

# Analysis of Chinese Character Writing Errors by Secondary School Students in Yaoundé, Cameroon

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## Abstract

In recent years, as Chinese has become a “hot” language in the world, the popularity of Chinese language learning in Cameroon is constantly increasing. Chinese character teaching is an important part of Chinese learning, and learning Chinese characters is one of the unavoidable difficulties for Cameroonian students. This paper mainly analyzes the writing errors of Chinese characters among secondary school students in Cameroon, focusing on three aspects: the errors in strokes, the errors in components and the errors in homophones and near-similar characters. The main reason for the error is that the students lack knowledge about the combination of strokes and parts of Chinese characters, the combination of parts and the distinction of homophones. In order to solve the practical problems of Chinese character teaching in secondary schools, this paper finally puts forward some pertinent opinions and suggestions, hoping to provide useful help to the teaching of Chinese characters in secondary schools in Cameroon.

## Keywords

Cameroon, Chinese Language, Secondary School, Teaching

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## 1. Introduction

Although the history of Chinese language teaching in Cameroon is not long, it has a growing momentum of development. As we all know, Chinese character teaching plays a very important role in Chinese language teaching. In other words, it is an inevitable teaching link for teachers and students. Huang (2012) believes that although Chinese character teaching is a big problem for foreigners, the status of Chinese character teaching is not universally recognized.

Characters are the written symbol system for recording language. Chinese characters are not only a way to write Chinese, but also an undeniable tool for learners to acquire the ability to express Chinese in writing. In addition, there are still many countries in the world that use only phonetic characters, but Chinese characters have the functions of sound and shape. Therefore, when people learn Chinese, they must not only master Chinese pinyin to make it read accurately, but also grasp the unique writing method of Chinese characters. It is not difficult for them to master Mandarin Pinyin, but the way of writing Chinese characters is a very different aspect. After several months of observation and practice at some secondary schools in Yaoundé, the author found that learning and writing Chinese characters is a very prominent problem for Cameroonian secondary school students. It is very difficult to recognize and read. The content of Chinese classes in Cameroonian secondary schools generally includes learning new words, text explanations, grammar learning, and writing Chinese characters. Due to the very limited class hours per week, local Chinese teachers generally only pay attention to the teaching of texts and new words, while ignoring the learning of Chinese characters. Chinese language students make many mistakes when writing Chinese characters. The purpose of writing this article is to investigate and analyze the errors in students' writing of Chinese characters, find out the reasons for the errors, and propose solutions and suggestions to solve the problem of Chinese characters teaching. The main focus of this paper is to analyze the Chinese characters errors of Cameroonian secondary school students, to analyze the types and causes of the errors, and to find out the corresponding solutions.

## 2. Literature Review

The theory and principles of teaching Chinese characters to foreigners are very important to this research. Zhao (2010) summed up the principles of teaching Chinese characters for foreigners into three basic principles: Teaching students according to the principles of Chinese character creation. The evolution of simplified characters is formed on the basis of ancient characters through morphology and meanings. We can still use the "six books" theory to analyze the physical structure of modern Chinese characters. For foreign students, it is very important to recognize and learn Chinese characters; Pay attention to the combination of form, sound and meaning. Many Chinese characters are pictographic characters, and when teaching them, one should make full use of the pictographic meaning and the characteristics of pictographic sounds. First, teachers have to use symbols many times to let students recognize and read Chinese characters, so as to increase students' literacy. On the basis of learning a word, we can identify common words related to the meaning of the same root; focus on practicality and interest. When teaching Chinese characters, it is best to avoid this kind of mechanical practice method. In order to complete this task, teachers should put more effort into fun and imagery, formulas, songs, etc. should be done in an adaptive manner. Guo and Liang (2006) put forward the following six principles

of Chinese character teaching on the basis of Zhao Jinming's research: Teaching students according to their aptitude, and guiding them by classification. For students in countries with similar Chinese character culture, writing Chinese characters quickly is not a big problem because they are very similar. However, for students in countries with non-Chinese character culture, this is a greater difficulty; it should be taught according to the concept of first easy and then difficult. This also means that teachers should follow a certain teaching sequence, first single characters and then combined characters, first strokes and then stroke order, first parts and then whole characters, first pictographs and then other types, first common characters and then rare characters. Here we need to use different methods according to different types of characters; combination of sounds and meanings, systematic teaching. The characteristics of the phonetic side meaning and the shape side meaning are to be used in this part, thinking that most Chinese characters are phonetic characters. Generally speaking, when students learn a Chinese character, they will know some common words with the same radical and meaning.

One of the oldest characters in the world is the Chinese character, which represents the development of Chinese culture. If a person wants to learn Chinese well, they must pay attention to Chinese characters. Although the teaching of Chinese characters as a foreign language is an important part, it is also a typical problem. If one wants to learn Chinese well, the person must understand and master the basic knowledge of Chinese characters. Teaching Chinese characters to foreigners is a big concept, which includes many methods. The following are some methods of teaching Chinese characters to foreigners from the perspectives of different experts: The famous scholar Zhao (2010) expounded these teaching methods: First, stroke teaching. Stroke is the most basic component of writing Chinese characters, and the most fundamental basis for writing Chinese characters well is to grasp the writing method of the entire stroke. The rules of writing Chinese characters are still based on the names of the strokes, for example, "write the horizontal stroke first and then the vertical one, write 'pie' and then 'na'". Therefore, at the beginning of Chinese character teaching, it is very necessary to tell students the basic stroke names. On this basis, we study and analyze the structure of Chinese characters, and enter into the teaching of radicals; secondly, in the teaching of components, the meaning of components is the structural unit composed of strokes and has the function of combining Chinese characters. In terms of the Chinese characters to be taught, teach students how to analyze the structure. Make students aware that Chinese characters are made up of meaningful units. After analyzing and summarizing the common components that have always existed, again according to from common to infrequently used, these basic components are composed into Chinese characters from easy to difficult and are taught to learners. Sun (2000) thinks that the most important part of teaching Chinese as a foreign language is Chinese characters. According to the different characteristics of Chinese characters, appropriate teaching me-

