Error Analysis of Time Adverbs of the Type "从来"

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Abstract— The time adverbs "一向" (yīxiàng), "一贯" (yīguàn), "一直" (yīzhí), and "从来" (cónglái) can all convey a state or behavior that remains unchanged over a long period of time, and in some contexts, they are interchangeable. However, due to subtle differences in semantics, syntax, and pragmatics, they are not always interchangeable. Therefore, in teaching Chinese as a second language, teachers should focus on the nuances in lexical meanings, specific contextual usages, and pragmatic implications to help students avoid errors and improve the accuracy and naturalness of their language expression.

Keywords 一向 (yīxiàng), 一贯 (yīguàn), 一直 (yīzhí), 从来 (cónglái), International Chinese Teaching

摘要— "一向" "一贯" "一直" "从来" 四个词语都能表示某种行为或状况在长时间内保持不变，且在某些情况下可以相互替换。然而，由于它们在语义、句法和语用层面上的细微差异，在某些语境中无法相互替换。因此，在国际中文教学中，教师应从词汇的语义理解、语境中的具体运用以及语用参考等多个角度入手，帮助学生掌握这些词语的正确使用方法，避免偏误，提高语言表达的准确性和自然性。

关键词一向；一贯；一直；从来；国际中文教学

I. INTRODUCTION

Adverbs play an important role in Chinese, particularly time adverbs, which typically modify the predicate in a sentence to indicate the continuity or consistency of an action or state over a specific period. "一向" (yīxiàng), "一贯" (yīguàn), "一直" (yīzhí), and "从来" (cónglái) are common time adverbs with highly similar functions. They are often used to describe actions or states that remain unchanged over an extended period. However, their similarity in meaning and usage often leads to confusion among foreign learners, particularly with "从来" (cónglái), which has unique semantic features involving continuity and negation.

When teaching these time adverbs in international Chinese language classes, educators should emphasize the subtle differences between these words. For many foreign learners, distinguishing and flexibly using these adverbs, which do not have concrete meanings on their own, presents a challenge, both in spoken and written communication. Based on data from the HSK dynamic composition corpus, students frequently misuse "一向," "一贯," "一直," and "从来," resulting in errors such as unclear meanings, improper collocations, or inappropriate usage.

Based on this background, this paper will conductt an in-depth analysis of "从来" and similar time adverbs from the perspectives of semantics, syntax, and pragmatics. By studying common errors made by foreign students, the paper explores the root causes of these mistakes and offers appropriate teaching strategies for Chinese as a second language. The goal is to help students better understand and use these adverbs, thereby improving their Chinese language proficiency.

II. A BRIEF LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Research on Time Adverbs

Broadly speaking, existing research on time adverbs can be divided into two categories: macro-level research and micro-level research. Macro-level research primarily

includes the definition, reclassification, and functional study of time adverbs, while micro-level research focuses on studies of specific subcategories of time adverbs and comparative studies between individual time adverbs.

There are few scholars who have provided clear definitions of time adverbs. Li Jinxi (1924) was the first to introduce the concept of "time adverbs." He argued that time adverbs distinguish specific durations of actions, indicating either the duration of an action or its repetition over time. Li Quan (1996) further posited that time adverbs not only indicate the time when an action occurs but also the frequency of that action. Scholars such as Huang Borong, Liao Xudong (1997), Zhang Yanjun (2006), Shao Jingmin (2007), and Gao Na (2009) share similar views.

Regarding the reclassification of time adverbs in modern Chinese, there has been a significant amount of research. This paper organizes the research based on the number of categories into which time adverbs have been reclassified. Li Jinxi (1924) divided time adverbs into four categories: past, present, future, and indefinite. Zhao Yuanren (1968), Lu Jianming, Ma Zhen (1999), Zhang Lei (2000), Yang Rongxiang, Li Shaohua (2014) classified them into two categories, while Ma Qingzhu (2000), Xia Qun (2010), Zou Haiqing (2010), Zhang Yisheng (2004), and Zhang Yanjun (2016) classified them into three categories. In contrast, Wang Li (1943) and Yang Shuda (1984) divided time adverbs into eight and seventeen categories, respectively.

In addition to defining and reclassifying time adverbs, current research also addresses the syntactic and pragmatic functions of time adverbs.

Regarding syntactic functions, scholars such as Xu Guoyu (1994) and Yang Defeng (2006) have studied the use of time adverbs as adverbial modifiers, while Zhou Liying (2007) and Huang Xiaojing (2009) explored their use as attributives. In terms of pragmatic functions, Qu Chengxi (1991) suggested that the placement of a time adverb can affect the focus of a sentence and whether the sentence is grammatically correct. Furthermore, Zhang Yisheng (2000) and Zhang Boyan (2006) examined the role of time adverbs in text cohesion.

Micro-level research includes in-depth analysis of certain subcategories of time adverbs and comparative studies between specific time adverbs. For example, Sun Tongzhu (2009) analyzed "向来" (xiànglái) adverbs, pointing out that they express "permanence" and "static meaning" and can function to highlight focus, parallelism, and contrast within a sentence. Jiang Han (2012) noted that "从来" (cónglái) adverbs convey meanings related to "long duration," "permanence," and "habitual actions," and also carry a clear subjective tone. Other scholars such as Guan Jian (2002), Chen Yan (2009), Xu Binbin (2009), Zhang Juan (2010),

Zhang Dan (2011), and Wang Lingxia (2011) have focused on specific time adverbs and made contributions in this area.

2.2 Research on the Teaching of Time Adverbs in Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language

Research on the teaching of time adverbs in the context of teaching Chinese as a foreign language generally falls into two categories: research on teaching time adverbs as a whole and research focused on teaching specific types or even individual time adverbs.

