

## **An Error Analysis of the Acquisition of Chinese Modal Verbs by Sri Lankan Students**

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Chinese is one of the most spoken language in the world next to English. Every sound in Chinese phonetic transcription system pinyin has four distinct pronunciations and its characters and grammar is also considered as difficult to learn. In addition, syntactical structures among modal verbs in Chinese consist of complex grammar patterns. The purpose of this study is to examine the common errors made by the Chinese learners of the University of Kelaniya when using ten modal verbs *hui, neng, yao, xiang, keneng, yuanying, yinggai, keyi, gai, and de*. The significance of this study has implications for both the Chinese learning students and for the Chinese language teachers who will be able to recognize the common errors in using modal verbs. Teachers have the opportunity to improve their teaching methodology, learning materials as well as new strategies in lesson planning to avoid the identified errors and to facilitate the effective learning of Modal Verbs in teaching Chinese. Data was collected through the distribution of questionnaires among both students and teachers, classroom observations and semi structured interview sessions. According to the above survey, the common errors made by the students in using modal verbs in learning Chinese were identified. These errors types consist of omission, redundancy, word order and misuse, justifying the theory that the modal verbs are ahead of functional category. Furthermore, the study indicated that the reason behind the commonly made errors of using modal verbs was the negative transfer of the learners' mother tongue as well as learning strategies, teaching methodology, teaching materials.

**Keywords:** *Sri Lankan students, grammar, Chinese, modal verbs, error Analysis*

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