thods should not be used randomly in the teaching of Chinese characters to foreigners. For him, in Chinese character teaching, students should be taught listening, speaking, reading and writing together, especially in the zero-starting stage Chinese character teaching should strengthen writing practice. [Xiao and Wu \(2018\)](#) analyzed the teaching methods of foreign students at the primary stage, and summarized them from the perspectives of word pronunciation, shape and meaning. For them, it is more convenient to use the combination of listening, speaking and communication in the pronunciation of words whether the standard of phonetic appearance is one of the important factors for testing phonetic learning; in addition, the use of audio-visual methods by teachers in the process of teaching characters' shape has nothing to do with natural methods. One of the reasons is that for primary students, when teaching Chinese characters, they should pay attention to them. The teaching of strokes makes students accustomed to the shape of Chinese characters and regards it as the main task of Chinese character teaching; after the "sound" and "shape" are carried out, the overall perception of the "meaning" of Chinese characters is finally formed. In this process, students' enthusiasm for learning Chinese characters should be fully mobilized, innovative courses should be offered, and diversified teaching resources should be provided.

Many scholars have already mentioned this point about the research on Chinese characters errors of foreign students. Among them, [Guo \(2019\)](#) studied the overall characteristics of stroke error types of foreign students outside the Chinese character circle and obtained valuable results: First, the overall characteristics of stroke number error types. Guo Ting believes that the type of stroke count bias features include stroke defect and stroke increase. The second is the characteristics of stroke form errors. The author thinks that the stroke is the stroke form of Chinese characters, and the types of stroke errors related to the stroke form are two types of stroke variation and stroke bias variation. [Feng \(2018\)](#) also summarized the points to be considered in the types of Chinese character errors of foreign students into several types, of which the first type is stroke order errors. Chinese writing has stroke order requirements. Observing table names in class and writing complete Chinese characters, learners are more prone to errors in stroke order and direction; additionally, there is stroke errors. Mistake between single stroke composition and multiple strokes is a very visible category of errors; besides, component errors are also parts of these errors. Component replacement, component increase or decrease, and component replacement are the components of component error.

### **3. Research Methodology**

#### **3.1. Research Participants**

The research participants of this paper are the secondary school students in Yaoundé, Cameroon. In the same perspective, some questionnaires and interviews will be made to Cameroonian secondary school students and Chinese language

teachers.

## 3.2. Research Methods

The research in this paper mainly includes four methods:

### 3.2.1. Literature Research Methods

Literature research mainly includes the following aspects. The first is to read and collect information on the basic situation of Chinese language teaching in Africa, Cameroon and other countries; the second is to read and collect information on the principles of teaching Chinese characters to foreigners, the characteristics of teaching Chinese characters to foreigners, and the methods of teaching Chinese characters to foreigners; the third is to collect and study the problems related to the teaching of Chinese characters to foreign countries.

### 3.2.2. On-the-Spot Investigation Method

The author has practiced in Yaoundé's government secondary schools in Cameroon for several months, and has observed and understood the actual situation of Chinese teaching in Cameroon secondary schools and the actual situation of Chinese characters errors of students through lectures, after-class discussions with teachers and students, etc.

### 3.2.3. Questionnaire Survey Method

In order to further understand the situation of Chinese characters errors in Cameroonian secondary school students, the author designed a questionnaire for Cameroonian Chinese characters errors; this questionnaire is a questionnaire for Cameroonian secondary school students. The author takes the students of the fourth grade of the junior high school in two secondary schools in Yaoundé, Cameroon as the participants of this investigation, and distributed 130 questionnaires in the two classes and recovered 102 valid questionnaires. Through the questionnaire survey of a certain number of participants, first-hand information was collected, analyzed and summarized.

#### 1) Students' Basic Information

The age distribution of the students at the secondary school is 12 - 17 years old, with the largest age group being 13-year-old students (30%). There are fewer boys than girls in the survey (30% boys and 72% girls), and most of the students speak their mother tongue, French is second, and many students find Chinese characters more difficult (70 students), as **Table 1** shows.

#### 2) The Basic Situation of Students' Errors

The questions in this part include: students' interest in Chinese characters, the stroke order of Chinese characters, the strokes of Chinese characters, the problem of writing characters and words according to pinyin, and the problem of writing Chinese characters according to their radicals.