2.2.1 Error Classification in Time Adverbs: Existing research on teaching time adverbs typically addresses three aspects: types of errors, causes of errors, and teaching strategies. However, scholars have reached different conclusions.

First, error classifications for time adverbs include three-part and four-part models. For example, Xue Jingjing (2009) and Ma Lan (2015) identified three types of errors: "omission," "misordering," and "misuse." On the other hand, Tuo Ao (2006), Wang Wanjie (2014), and He Ming (2015) proposed a four-part classification that includes "omission," "misuse," "redundant addition," and "misordering."

2.2.2 Causes of Errors in Time Adverbs: The classification of causes behind errors in time adverbs also varies, including two-part, four-part, and five-part models. Ma Lan (2015) analyzed the causes of errors from both teaching and learning perspectives. Wang Yuhan (2012) classified the causes into four categories: negative transfer from the native language, negative transfer from the intermediate language, negative transfer from the target language, and issues within the teaching process. Guo Huiqin (2011) identified five causes: the complexity of time adverbs, negative transfer from the native language, negative transfer from the target language, inappropriate teaching strategies, and inappropriate learning strategies.

2.2.3 Teaching Suggestions: Various scholars have provided teaching suggestions from different perspectives. Some scholars proposed specific teaching methods, such as Xue Jingjing's (2009) "clause teaching method," Liu Kai's (2013) "aggregate analysis method," Wang Wanjie's (2014) "associative memory method," "cyclical explanation method," and "search and perception method," and He Ming's (2015) "situational method" and "comparative method." Other scholars focused on suggestions for textbook compilation. For example, Weng Hongwei (2008) emphasized the importance of accuracy in defining words and the need to systematically present the multiple meanings of complex vocabulary in stages. Additionally, scholars like Ma Ruichen (2010) offered suggestions from three perspectives—learning, teaching, and textbooks. Ma suggested that students should adopt a positive attitude and

actively seek effective learning methods, teachers should improve their teaching methods, focus on error analysis, and tailor their instruction to individual learners, and textbooks should balance systematicity and scientific rigor, with special attention to after-class exercise design.

2.2.4 Research on Teaching Specific Time Adverbs: Studies on teaching specific time adverbs include Xin Yongfen's (2001) analysis of errors related to the overgeneralization of the particle "了" (le) in the use of "已然" (yǐrán) time adverbs. The study identified the rules governing the co-occurrence of time adverbs and "了," and concluded that learners made four types of errors: "misuse," "omission," "redundant addition," and "disordered sequence." Xue Yu (2013) analyzed five pairs of adverbs: "一直" (yīzhí) and "总" (zǒng), "从来" (cónglái) and "始终" (shǐzhōng), "总是" (zǒngshì) and "老是" (lǎoshì), "还" (hái) and "还是" (háishì), and "往往" (wǎngwǎng) and "常常" (chángcháng). The study identified four common types of errors learners made when acquiring continuous time adverbs: "substitution," "redundant addition," "omission," and "misordering." Other studies include Liu Linyan's (2011) research on errors related to continuous time adverbs, Liu Jin's (2010) research on the acquisition of definite time adverbs, and error analyses of "已然" adverbs by Tan Peiyu (2011) and Gao Yuansui (2014). Additionally, Liu Kai (2013) conducted a study on errors related to three sets of time adverbs: "一直" (yīzhí) and "总是" (zǒngshì), "再" (zài) and "又" (yòu), and "就" (jiù) and "才" (cái). Wang Zhe (2013) explored errors related to the time adverb "就" (jiù).

2.2.5 Cross-National Studies on Time Adverbs: There are also studies focused on learners from specific countries. For example, Li Yanqiu (2012) conducted a comparative analysis of time adverbs in Chinese and Thai, identifying five common errors made by Thai students: "redundant addition," "omission," "substitution," "misordering," and "other errors." Ruan Shihui (2013) selected nine Time Adverbs for a comparative analysis between Chinese and Vietnamese. Based on data analysis, Ruan identified three types of errors among Vietnamese learners of Chinese: "omission," "redundant addition," and "mixed usage." The study then analyzed the internal and external causes of these errors and proposed teaching strategies. Other studies include Jing Xin's (2013) research on errors in Korean learners' acquisition of time adverbs and Pan Dian's (2015) research on Indian learners' acquisition of time adverbs.

2.6 Current Research on "从来" Time Adverbs:

2.6.1. Linguistic Research on "从来" Time Adverbs

Research on "从来" (cónglái) Time adverbs includes both diachronic and synchronic studies. Diachronic research explores the lexicalization and grammaticalization processes of these adverbs, while synchronic studies focus on their semantic, syntactic, and pragmatic aspects.

Diachronic studies typically focus on the evolution of individual adverbs, such as Liang Yinfeng's (2009) exploration of "向来" (xiànglái) and its reduction from "自从 + X (noun component) 以来" to its current form. Nian Ying (2010) discussed the formation of "从来" (cónglái) from the preposition "从" (cóng) and the verb "来" (lái), eventually becoming a fixed term through metaphor and reanalysis. Other researchers, such as Zhang Chengjin (2013) and Chen Changlai (2015), explored the processes behind "一向" (yīxiàng) and "一直" (yīzhí), respectively.

In synchronic research, scholars commonly agree that "从来" and similar time adverbs can modify predicates to express continuous actions, but "一直" differs from the others in that it can express both "static meaning" and "dynamic meaning," as well as "short-duration meaning" and "spatial meaning." Researchers such as Cui Mingyu (2001), Deng Xiaoning (2002), and Cai Yichun (2010) have contributed to this understanding.

Syntactically, it is widely believed that "从来" Time Adverbs typically function as adverbials positioned between the subject and predicate, but while "从来," "向来," and "一向" only modify static verbs, "一直" can modify both static and dynamic verbs. Scholars such as Deng Xiaoning (2002), Xia Qun (2009), and Wang Min (2010) have conducted studies in this area.

