy because “shì” has no actual meaning here.

Reasons for error:

In Korean, “는 / 예” can indicate both existence (corresponding to “zài”) and judgment (corresponding to “shì”), making it difficult for students to distinguish between the two usages in Chinese.

### 3.4 Misuse

Misuse refers to the incorrect use of the character “shì” in other fixed collocations or structures, resulting in sentences that do not conform to Chinese expression habits. According to corpus analysis, the main manifestation of misuse bias is the misuse of the “shì” structure into the “shì……de” structure.

A wrong example: zhè shì wǒ dì yī cì xiě xìn de

Correct: zhè shì wǒ dì yī cì xiě xìn

Analysis: After misuse, although the sentence is grammatically correct, there is a semantic deviation because the “shì……de” structure is usually used to emphasize the time, place, manner, etc. of the action, and this sentence does not have this meaning.

Reasons for error:

The “shì……de” structure is used for emphasis in Chinese, but its usage conditions are relatively strict, requiring specific contextual and semantic requirements to be met. Learners may not accurately grasp the usage conditions of this structure, leading to misuse. However, there is no structure in Korean that fully corresponds to “shì……de”. Thus, Korean students may lack direct support for native language transfer when using this structure, which can easily lead to errors.

### 3.5 Misorder

Misorder refers to the incorrect placement of the word “shì” in a sentence, resulting in unclear semantics or inconsistency with Chinese expression habits.

A wrong example: zǒng shì nǐ men zài wǒ de páng biān

Correct: nǐ men zǒng shì zài wǒ de páng biān

Analysis: The adverb “zǒng shì” in this sentence is misplaced and should be placed after the subject “nǐ men” and before the predicate “zài”. After the wrong order, although the sentence is grammatically correct, there is a semantic deviation because “zǒng shì” should modify the entire predicate part here, not just “nǐ men”.

Reasons for error:

Korean adverbials (such as “항상”) can be placed before the subject or after the predicate, while Chinese adverbials (especially frequency adverbs) need to be adjacent to the predicate center language, making students susceptible to interference from the native language order.

## 4. Teaching Suggestions

### 4.1 Teaching Strategy

#### 4.1.1 Comparative Teaching

Teachers should compare the structure of Chinese “shì” sentences with similar expressions in Korean when explaining “shì” sentences. Design Korean Chinese comparative sentence exercises, such as: Korean: 북동도발달한도입니다 Chinese: běi jīng yě (shì) fā dá de chéng shì. Enhance students’ memory through visual annotation (such as highlighting “shì” with a red pen).

#### 4.1.2 Situational Teaching

Create various authentic language contexts for students to communicate using the word “shì” in the context. For example, set up a scenario of “introducing a city” and ask students to describe the characteristics of different cities, such as “Beijing is the capital of China and a city with a long history”. Through this approach, students can better understand the application of the “shì” sentence in practical contexts and improve language accuracy.

#### 4.1.3 Specialized Exercises

Design specialized exercises targeting different types of errors in the word “shì”. For example, for omissions, fill in the blank exercises can be designed to allow students to supplement the missing “shì” word in the sentence. Through a large number of specialized exercises, help students consolidate the correct usage of the “shì” sentence.

### 4.2 Suggestions for Textbook Writing

#### 4.2.1 Add Example Sentences and Exercises With the Word “shì”

The textbook should add examples and exercises of the “shì” sentence, especially for the types of errors that Korean students are prone to make. The example sentences should cover various structures and usages of the “shì” sentence, and pay attention to the authenticity and practicality of the context.

#### 4.2.2 Annotate Language Differences Between Korean and Chinese

Textbooks should annotate the differences in the use of the “shì” sentence between Korean and Chinese at appropriate positions to help students understand the differences in grammar structure between the two languages.

#### 4.2.3 Provide Error Correction Prompts

Textbooks can provide error correction prompts in the practice section to help students identify and correct their own errors. The error correction prompt should be concise

and clear, directly indicating the type of error and the correction method, so that students can quickly understand and master it.

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