The first to ninth questions are about students' interest in Chinese characters, the importance of Chinese characters in Chinese learning, the importance of Chinese character recognition, reading and writing, their views on the time to

**Table 1.** Analysis of students' basic information.

Attributes of Survey Participants	Quantity	Proportion	Quantity	Percentage
Age	12		6	0.6%
	13		30	30%
	14		18	18%
	15		18	18%
	16		20	20%
	17		10	10%
Gender	Male		30	30%
	Female		72	72%
Native language	Others		65	65%
	French		37	37%
	English		0	0%
Perception of Chinese characters	Very difficult		10	10%
	Relatively difficult		70	70%
	Not difficult		12	12%
	Relatively easy		10	10%
	Easy		0	0%

start learning Chinese characters, the difficulties encountered in learning Chinese characters, Methods of learning Chinese characters, teachers correct students' typos and their understanding of "character creation". The distribution results are as follows:

From the above data in **Table 2**, we can see that most students are more interested in Chinese characters (52%), and many students think Chinese characters are very important in Chinese learning (54 students). There are also many students who think Chinese characters should be taught at the beginning of Chinese language learning (90 students in total), they also agree that the teacher often corrects their stroke order and typos, and they do not understand the concept of "character creation". There are many students who use the method of copying to learn Chinese characters. There are more students who encounter difficulties in writing Chinese characters, and fewer students who encounter difficulties in writing Chinese characters. The remaining questions constitute a test dealing with stroke, stroke order and component errors which is discussed below in the analytic part of the paper.

In a word, students think Chinese characters are interesting but their interest is not that high. They realize the role and importance of Chinese characters and feel that the teaching of Chinese characters should be emphasized at the primary stage. Students mainly use the study of text copying to strengthen their practice of Chinese characters, and hope the teacher will strictly correct their Chinese

**Table 2.** Analysis of the basic situation of students' understanding of Chinese characters.

Questions	Options	Quantity	Percentage
Interest on characters	Very interested	39	39%
	Relatively interested	52	52%
	More or less interested	8	8%
	Not interested	3	3%
The Importance of Chinese Characters in Chinese Learning	Very important	54	54%
	Relatively important	44	44%
	More or less important	4	4%
	Not important	0	0%
The Importance of Chinese Character Recognition, Reading and Writing	Character recognition is important	61	61%
	Writing is important	41	41%
	Do not know	0	0%
The best time to start learning Chinese characters	At the beginning	90	90%
	One month later	10	10%
	Half a year later	1	1%
	One year later	1	1%
Difficulties encountered by students in learning Chinese characters	At the level of strokes	6	6%
	At the level of character order	28	28%
	At the level of wrongly written characters	30	30%
	At the level of homophones	32	32%
	At the level of polyphonic characters	6	6%
	Others	0	0%
Methods used by students to learn characters	Copy text or new words	39	39%
	watch TV or read a book	18	18%
	Using the dictionary	22	22%
	Ask the teacher	8	8%
	Study calligraphy	3	3%
	Study Chinese songs	10	10%
	Others	2	2%
How often does the teachers correct students wrongly written characters	Often correct	90	90%
	Rarely correct	11	11%
	Do not correct	1	1%
How often does the teacher correct the stroke order	Often correct	92	92%
	Rarely correct	9	9%
	Do not correct	1	1%
Students' understanding of "character creation"	Understand	32	32%
	Do not really understand	61	61%
	Do not understand	9	9%

characters errors. In addition, according to the results of the survey, students have a certain knowledge of “character creation”, and they also feel that Chinese characters play a huge role in Chinese teaching.

However, the acquisition of Chinese characters by secondary school students in Cameroon is not ideal. Most students do not have a good grasp of the order of Chinese strokes, the names of strokes, the number of strokes and how to write basic Chinese characters, which makes it easy to confuse different Chinese characters.

### 3.2.4. Interview Method

The author designed an interview outline for Chinese teachers, interviewed some experienced local teachers in Cameroon secondary schools, and collected their evaluation of students’ Chinese characters errors and Chinese characters teaching problems. In order to understand the teaching situation of primary Chinese characters in other regions and secondary schools in Cameroon, the author also interviewed some local Chinese teachers in other cities through telephone interviews and online chats. A total of 10 teachers participated in the interviews.

Among all the Cameroonian teachers who participated in the interviews, there were relatively few teachers who liked Chinese character teaching and had a certain understanding of Chinese character teaching. They think Chinese character classes are difficult to teach, and few students like Chinese character classes. Instead, they prefer classes on phonetics, grammar, culture, and vocabulary. In addition, teachers think that students are not interested in Chinese characters at all, but most teachers insist on teaching Chinese characters to students, especially secondary school students. The difficulties they encounter when teaching Chinese characters are mainly in stroke order, and they usually correct students’ mistakes in Chinese characters very strictly. The main ways that teachers help students to improve their writing accuracy include: let them copy the text, copy the names of strokes, do listening exercises, recite Chinese characters, teach Chinese character radicals, and teach the culture behind Chinese characters, etc. Besides, to help students enjoy their Chinese characters lessons, teachers will often hand out small gifts, sing Chinese songs, use body language, perform, use Chinese character cards, tell stories, etc.

## 4. Research Analysis

### 4.1. Analysis on Types of Writing Errors in Chinese Characters

The 20<sup>th</sup> century famous American linguists *Gass and Selinker (2001)* think that when learning a foreign language, a language system that is different from both the native language and the target language is formed by students’ inaccurate summary and inference of the rules of the target language: here is the definition of an intermediary language. *Corder (2008)*, a famous British linguist emphasizes the definition of a language error from a linguistic perspective and believes that it is a kind of regular error caused by the poor grasp of the target language.



It is completely different from the target language. From this, we can see where the specific language level and level of the speaker occupy.

There are a lot of mistakes in the study of Chinese characters by secondary school students in Cameroon. Through observation, correction of homework, examination papers, and distribution of student questionnaires during the practice stage, the author collected a lot of errors in writing Chinese characters, mainly focusing on errors in strokes, errors in components, and errors in homophones and near-synonyms.