Pragmatically, there has been less research. Some scholars, such as Cai Yichun (2010), have pointed out that "从来" time adverbs carry focal and subjective informational functions, while Sun Tongzhu (2009) discussed the parallelism and contrast functions of "向来" time adverbs.

2.6.2 Teaching Research on "从来" Time Adverbs in Chinese as a Foreign Language

Research on teaching "从来" time adverbs in Chinese as a foreign language can be divided into two categories: subcategory research and individual comparative analysis. Subcategory research groups two- or three-time adverbs from the "从来" category and analyzes errors made by learners when acquiring them. Comparative research selects two or three adverbs from the "从来" category and examines learner errors based on specific data.

For example, Tuo Ao (2007) classified "从来," "一向," and "向来" as frequency adverbs and pointed out that errors

related to frequency adverbs include "omission of grammatical components," "misordering of grammatical structures," and "mixed usage of grammatical components." The study suggested that the different meanings of high-frequency adverbs should be explained in stages and layers, and that multi-meaning adverbs should be analyzed comparatively.

Su Wenwen (2011) classified "一直" (yīzhí), "一向" (yīxiàng), and "从来" (cónglái) as frequency adverbs, summarizing common error types for each and explaining the causes of errors from the perspectives of interlanguage transfer, intralingual transfer, and insufficient teaching guidance.

Other scholars, such as Wang Yuhan (2012) and Zhang Jiqing (2012), have similarly conducted research on the errors learners make with these time adverbs and provided teaching suggestions based on error analysis.

2.7 Evaluation of Previous Research:

Upon reviewing the existing literature, several issues have been identified in the research on "从来" time adverbs. Firstly, most scholars have either focused solely on linguistic research or solely on the analysis of "从来" time adverbs in Chinese as a foreign language, leading to a lack of connection between the two areas. Secondly, there are significant discrepancies in how scholars classify the types of errors learners make with "从来" time adverbs. Despite differences in the number and names of error categories, many scholars are discussing the same types of errors, but with different terminology. Thirdly, the classification of error causes varies widely, and some approaches mix internal and external factors inconsistently.

III. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research site and participants

Research Site: The study was conducted in Ho Chi Minh City of Education, which specializes in teaching Chinese as a foreign language. This institution provides a diverse environment for language learners, offering various courses tailored to different proficiency levels. The setting includes modern classrooms equipped with teaching technologies, libraries with extensive Chinese language resources, and language labs for practical learning.

Participants: The participants in this study comprised 102 students enrolled in Chinese language courses at school.

Participants were selected based on the following criteria:

- Proficiency Level: Learners at different stages (beginner, intermediate, and advanced) to

understand how proficiency affects the acquisition of temporal adverbs.

- Background: A mix of students with varying degrees of prior exposure to the Chinese language, including those who had studied Chinese before and those who were new to the language.

- Age Range: Participants ranged from 18 to 20 years old (the 2nd students and the 3rd students), allowing for a diverse range of learning experiences and motivations.

The research aimed to analyze how these learners understood and used temporal adverbs in their language production, as well as to identify common errors and misconceptions.

3.2 Research Instruments

The study employed several research instruments to gather data on the participants' understanding and use of temporal adverbs in Chinese. These instruments included:

3.2.1 **Surveys/Questionnaires**: A structured questionnaire was administered to collect demographic information, prior exposure to the Chinese language, and learners' self-assessment of their proficiency in using temporal adverbs. This helped to contextualize the participants' backgrounds and language learning experiences.

3.2.2 **Written Tests**: A written test was designed to assess participants' understanding and application of various temporal adverbs. The test included multiple-choice questions, fill-in-the-blank exercises, and sentence construction tasks that required participants to use specific temporal adverbs in context.

3.2.3 **Speaking Tasks**: Participants engaged in speaking tasks where they had to use temporal adverbs in conversation. These tasks were recorded and analyzed for the correct usage of temporal adverbs, allowing for an evaluation of their speaking proficiency in real-time scenarios.

3.2.4 **Error Analysis**: Written assignments from participants (e.g., essays or diary entries) were collected and analyzed to identify common errors related to the use of temporal adverbs. This included examining the frequency and types of errors made in their written work.

3.2.5 **Interviews**: Semi-structured interviews were conducted with a subset of participants to gain deeper insights into their experiences learning and using temporal adverbs. These interviews allowed researchers to explore participants' thoughts on the

challenges they faced and their strategies for overcoming them.

3.2.6 **Focus Groups**: Focus group discussions were organized to facilitate conversation among participants about their experiences with learning temporal adverbs. This method provided qualitative data on common themes, misconceptions, and peer influences in language learning.

These instruments collectively provided a comprehensive understanding of how learners acquire and utilize temporal adverbs in Chinese, helping to inform teaching strategies and improve instructional materials.

3.3 Procedures for Data Collection and Analysis

3.3.1 Data Collection Procedures:

- **Preparation Phase:**
    - Develop and pilot-test research instruments (surveys, written tests, speaking tasks) to ensure clarity and reliability.
    - Obtain necessary approvals from the institution's ethics committee and inform participants about the study's purpose, confidentiality, and their right to withdraw at any time.

- **Participant Recruitment:** Identify and recruit participants through announcements in Chinese language classes, ensuring a diverse group based on proficiency levels and backgrounds.

    Obtain informed consent from participants, explaining the study's scope and how their data will be used.

- **Survey Administration:** Distribute the structured questionnaires during class sessions or online, allowing participants to complete them at their convenience.

- **Conducting Written Tests:** Administer written tests in a controlled environment to minimize distractions. Provide clear instructions and allocate sufficient time for completion.

- **Implementing Speaking Tasks:** Organize speaking tasks in pairs or small groups, using prompts that require the use of temporal adverbs. Record these sessions for further analysis.

- **Collecting Written Assignments:** Request written assignments from participants over a specified period. Provide guidelines to ensure they include opportunities for using temporal adverbs.

- **Conducting Interviews and Focus Groups:** Schedule interviews and focus group discussions, ensuring a comfortable setting for open dialogue. Use semi-structured formats to guide the discussion while allowing for flexibility in responses.

3.3.2 Data Analysis Procedures:

- **Quantitative Data Analysis:**
    - Analyze survey and written test responses using statistical software (e.g., SPSS or Excel) to calculate descriptive statistics (mean, median, mode) and inferential statistics (e.g., t-tests) to assess differences in proficiency levels.
    - Conduct item analysis on written tests to identify patterns in correct and incorrect responses, focusing on specific temporal adverbs.

- **Qualitative Data Analysis:**
    - Transcribe recordings from speaking tasks, interviews, and focus group discussions for content analysis. Use coding techniques to identify common themes and patterns related to the use of temporal adverbs.
    - Analyze written assignments using error analysis methods, categorizing errors related to temporal adverbs into types such as omission, substitution, and misordering.

- **Triangulation:**
    - Combine quantitative and qualitative findings to provide a comprehensive understanding of participants' mastery of temporal adverbs. This triangulation enhances the validity and reliability of the results.

- **Reporting Results:**
    - Prepare a detailed report summarizing the findings, including statistical analyses, qualitative themes, and recommendations for teaching strategies based on the data collected.

This systematic approach to data collection and analysis ensures that the research comprehensively captures participants' experiences and challenges in learning temporal adverbs in Chinese.

IV.   RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Semantic Analysis of Time Adverbs "一向," "一贯," "一直," and "从来"

4.1.1. Semantic Characteristics of "一向," "一贯," "一直," and "从来"

Table 1-1: Definitions of "yīxiàng" (一向), "yīguàn" (一贯), "yīzhí" (一直), and "cónglái" (从来) from Reference Books

Term	Modern Chinese Dictionary	Chinese Adverb Dictionary
一 向 (yīxiàng)	1. A certain period in the past; (thought, style, policy, etc.) has always been like this. 2. Indicates continuity from the past to the present or from the last meeting until now.	From the past to the present, it has always been like this.
一 贯 (yīguàn)	1. Indicates continuity in one direction without change. 2. From the past to the present.	Indicates that actions have consistently been like this or that situations have remained unchanged, typically used to describe habits, preferences, or morals.
一 直 (yīzhí)	1. Indicates that actions or situations remain constant without interruption; emphasizes the scope.	Indicates actions progressing in one direction; emphasizes the scope; indicates continuous or unchanging actions or states.
从 来 (cónglái)	1. From the past to the present, it has always been like this without change.	

From the table, we can see that the four adverbs "一向" (yīxiàng), "一 贯" (yīguàn), "一 直" (yīzhí), and "从 来" (cónglái) all convey the idea that behavior or state has continued without change for a significant period. This involves two aspects: duration and continuity. Next, we will explore the semantic similarities of "yīxiàng," "yīguàn," "yīzhí," and "cónglái" based on these two important aspects: temporality and continuity.

4.1.1.1 Temporality

All four terms can express that a behavior or state remains stable over a long time period. For example:

- (1) 这家公司**一向**以诚信经营为原则，获得了客户的广泛好评。This company has always adhered to the principle of integrity in its operations, receiving widespread acclaim from customers. (Example)

- (2) 他**一贯**支持慈善事业，长期为贫困地区捐款。He has consistently supported charitable causes, donating to impoverished areas for a long time. (Example)

- (3) 我**一直**对文学感兴趣，从小到大从未改变过。I have always been interested in literature, a passion that has not changed since childhood. (Example)

Through research, I found that many reference books provide explanations for the terms "yīxiàng" (一 向), "yīguàn" (一贯), "yīzhí" (一直), and "cónglái" (从来). For example, both the "Modern Chinese Dictionary" and the "Chinese Adverb Dictionary" offer the following definitions for these four terms:

- (4) 她**从来**没有迟到过，每天都准时到达公司。She has never been late, arriving at the office on time every day. (Example)

In these examples, "一向" (Example 1) indicates that the company has maintained its principle of integrity over time; "一 贯" (Example 2) shows that he has consistently supported charity; "一直" (Example 3) reflects a continuous interest in literature from the past to the present; while "从来" (Example 4) emphasizes that she has never been late from the past to now. These usages highlight that the behavior or state does not change over an extended period.

4.1.1.2 Continuity

The four adverbs also convey continuity, meaning that the behavior or state occurs without interruption during that time. For example:

- (5) 过去几年，他**一向**严格要求自己，从不松懈。Over the past few years, he has consistently demanded a high standard from himself without slackening. (Example)

- (6) 他的工作态度**一贯**认真负责，从未马虎。His work attitude has always been serious and responsible, never careless. (Example)

- (7) 自从她加入公司以来，她**一直**表现出色，赢得了大家的认可。Since she joined the company, she has consistently performed

exceptionally well, earning recognition from everyone. (Example)

- (8) 这个地方**从来**没有发生过任何安全事故，大家都很放心。This place has never experienced any safety incidents, which reassures everyone. (Example)

In Example 5, "一向" indicates that his high standards have remained unchanged and continuous; in Example 6, "一贯" reflects that his serious work attitude has remained constant; Example 7 uses "一直" to emphasize her consistent excellent performance; and in Example 8, "从来" suggests that no safety incidents have occurred here over a long time. These examples demonstrate that behaviors or states continue without interruption.

From a semantic perspective, "一向," "一贯," "一直," and "从来" describe the continuity and stability of certain behaviors or states over an extended period. They emphasize the unchanged nature of actions or situations over time, showcasing their semantic commonality, particularly in their agreement on representing long durations and continuity.