#### 4.1.1. Analysis of Types of Writing Errors in Strokes

In the aspect of learning Chinese characters, strokes are the smallest components of Chinese characters, which are the “bones” of Chinese characters. At the very beginning, learners usually start learning Chinese characters from some basic strokes: “heng”, “shu”, “pie”, “na”, “ti”, and “dian”. Even though they are the smallest components of Chinese language learning, they are the most problematic parts for Cameroonian students. In this part of strokes, the author summarizes three different errors: the error of missing strokes, the error of redundant strokes and the error of stroke length.

##### 1) Missing Stroke Errors

Missing strokes refers to the reduction of strokes or lack of strokes in the process of writing Chinese characters. The main reason for this writing error is that learners are not concerned with the details of Chinese characters, and they are not familiar with the components of Chinese characters, so they are prone to missing words when copying.

From **Table 3**, we can find that the listed stroke biases are all missing biases. The author divides these errors into three different situations: First, the initial strokes. For example: “习” in “学习” is missing a “横”, and “的” in the table is missing a “撇”. Two, end the strokes. For example, the first “谢” in “谢谢” is missing a “点”, and the word “除” is missing a “提” and “点”. Strokes in the middle, for example, “谁” is missing a “撇”, and “们” is missing the middle “竖”.

##### 2) Extra Strokes

Superfluous strokes refer to the situation where strokes or multiple strokes are added in the process of writing Chinese characters. This writing error is also caused by the lack of learners’ attention to the details of Chinese characters and their unfamiliarity with the components of Chinese characters.

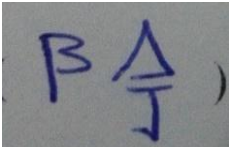
The above biases in **Table 4** are very prominent in the first and second grades of high school. By collecting and analyzing them, The author found that the added strokes that students like very much are “dot” strokes (“点”). For example: “冷” only has “two dots” (“两点水”), but the student has one more “dot”, which is changed to “three dots”; the last part of “吃” has no “dot” but the student has one more dot; “忙” only has one “dot” but students add more than two “dots”; “汉” in Chinese characters does not have a “dot” on it, but students also add it. In addition to “dot”, students are used to adding “横”. For example, “而”

in “而且” adds an unnecessary “横”; the “本” of “课本” adds a “横”.

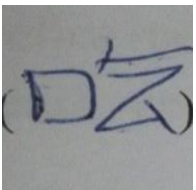
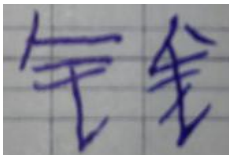
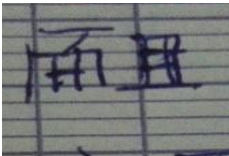
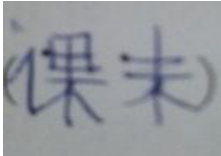
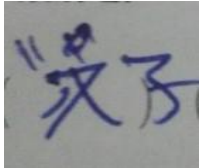
### 3) Wrong Stroke Length

The Chinese character error in this aspect is an error made in the process of writing Chinese characters because students have not yet understood the length of Chinese characters and whether they are in the early stage or not. One of the reasons is that learners do not have a good enough understanding of the length of Chinese strokes and the differences between Chinese characters. In addition to these, students often confuse the three major relationships of separation, connection and intersection between strokes.

**Table 3.** Analysis table of missing strokes for students in the third and fourth grades of junior high school.

Correct Chinese characters	Chinese characters written by students	Correct Chinese characters	Chinese characters written by students
睡觉		的	
学习		明	
们		谢谢	
影		谁	
家人		喜欢	
热		常	
除		高兴	

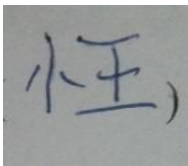

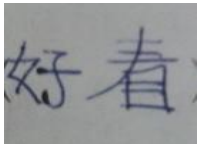
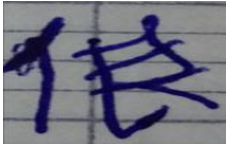
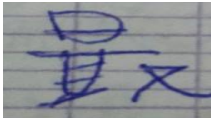
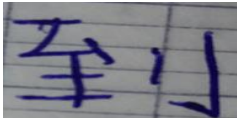
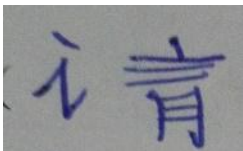
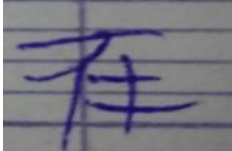
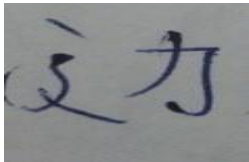
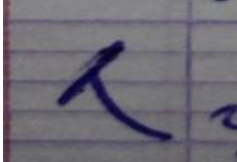
**Table 4.** Analysis of excess strokes of senior first and senior two students.

Correct Chinese characters	Chinese characters written by students	Correct Chinese characters	Chinese characters written by students
冷		吃	
今天		家人	
忙		钱	
而且		课本	
汉字		意	

The above errors shown in **Table 5** are a case of the stroke length deviation in the fourth grade of junior high school. Regarding the case of long strokes, The author has collected different situations. For example: the word “看”, students wrote the stroke “撇” very long, which led to exceed the first stroke “横”; the word “很”, students wrote the strokes “横折” and “竖钩” a little long, resulting in a non-existent Chinese character; the character “男”; students separated the “田” above and the “力” below; the stroke “竖” of the word “到” pushed the “竖” stroke down a little, which caused an error; the case of “在” was no exception: the stroke “竖” exceeded the “土”.