4.2 Semantic Commonality Among "一向," "一贯," "一直," and "从来"

4.2.1 Temporal Aspect

According to the definition in *Grammar Clarification in Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language*, "time periods" refer to spans like "10 years," "3 months," or "5 hours." In Chinese, "一向," "一贯," "一直," and "从来" all indicate that a behavior or state remains unchanged over a significant time period. Thus, all four terms exhibit temporality, typically over long periods. For example:

- (9) 这个企业管理得很好，**一向**是大家称赞的对象。This company is well-managed and has always been praised by everyone. (Example)

- (10) 他**一贯**严格要求自己，工作从不马虎。He has consistently held himself to high standards and never been careless. (Example)

- (11) 学校的教学质量**一直**是本地区最好的。The quality of teaching at this school has always been the best in the region. (Example)

- (12) 她**从来**不迟到，总是准时到达。She has never been late and always arrives on time. (Example)

In these cases, "一向" (Example 9) indicates that the company has maintained good management for a long time; "一贯" (Example 10) reflects his consistent self-discipline;

"一直" (Example 11) highlights the sustained high quality of education; while "从来" (Example 12) emphasizes that she has never been late, which likely spans a long duration.

These examples show that "一向," "一贯," "一直," and "从来" are used to describe situations where behaviors or states remain unchanged over an extended period, even though the specific length of "long duration" varies based on subjective perception. Nonetheless, the essence of temporality for these four terms remains constant.

4.2.2 Continuity Aspect

Continuity refers to behaviors or states that occur without interruption over a period. "一向," "一贯," "一直," and "从来" not only convey temporality but also reflect ongoing continuity. For instance:

- (13) 这个项目**一向**被认为是本市最具创新精神的成果。This project has always been regarded as the most innovative outcome in the city. (Example)

- (14) 他**一贯**支持环保事业，并且积极参与各种环保活动。He has consistently supported environmental causes and actively participated in various activities. (Example)

- (15) 自公司成立以来，企业**一直**坚持以质量为核心的发展理念。Since the establishment of the company, it has always adhered to a quality-centered development philosophy. (Example)

- (16) 她**从来**没有抱怨过自己的工作，总是默默奉献。She has never complained about her work and always contributes silently. (Example)

In Example 13, "一向" indicates that the project has consistently been seen as innovative over time; Example 14 shows that he has always supported environmentalism without interruption; Example 15 emphasizes the company's steadfast commitment to quality since its inception; and Example 16 illustrates that she has never complained about her work.

These examples illustrate the continuity characteristic of these four adverbs, where behaviors or states occur continuously without gaps, demonstrating a consistent quality in actual language usage.

4.3 Semantic Differences Among "一向," "一贯," "一直," and "从来"

4.3.1 Differences in Space and Range

As shown above, "一向," "一贯," and "从来" indicate only temporal continuation, whereas "一直" not only denotes temporal extension but also spatial and range extension.

This allows "一直" to express broader meanings. For example:

- (17) 我们**一直**沿着海岸线走，直到看到灯塔才停下来。We walked along the coastline until we saw the lighthouse. (Example)

- (18) 这条路**一直**通往山顶，沿途风景非常优美。This road leads straight to the mountain top, with beautiful scenery along the way. (Example)

In Example 17, "一直" denotes directional and spatial continuity, emphasizing that we maintained our course from the starting point to the lighthouse; in Example 18, "一直" indicates that the road uninterruptedly extends to the mountain top. If "一直" in these sentences were replaced with "一向" or "一贯," it would result in an illogical expression, as the latter two cannot convey spatial extension.

4.3.2 Consistency Aspect Differences

While "一向," "一贯," "一直," and "从来" all express the temporal continuity of behaviors or states, "一贯" focuses more on the consistency of behavior over time, while the other three emphasize temporal continuity. For instance:

- (19) 他**一向**对人友好，从来没有和别人争吵过。He has always been friendly and has never quarreled with others. (Example)

- (20) 这家公司**一贯**注重质量，从未对客户的反馈掉以轻心。This company has consistently emphasized quality and never taken customer feedback lightly. (Example)

In Example 19, "一向" indicates a long-standing friendly attitude; in Example 20, "一贯" emphasizes the company's commitment to quality, regardless of time. Replacing "一贯" with "一向" or "一直" would still make sense but would weaken the emphasis on behavioral consistency.

4.3.3 Subjectivity Aspect Differences

In terms of subjectivity, "从来" carries more subjective connotation compared to "一向," "一贯," and "一直," often reflecting the speaker's emotional attitude. "从来" typically conveys a more absolute and determined tone. For example:

- (21) 他**从来**不相信运气，认为成功靠的是努力和毅力。He has never believed in luck, believing that success depends on effort and perseverance. (Example)

- (22) 我们家**从来**没有养过宠物，因为家里人不喜欢动物。Our family has never raised pets because we don't like animals. (Example)

In Example 21, "从来" expresses a firm stance, indicating his absolute disbelief in luck and reflecting the speaker's endorsement of that viewpoint; in Example 22, "从来" emphasizes the family's long-standing attitude toward not having pets, conveying a strong assertion. If "从来" were replaced with "一向" or "一贯," the absolute subjectivity and emotional color would diminish, making it a more objective statement.

Through comparison, we see that "一向," "一贯," "一直," and "从来" share semantic commonalities while exhibiting notable differences. Their commonality lies in temporality and continuity, indicating that behaviors or states remain unchanged over a period. The differences include:

- **"一直"** can express both temporal and spatial continuity.

- **"一贯"** focuses on behavioral consistency over time.

- **"从来"** conveys a stronger subjective stance and a more absolute tone.