There are also many examples of short strokes, among which are: the stroke “撇” has no prominence in the word “在”; the second and third “竖” in “最” do not originate from the stroke “提”, so they are not well written; The second stroke “竖” of “性” is gone, and the stroke “竖” of “请” has not been pulled down. In general, through the above analysis, it is easy to find that there are more examples of students with long strokes than those with short strokes.

**Table 5.** Analysis table of stroke length and short strokes of junior four students.

Correct Chinese characters	Chinese characters written by students	Correct Chinese characters	Chinese characters written by students
性		男	
好看		很	
最		到	
请		在	
边		人	

#### 4.1.2. Component Error Analysis

##### 1) Component Breakdown Error Analysis

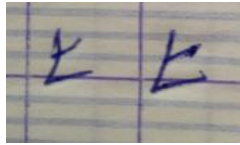
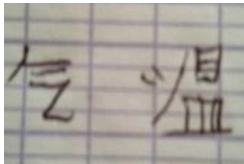
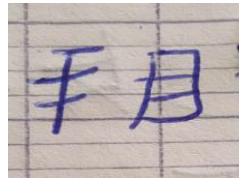
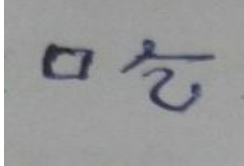
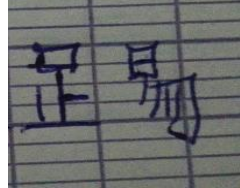
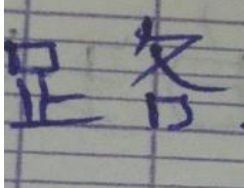
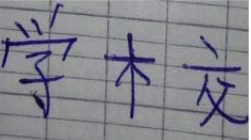
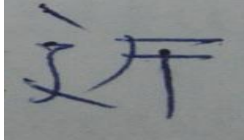
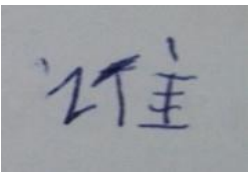
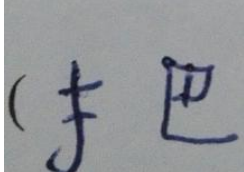
This part of the error refers to the error of dividing the parts that cannot be separated into several parts when writing Chinese characters. The reason for this type of error is that the learner is not familiar with the totality of the good parts, and splits a character into non-existing Chinese character parts, thus causing writing errors.

In addition to the reasons listed above, the author found that another reason for students to disassemble parts is the influence of their mother tongue, that is, students regard the writing of parts as the writing of French letters. Generally speaking, when writing words in Latin languages, they should be written separately, but Cameroonian secondary school students have integrated this habit into Chinese character learning when writing Chinese characters. In addition, the notebooks used by Cameroonian secondary school students are not framed, but line-by-line, which makes it difficult to control their writing style, as **Table 6** reveals.

##### 2) Component Change Error

Component change error means that when writing Chinese characters, the Chinese character components are newly edited or arbitrarily changed into

**Table 6.** Analysis table of component breakdown bias for senior three students.

Correct Chinese characters	Chinese characters written by students	Correct Chinese characters	Chinese characters written by students
比		天气	
看		吃	
踢		路	
学校		近	
谁		把	

components that do not exist in the Chinese character body system. There are many reasons for this error. On the one hand, the font system of Chinese characters is exactly the same as that of Latin languages (French or English, etc.), on the other hand, because Chinese characters themselves are quite rich in components, they are hard to remember.

**Table 7** can be classified into three categories: the reversed components, components written with another character, and characters looking like painting, for example, “谢谢” and “歌” for reversed components, written upside down; the right side of “打” is written with the character “井”, but it should have been the character “丁”, for components written with another Chinese character. The situation where writing Chinese characters is like painting is the most common, such as “谢”, “呢”, “语”, “发”, “包”, “我” and “侯”.

### 3) Mistakes on Characters with Similar or Approximate Sounds

The error in this part refers to the error of mixing and writing Chinese characters with similar pronunciation or almost similar pronunciation when writing Chinese characters. The learners do not have a deep understanding of the

**Table 7.** Analysis table of component change error for junior three students.

Correct Chinese characters	Chinese characters written by students	Correct Chinese characters	Chinese characters written by students
谢谢		谢	
打		唱歌	
呢		语	
侯		书包	
我		发	

relationship between the shape, sound and meaning of Chinese characters, often do not pay attention to the meaning of words, and choose to write the homophones or words that have no meaningful connection.

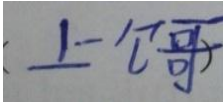
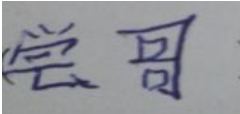
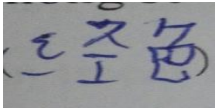
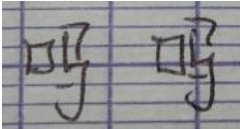
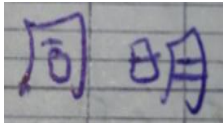
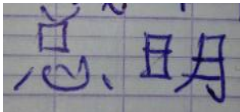
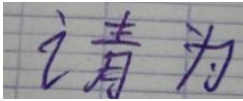
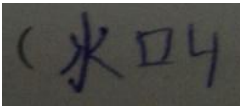
Homonyms in Chinese are divided into three categories. Among them, the syllables, the morphemes, and the homographs will not cause errors in the writing of Chinese characters. Since foreign learners are always “listening ahead, recognizing and reading later” when learning Chinese, foreign Chinese learners are coded as “phonics-meaning-morphology” when dictating Chinese characters, which leads to students hearing this pronunciation and being able to understand what it means, but the memory of Chinese characters is more confused. From **Table 8**, it can be seen that most of the characters are misused near phonetic characters. After the students heard the pronunciation of the words, they did not match the correct morphology, but wrote Chinese characters according to the pronunciation, meaning and shape in their minds.

#### 4.2. Analysis of the Causes of Errors in Chinese Character Writing

Modern Chinese characters are formed on the basis of ancient Chinese characters through the evolution of the shape, pronunciation and meaning of the characters. Although there are many traces of modern Chinese characters that are not easily found when they were originally created, we can still use the “Liu

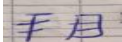
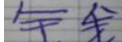



**Table 8.** Error analysis table of homophones and near misspellings for junior four students.

Correct Chinese characters	Chinese characters written by students	Correct Chinese characters	Chinese characters written by students
唱歌		唱歌	
景色		妈妈	
聪明		聪明	
请问		睡觉	

Shu” (六书) theory to analyze the structure of modern Chinese characters to a certain extent. For foreigners, this kind of analysis can arouse their interest in learning Chinese characters so as to understand and memorize Chinese characters. “Liu Shu” (六书) is a theory of analyzing the structure system of Chinese characters based on the Chinese characters before the change of official script, mainly taking seal script as the research object. Character formation is the basis for the generation of Chinese characters. Knowing the formation method of Chinese characters can make it easier to remember the Chinese characters. Because students rarely learn about Chinese characters in Chinese classes, they are very unfamiliar with Chinese characters, so they can only memorize Chinese characters by rote, without any rules.

#### 4.2.1. Lack of Relevant Knowledge about the Relationship between Chinese Strokes

If we want to combine Chinese strokes, we have to follow a certain combination method. The first is separation. The strokes are connected with each other, such as “三”, “八”, “川”; the second is the connection relationship. Strokes and strokes are separated from each other, such as “人”, “上”, “白”; the third is the intersecting relationship. The strokes intersect with each other, such as “十”, “王”, “干”. These are the three basic methods of combining strokes in Chinese characters. In fact, many Chinese characters are composed of the above methods. For example, “书” uses the three methods of separation, connection and intersection. Through the survey, it was found that most of the students did not know much about the relationship between strokes and strokes of Chinese characters, so there were various errors, such as splitting the word “看” into , and writing the word “钱” as . Students also write the

adjoining combination of words as a disjoint combination, for example, write the word “边” as .

#### 4.2.2. Reasons for the General Aspect of Chinese Character Strokes

Component (another name for the radical) is a word-forming component that has the function of assembling Chinese characters according to the combination of strokes. The radicals of Chinese characters can be analyzed differently, and a combined character is often constructed according to two or more radicals. The parts in a Chinese character that can no longer be disassembled are called “basic parts”. For example, the Chinese word “型” is composed of three basic components, “开, 巾, and 土”. Chinese character radicals have two parts: the radicals of formed characters and the radicals of non-formed characters. The word-forming parts refer to those word-forming units that are single characters and can also act as parts, such as “木, 巾, 日, 月” and so on. Non-character components refer to word-forming units other than the word-forming components. Chinese characters are divided into single characters and combined characters. The structures of combined characters are mainly: up and down, left and right, left, middle, right, upper, middle and lower, half-enclosed, fully enclosed, interspersed, mosaic configuration, etc., grasping the relevant knowledge of the combination of Chinese characters will be easier to write Chinese characters. However, the survey showed that most of the students lacked relevant knowledge about the combination of Chinese characters.

#### 4.2.3. Chinese Homophone Problem

Chinese is a sino-tibetan language. It uses limited syllables to express infinite meanings, so there are many homophones. Therefore, many Chinese characters are homophones, but they are written differently. Through investigation, we found that students often make mistakes in other words, such as writing “唱歌” as “上歌” or “上哥”, and writing “妈妈” as “吗吗”.

## 5. Recommendations

### 5.1. Recommendations for the Cameroonian Ministry of Secondary Education

The Ministry of Secondary Education in Cameroon is the “general headquarters” of secondary school teaching in Cameroon, and the development of secondary school teaching is also strictly implemented in accordance with the relevant documents and policies of the Ministry of Secondary Education. Only the “top-level design” of the Ministry of Secondary Education can truly improve the teaching of Chinese characters in Cameroonian secondary schools. The following are some suggestions for the Ministry of Secondary Education:

#### 5.1.1. Moderately Increasing Chinese Class Hours

When the author interviewed some secondary school teachers in Yaoundé, he learned that the Chinese syllabus of the Cameroonian Ministry of Secondary



Education is not well designed. Many teachers complained that it especially advocates grammar teaching, and the time for grammar teaching is much more than that for Chinese characters. Therefore, teachers have only half an hour to teach Chinese characters in a week, which leaves them no time to practice Chinese characters. Therefore, it is suggested that the Ministry of Secondary Education consider increasing the time for Chinese teaching, so that teachers and students can consolidate and learn Chinese characters within a certain period of time.

### **5.1.2. Increasing the Content of Chinese Character Teaching in the Chinese Syllabus for Secondary School**

Each grade of Cameroonian secondary school has its own Chinese teaching syllabus, but there are many problems in the syllabus, which is inconsistent with the current situation of Chinese. The idea of the Cameroon Chinese syllabus is based on other languages (such as German, Spanish, Italian, Arabic) and other foreign languages, that is to say, its content and form are mainly based on these languages, and for students coming Speaking these Latin languages is not as difficult as Chinese (for example, German and French or English have the same alphabet), it is not a problem for students, they will not take too long to learn. However, Chinese characters are completely different from the students' native language, and there is a big difference. They must take a long time to learn Chinese characters.