When teaching these terms, educators should highlight their semantic differences and use concrete examples to help students grasp their distinct usages, thereby preventing errors in real-life applications. For instance, contrasting "他一直努力工作" (He has always worked hard) with "他从来没有偷懒" (He has never been lazy) can aid students in understanding the nuances of subjectivity and consistency.

4.4 Syntax Analysis of "一向," "一贯," "一直," and "从来"

4.4.1 Syntactic Commonalities Among "一向," "一贯," "一直," and "从来"

4.4.1.1 Positioning Between Subject and Predicate

As adverbs, "一向," "一贯," "一直," and "从来" primarily function as adverbials modifying and limiting the predicate. Therefore, they typically appear between the subject and the predicate. For example:

- (23) 他**一向**关心家人，特别是母亲。He has always cared for his family, especially his mother. (Example)

- (24) 张教授**一贯**支持学生的独立思考。Professor Zhang has consistently supported independent thinking among students. (Example)

- (25) 我**一直**觉得他是一个非常值得信赖的人。I have always thought he is a very trustworthy person. (Example)

- (26) 她**从来**没有忘记过她的承诺。She has never forgotten her promise. (Example)

In these examples, "一向," "一贯," "一直," and "从来" all appear between the subject and the predicate, modifying actions or states such as "关心" (care), "支持" (support), "觉得" (think), and "忘记" (forget).

4.4.1.2 Preference for Stative Verbs

According to linguistic theory, stative verbs indicate that actions or states do not change over time, emphasizing constancy. "一向," "一贯," "一直," and "从来" often pair with stative verbs, such as psychological verbs, relational verbs, and existential verbs. For example:

- (27) 图书馆里**一向**存在着学习的氛围。There has always been a learning atmosphere in the library. (Example)

- (28) 她**一贯**认为自己能胜任这项工作。She has always believed she is capable of this job. (Example)

- (29) 他们**一直**喜欢探讨哲学问题。They have always enjoyed discussing philosophical issues. (Example)

- (30) 他**从来**不觉得自己有任何优势。He has never felt he has any advantages. (Example)

In these instances, the verbs "存在" (exist), "认为" (believe), "喜欢" (like), and "觉得" (feel) are stative, aligning with "一 向," "一 贯," "一 直," and "从 来" to emphasize the continuity and stability of these states.

4.4.1.3 Preference for Quality and Stative Adjectives in Reduplicative Form

"一向," "一贯," "一直," and "从来" frequently combine with quality adjectives or reduplicated state adjectives to enhance their temporal continuity. For example:

- (31) 他**一向**冷静，几乎从未失去过理智。He has always been calm and has hardly ever lost his reason. (Example)

- (32) 她**一贯**认真细致，从不疏忽。She has always been meticulous and never careless. (Example)

- (33) 他们**一直**兢兢业业，认真对待每一个项目。They have consistently been diligent, treating each project seriously. (Example)

- (34) **从来**不马马虎虎，总是追求完美。They have never been careless and always pursue perfection. (Example)

In these examples, adjectives like "冷静" (calm), "认真细致" (meticulous), "兢兢业业" (diligent), and "马马虎虎" (careless) are either qualities or states, with "兢兢业业" and "马 马 虎 虎" being AABB reduplicative adjectives, emphasizing sustained states and consistency.

4.4.1.4 Co-occurrence with the Dynamic Particle "着"

Since "一向," "一贯," "一直," and "从来" denote continuity, they can pair with the dynamic particle "着" to indicate that actions or states persist during a particular timeframe. For example:

- (35) 他**一向**过着简单而充实的生活。He has always led a simple yet fulfilling life. (Example)

- (36) 我们**一贯**抱着开放的心态进行讨论。We have consistently maintained an open mind set during discussions. (Example)

- (37) 他**一直**想着如何提高工作效率。He has always been thinking about how to improve work efficiency. (Example)

- (38) 她**从来**都怀着一颗感恩的心面对生活。She has always faced life with a grateful heart. (Example)

In these instances, "着" indicates the continuation of actions or states, while "一向," "一贯," "一直," and "从来" further emphasize this continuity, making the expression more specific and sustained.

The common syntactic features of "一向," "一贯," "一直," and "从来" manifest in their positional alignment, their preference for stative verbs and adjectives, and their ability to co-occur with the dynamic particle "着." Understanding these commonalities enhances the correct usage of these adverbs and helps avoid errors.

4.4.2 Syntactic Differences Among "一向," "一贯," "一直," and "从来"

4.4.2.1 Co-occurrence with the Dynamic Particle "过"

The particle "过" typically follows verbs or adjectives, indicating that an action has occurred or a state has existed. "一向," "一贯," "一直," and "从来" can appear in the structure "没有……过" with "过," except for "一贯," which cannot be used in this structure. However, "一向," "一直," and "从来" can be used. For example:

- (39) 这个人**一向**没有犯过任何错误。This person has never made any mistakes. (Example)

- (40) 自从上次见面后，我们<u>一直</u>没有联系过。 Since we last met, we have not been in contact. (Example)

- (41) 这个地区的土地<u>从来</u>没有被开发过。The land in this area has never been developed. (Example)

In these examples, the structure "没有……过" negates the verbs "犯" (make), "联系" (contact), and "开发" (develop), indicating that these actions have never occurred; thus, they can be used with "一向," "一直," and "从来," but not with "一贯."

4.4.2.2 Co-occurrence with Action Verbs

While "一向," "一贯," "一直," and "从来" can pair with stative verbs, "一直" is more flexible with action verbs. "一直" can express both static and dynamic continuity, while "一向," "一贯," and "从来" are more suited for stative verbs and less effective with action verbs. For example:

- (42) 在马拉松比赛中，他<u>一直</u>坚持跑到终点。 In the marathon, he has consistently run to the finish line. (Example)

- (43) 他<u>从来</u>没有跑过那么远的距离。He has never run such a long distance. (Example)

In Example 42, "一直" pairs with the action verb "跑" (run), emphasizing the action's continuity. Using "一向," "一贯," or "从来" here would not convey the same sense of ongoing action.