At present, the Chinese teaching syllabus of secondary schools in Cameroon does not fully consider the characteristics of Chinese teaching, and there is a lack of scientific research related to Chinese teaching. Therefore, it is believed that the Ministry of Education of my country needs to adjust the syllabus appropriately according to the characteristics of Chinese. The Ministry of Education should compare the official language and Chinese, find out their differences, and cooperate with the national Confucius Institute to produce a complete and effective secondary school syllabus to better serve Cameroonian secondary school Chinese teaching.

The Chinese syllabus of Cameroonian secondary schools is divided into text teaching and grammar teaching, and does not focus on the teaching of Chinese characters. This situation has led to local teachers not knowing which Chinese characters to teach, or which Chinese characters to teach first and which ones to teach later. Most local teachers only let students copy Chinese characters and memorize stroke order in the teaching process, and the basic knowledge of Chinese characters is rarely involved. In order to allow local teachers to have a definite target in the teaching process and have rules to follow, it is suggested that the content of Chinese character teaching should be added to the Chinese syllabus for secondary schools.

### **5.1.3. Holding Chinese Character Teaching Method Related Training or Chinese Character Teaching Lecture**

In order to better carry out the teaching of Chinese characters, it is suggested

that the Ministry of Secondary Education of Cameroon and the Confucius Institute at the University of Yaoundé II in Cameroon cooperate, and regularly conduct teaching training for local Chinese teachers, including training related to Chinese character teaching methods or Chinese character teaching lectures, so as to continuously improve the local Chinese language and the professional level of the teacher.

## **5.2. Recommendations for Local Chinese Teachers**

### **5.2.1. Teaching Chinese Characters According to the Systematicness of Chinese Characters**

When interviewing teachers, the author found that many students find Chinese characters difficult. One of the reasons is that there is no mature teaching method for Chinese language teaching in Cameroon. Chinese characters are ideographic characters, and they are very systematic. When teaching Chinese characters, if someone can master the system of shape, sound and meaning, it is easier to get better results.

When learning Chinese characters, students need to master some rules, from simple Chinese characters to complex Chinese characters, from strokes, stroke order to parts, and then to whole characters. At the same time, we should also pay attention to the explanation of the basic radicals. For example, “水” is a character and a word. We can also use it to make other characters, and turn it into a radical called “三点水” and put it in another Chinese character part. In front of the character: 河, 汗, 泡, 流, 泪, 温, 泌, 汕, 油, and 泼, these Chinese characters are all beside the three dots of water (三点水), indicating that these words are related to water. Teachers should teach students the composition and cognitive laws of Chinese characters. Some people think that there are no rules in Chinese characters, and learning Chinese characters requires more writing and more practice, because only practice makes perfect, this view is biased.

In addition, Chinese character teaching can also understand the role of Chinese characters in Chinese culture and society from a historical perspective, which can help students memorize the Chinese characters to be learned quickly. In the whole process of Chinese character teaching, Chinese teachers should teach students systematic Chinese character theory and cultural knowledge, so that students can have an overall and systematic understanding of Chinese characters.

### **5.2.2. Teaching Chinese Characters According to the Interest of Chinese Characters**

From the teacher interviews, we can find that only a few Chinese teachers think that students are interested in Chinese characters. Therefore, the author believes that in order to attract students' interest in Chinese characters, teachers can teach according to the interest of Chinese characters. Although Chinese characters are recognized as the most difficult characters, their historical development

and evolution, from knotting events to today's simplified characters, many Chinese characters have ingenious stories, which makes many Chinese characters very interesting. Knowing this, Chinese teachers should be familiar with these short stories of Chinese characters, and can use drawing when teaching pictographic characters, such as “水” (picture of the earliest word for water), “山” (picture of the earliest word for mountain), many Chinese characters. The composition is also very interesting, and teachers can use this to motivate students to memorize relevant Chinese characters faster and easier, such as “好” (a woman and a man are together, there will be a good life) “家” (there is a pig in the house, which is a symbol of a wealthy family) “嫁” (give a woman a home) “娶” (go to the woman's house and take the woman away).

Chinese language teachers should use more interesting classroom activities when teaching Chinese characters. In addition to teaching students the rules of Chinese characters, teachers should also repeatedly practice activities. Through related Chinese character activities, students can not only master the rules of Chinese characters they have learned, but also arouse the enthusiasm of students to learn Chinese characters, so that they can relax and enjoy Chinese characters.

When many Chinese language beginners see Chinese characters, their first impression is that a character is a picture, so teachers can use this impression in the initial stage of students' learning of Chinese characters to make students interested in Chinese characters as soon as possible. Teaching Chinese characters should be a fun, and learning Chinese characters should also be a fun. Chinese character classes should have a happy environment. Taking advantage of the interest for Chinese characters will make the teaching of Chinese characters more effective.