4.4.2.3 Usage in Negation

"从来" can be used in both affirmative and negative sentences, but it is more frequently and naturally used in negative contexts. "一向," "一贯," and "一直" can be used in both types of sentences without clear preference. For example:

- (44) 她<u>从来</u>不喜欢迟到。She has never liked being late. (Example)

- (45) 我<u>一直</u>认为他是一个可靠的人。I have always believed he is a reliable person. (Example)

- (46) 他们<u>一向</u>严格遵守公司规定。They have always strictly followed company regulations. (Example)

In Example 44, "从来" appears in a negative context, indicating that she has never had the habit of being late, presenting a sense of absoluteness. Examples 45 and 46 show "一直" and "一向" in affirmative statements.

4.5 Pragmatic Analysis of "一向," "一贯," "一直," and "从来"

4.5.1 Register Differences

The difference between written and spoken language manifests in formality and word choice. "一向" and "一贯" typically appear in written contexts, conveying a formal and rigorous tone, such as in government documents or formal reports. "一直" and "从来," however, can be used flexibly in both spoken and written forms. For example:

- (47) 中国政府<u>一向</u>致力于维护和平与发展。 （书面语，正式）The Chinese government has always been committed to maintaining peace and development. (written, formal)

- (48) 他<u>一贯</u>保持严谨的态度处理事务。（书面语，正式）He has consistently maintained a rigorous attitude in handling affairs. (written, formal)

- (49) 我<u>一直</u>喜欢这座城市。（口语，较随意）I have always liked this city. (spoken, somewhat informal)

- (50) 我<u>从来</u>没见过这么漂亮的风景。（口语，较随意）I have never seen such beautiful scenery. (spoken, somewhat informal)

Examples 47 and 48 feature "一向" and "一贯" in formal written contexts, while 49 and 50 demonstrate that "一直" and "从来" can be employed in casual spoken conversation.

4.5.2 Sentence Type Selection

In modern Chinese, common sentence types include declarative, interrogative, imperative, and exclamatory sentences. "一向," "一贯," and "从来" typically feature in past tense declarations and are unsuitable for imperatives. In contrast, "一直" can be used across past, present, and future tenses, making it suitable for imperative sentences. For example:

- (51) 请<u>一直</u>保持联系，不要断了消息。Please keep in touch continuously; don't lose contact. (Example)

- (52) 你<u>一直</u>支持我，我非常感谢。You have always supported me, for which I am very grateful. (Example)

In Example 51, "一直" is used in an imperative context, asking the listener to maintain contact. Using "一向," "一贯," or "从来" here would not fit the imperative structure.

In syntactic and pragmatic analyses, while "一向," "一贯," "一直," and "从来" exhibit common features, they also

display significant differences in specific usage contexts. For example, "一贯" cannot co-occur with the dynamic particle "过," while "一直" can pair with action verbs. Additionally, "从来" is frequently used in negative sentences, and "一向" and "一贯" lean more towards formal writing, whereas "一直" and "从来" are more adaptable to both spoken and written forms.

4.6 Reasons for Errors and Teaching Strategies in Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language

4.6.1 Reasons for Errors

4.6.1.1 Semantic and Syntactic Similarities

From a semantic perspective, all four terms indicate that a behavior or state remains unchanged over a period, typically translated in English as "always" or "all along." This similarity makes them easily confused for foreign learners of Chinese. However, the terms differ in their specific usage contexts. For instance, "一直" can denote spatial extension, while "一向," "一贯," and "从来" cannot. Students unaware of these nuances may misuse these terms in incorrect contexts. For example:

- (53) 我们从学校<u>一直</u>走到公园。We walked from school to the park continuously. (correct)
- (54) 我们从学校<u>一向</u>/<u>一贯</u>/<u>从来</u>走到公园。We walked from school 一向/一贯/从来 to the park. (incorrect)

In sentence 53, "一直" appropriately expresses directional and spatial continuity, while sentence 54 demonstrates that using "一向," "一贯," or "从来" would result in a semantic mismatch, leading to an error.

From a syntactic standpoint, while all four can serve as adverbs in a sentence and may sometimes follow the dynamic particle "着," their compatibility with dynamic verbs varies. For instance, "一直" can modify action verbs, indicating ongoing actions, while "一向," "一贯," and "从来" cannot. For example:

- (55) 他<u>一直</u>在努力学习。He has always been studying hard. (correct)
- (56) 他<u>一向</u>/<u>一贯</u>/<u>从来</u>在努力学习。He 一向/一贯/从来 has been studying hard. (incorrect)

In sentence 55, "一直" correctly modifies the action verb "学习" (study), while sentence 56 fails to do so with "一向," "一贯," or "从来," resulting in grammatical errors.

4.6.1.2 Insufficient Handling in Teaching Materials and Dictionaries

4.6.1.2.1 Simplified Explanations

In teaching Chinese as a foreign language, textbooks and dictionaries often provide overly simplified explanations for terms like "一向," "一贯," "一直," and "从来," typically translating them uniformly as "luôn luôn" or "từ trước đến nay hoặc liên tục." This simplification leads students to struggle to distinguish subtle differences among these terms, resulting in grammatical and semantic errors.

For example, certain textbooks might categorize all four as continuity adverbs, neglecting their grammatical rules and contextual differences. This vague treatment fails to accurately convey each term's specific usage scenarios, undermining students' understanding of their subtle distinctions. For instance, **(57)** 教材可能会写道 a textbook might state that "一直" and "从来" both indicate temporal continuity without explaining that "从来" commonly appears in negative sentences, leading students to misuse "从来" in affirmative sentences, as in "我从来都喜欢这本书" (incorrect).

Furthermore, example sentences in textbooks often lack the depth needed to illustrate the distinctions among these terms. For instance:

- "一直" typically indicates a continuous behavior or state, usable in both affirmative and negative contexts.
  - Example: 他一直在学习。He has always been studying. (indicating he has continuously studied from the past to now)
- "从来" is often used in negative contexts, indicating an ongoing negation.
  - Example: 他从来没迟到过。He has never been late. (indicating he has not been late at any time)
- "一向" describes habitual behaviors or characteristics over a long period, predominantly used in affirmative contexts.
  - Example: 他一向很准时。He has always been punctual. (indicating he has been punctual for a long time)
- "一贯" is similar to "一向," but often carries a stronger evaluative or attitudinal nuance, typically used in criticisms or praise.
  - Example: 他一贯喜欢批评别人。（带有主观评价的意味）He has consistently criticized others. (implying a subjective evaluation)

Hence, teaching materials and dictionaries should provide more detailed explanations, clearly stating the grammatical

rules and usage contexts for these terms to avoid oversimplification. This approach would not only aid students in mastering these terms but also reduce errors and confusion during their learning process.

4.6.1.2 Negative Transfer from Native Language and Target Language Knowledge

4.6.1.2.1 Negative Transfer from Native Language

Foreign students learning Chinese often translate Chinese vocabulary into familiar terms in their native languages. However, the meanings and usage rules of Chinese vocabulary do not always align with those of other languages (like English). For instance, students from Western countries may translate "一向," "一贯," "一直," and "从来" as "always," overlooking the differences in grammar, semantics, and pragmatics. Similarly, Vietnamese students might directly translate Chinese vocabulary into their native language, ignoring the grammatical and semantic distinctions present in Chinese. For example:

- (58) "He always works hard" might be incorrectly translated as "他从来努力工作" (incorrect) instead of "他一直努力工作" (correct).

This misapplication occurs when students mistakenly equate "always" with "从来," leading to errors in sentence structure. Additionally, Vietnamese students might conflate "一向" and "一贯" with "từ trước đến giờ," causing further confusion in their usage.

4.6.1.2.2 Negative Transfer from Target Language Knowledge

Students usually grasp the usage of terms they learn first more easily. For instance, the use of "一直" is more common and straightforward. When learning "一向," "一贯," and "从来," students might erroneously assume they can interchange these terms due to the influence of "一直." For example:

- (59) Students may mistakenly equate 学生可能会错误地将 "一直" with "一贯," leading to sentences like "我一贯喜欢这个节目" (incorrect), which, while semantically close, do not conform to standard usage.

4.6.2 Teaching Strategies for Chinese as a Foreign Language

4.6.2.1 Understanding Semantics

In the teaching process, instructors should first thoroughly explain the basic semantics of these four terms, emphasizing their similarities and differences. For example:

- **"一直"** can express temporal, spatial, and range continuity, focusing on the duration and direction of the behavior.
- **"一向"** and **"一贯"** focus more on the consistency of behavior from the past to the present.
- **"从来"** typically appears in negative contexts, indicating that something has always been the case since the past.

For instance, when explaining "一贯," the teacher can highlight its indication of behavioral consistency, such as "他一贯遵守规则" (He has consistently followed the rules), while "一直" emphasizes temporal and spatial continuity.

4.6.2.2 Contextual Guidance

Standalone explanations can be monotonous and may not facilitate understanding. Placing these terms in concrete contexts is crucial. Instructors can showcase how these terms are used in various contexts through example sentences. For instance:

- (60) "我们从家<u>一直</u>走到学校" "We walked from home to school continuously" demonstrates spatial continuity.
- (61) "他<u>一向</u>勤奋工作" "He has always worked diligently" highlights a consistent behavior over time.

Concrete examples help students visually understand each term's appropriate contexts, avoiding rote memorization.

4.6.2.3 Pragmatic Reference

In addition to syntactic and semantic explanations, instructors should stress the differences in pragmatic usage among these terms. Students should understand that:

- **"一向"** and **"一贯"** are more frequently found in formal written language, while **"一直"** and **"从来"** can appear in both spoken and written forms.
- **"一直"** can be used in imperative sentences, whereas **"一向," "一贯,"** and **"从来"** are unsuitable for imperatives.

For example:

- (62) "请<u>一直</u>保持联系。" "Please keep in touch continuously." (correct)
- (63) "请<u>一向</u>保持联系。" "Please always keep in touch." (incorrect)

Through pragmatic analysis, students can better distinguish the actual application contexts of these terms, preventing misuse across different registers and sentence types.

4.7 Teaching Recommendations

4.7.1 Enhancing Semantic Distinctions: In teaching, comparing the usages of "一直," "一向," and "从来" can help learners clearly differentiate their applications in various contexts. Emphasizing that "从来" often pairs with negation will assist learners in understanding its specific semantic function.

4.7.2 Contextualized Practice: Setting up diverse contextual exercises will enable learners to grasp the usage of "从来" within specific scenarios. Engaging students in listening, speaking, reading, and writing activities will deepen their understanding of these temporal adverbs.

4.7.3 Error Correction Feedback: Instructors should provide timely feedback on errors, especially when learners misuse "从来." Prompt corrections and explanations of the proper usage will be beneficial. Additionally, guiding students to self-check and correct their mistakes can enhance their language sensitivity.

V.   CONCLUSION

The use of "从来" class temporal adverbs presents certain challenges for Chinese learners, particularly in understanding their pairing with negative forms and expressions of continuous time. By analyzing common errors, we can clarify the grammatical rules and semantic characteristics of "从来." To help learners master its correct usage, instructors should focus on semantic distinctions, contextualized teaching, and timely error feedback. Through diverse practice and proper guidance, learners can accurately use "从来" class temporal adverbs in real-life communication.

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