### **5.2.3. Establishing Chinese Character Strokes and Stroke Order**

Many grades have stroke errors, and the stroke errors are regarded as their common ground. Because strokes and stroke order are the basis for learning Chinese characters, the present paper thinks teachers should emphasize this point very much. In addition to introducing students to the structure and laws of Chinese characters, teachers should also make students master the correct learning methods, and establish students' understanding of Chinese character strokes and stroke order in the early stages of learning Chinese. Teachers should first talk about the most basic structure, such as stroke type, name, writing direction and method, the connection method of strokes, the order of strokes and the establishment of component concepts. These basic structures can help students slowly build up the correct thinking for writing Chinese characters. The basic stage of learning Chinese characters is very important. Teachers should explain the strokes and stroke order of Chinese characters to learners from the third grade of junior high school. Learning the strokes and stroke order of Chinese characters not only allows students to remember the names of strokes and the order of strokes, it also helps students to write characters, words and even articles correctly and quickly.

### 5.3. Recommendations for Students

#### 5.3.1. Cultivating the Habit of Writing Chinese Characters

Words in Cameroonian languages only have the phonetic function, which is just limited at the level of spelling. To record a text, one only needs to spell out the corresponding letters according to the pronunciation and arrange them in a linear manner, while the Chinese text has two functions of sound and shape, which must be in the form of a square. Since elementary school, students in Cameroon have begun to write linear characters, forming the habit of linear writing. Therefore, Cameroonian secondary school students will encounter many difficulties in the process of learning Chinese. The transition from linear to square requires time and Chinese thinking. There is still a long way to go in secondary school. Some students choose to learn Chinese because of curiosity. They discovered the difficulties of Chinese only when they went to the Chinese class. During an internship in secondary schools, the author found that students like Pinyin very much. When one writes on the blackboard they always say “please write the pinyin on the Chinese characters” because they are already familiar with the pinyin script. There are some words they can speak, but can’t read or write. It is difficult for students to master Chinese characters, which has a lot to do with their writing habits. Therefore, in the usual Chinese learning, students should carefully copy the texts, new words, sentences, etc. in the classroom, do more exercises in Chinese characters, and constantly cultivate their ability to write Chinese characters.

#### 5.3.2. Strictly Following the Writing Order of Chinese Strokes

When analyzing the students’ errors, the author mentioned that some students regard writing Chinese characters as drawing. The most important reason why students “draw” is that they have not yet grasped the basic order of writing. There are certain stroke order and stroke order rules for writing Chinese characters, such as horizontal and vertical, left to right, top to bottom, middle and then both sides, etc. If students can strictly follow Chinese characters when writing Chinese characters, the order in which the strokes are written can form cognition of Chinese characters and develop good writing habits.

In addition, a word is not necessarily a word, but a word is generally composed of two words. Teaching Chinese characters starting from a single character is the way many teachers are now using them. Understanding words and forming vocabulary has many uses. Due to the complexity of Chinese characters, its teaching has such a process: first, teach students the basic knowledge of Chinese characters, strokes and stroke order, so that they have a deep understanding of how to write a character stroke by stroke, then the next stage is to write characters, and finally to write words. This Chinese character teaching path is actually in line with the rules of teaching, which is also a teaching strategy from simple to difficult. Learning Chinese characters step by step will gradually fill the learner’s mind with the logic established by Chinese characters. For example, the word “题” is built up from two words, which are the word “是” plus “页”. word,

so it is 是 + 页 = 题. There are many words in Chinese with the same way of establishment: 王 + 见 = “现”, 句 + 多 = “够”, 京 + 尤 = “就”.

### 5.3.3. Repeated Dictation

Generally, students do not practice Chinese characters after class, but spend more time on pronunciation, listening and speaking practice. If they can pay attention to Chinese characters and learn Chinese characters by themselves, they can make up for the blank of Chinese writing. Students can try to write Chinese characters repeatedly every day. At the beginning, they may find Chinese characters difficult, but after a period of persistence, they will gradually find that writing Chinese characters is actually very easy. If students can master the composition and rules of Chinese characters, they can know its strokes and stroke order, and then they can learn any characters. To encourage students to repeat the dictation of Chinese characters, teachers can give them some homework, such as copying the newly learned Chinese characters five times when they go home. Another way is that teachers can dictate every time they are in class, which is also a review activity. There is no fixed way to learn Chinese characters, the main thing is to adopt appropriate methods and develop good habits. Teachers should encourage students to study and review continuously every day.

## 6. Conclusion

Through the analysis of the different writing errors made by students, it is confirmed that the teaching of Chinese characters for secondary school students in Cameroon is the most difficult content in Chinese teaching and reasons for the deficiency. It can be stated that there are many contradictions that need to be resolved as soon as possible in Cameroonian secondary school students' Chinese character learning and teaching strategies. The author should take appropriate measures to improve the current situation of Chinese character teaching in Cameroon. The strategies that can be adopted are: Chinese teachers who have good knowledge of Chinese characters rely on the interest of Chinese characters to teach Chinese characters, establish Chinese character strokes and stroke order, and use repeated dictation to consolidate them. The problems existing in Chinese characters teaching in Cameroon secondary schools are not only because the students are not good at learning, but also because there are many imperfections in the teaching strategies of the teachers. When the author was talking with some teachers, he found that there were some people who couldn't tell the difference between Chinese character teaching and vocabulary teaching. Secondary school teachers all said that they neglected Chinese characters teaching because the content to be taught in a school year was too many and complex, and there was not enough time for Chinese characters teaching, which needs to be coordinated by the Cameroonian Ministry of Education. Who is to blame for the poor level of Chinese character learning of secondary school students? Judging from the perspective of pedagogy, we have a very clear view on this issue, just like the Greek educator Comenius said: “Students who do not learn well are not as bad

as teachers who do not teach well”. This requires our Chinese teachers not to shirk their responsibilities and actively explore appropriate Chinese teaching methods. In addition, students should also take a proactive attitude to learn Chinese characters.

### Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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