China English in Cross-cultural Communication
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Abstract: Due to different linguistic, literary conventions, cultural backgrounds and social environments, the nativization of English in China has evolved into a special variety—China English, which takes the Standard English as the core and the Chinese cultural elements as the content. It can spread the Chinese culture, and at the same time, it can enrich the contents of English language. China English has experienced three stages in its development: Pidgin English, Chinglish, China English. China English, as a product of cross-cultural communication, has a great influence on cross-cultural communication.

1. Introduction

Nowadays English is the most widely used language in the world. Its globalization will inevitably lead to localization. Consequently, English has formed a lot of varieties in the whole world, such as India English, Singapore English, and Australian English and so on. China English is a special variety with Chinese characteristics which occurs in the process of the nativization of English. With the influence of localization, it brings up a lot of changes, such as vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammar, and this makes a difference between China English and Standard English. What is more, a lot of people cannot draw a distinction between China English and Chinglish accurately. They tend to confuse the two issues. In fact, there are plenty of different substantial elements that stand between them. China English is a kind of English variant accepted by Standard English, it has the active meaning for English learning and cross-cultural communication. However, Chinglish is the bottleneck which slows down English studies. It is not conformed to the accepted English expressing rules and influenced by individuals.

2. The definition of China English

In 1980, the concept of China English was first proposed by Ge Chuangui in his article A Talk on Chinese-English Translation. However, he did not define what “China English” is. He just simply talked about the differences between Chinese English and China English. He said, "English is the language of the English people. The other people who speak English should certainly follow the idiomatic ways of the English people. However, each nation has its own peculiarities. So far as our nation is concerned, no matter whether it is before or after liberation, there are some typical Chinese things to express in written or oral English", such as “Four Books”, “Five Classics”, “eight-legged essay”, “Hanlinyuan”, “Four modernization” and so on. In his opinion, the existence of China English is inevitable, but it is to express things typical of China and can be understood by foreigners after some explanation, and, most importantly, to be constructed on the basis of following the idiomatic ways of the English people. However, each nation has its own peculiarities. So far as our nation is concerned, no matter whether it is before or after liberation, there are some typical Chinese things to express in written or oral English", such as “Four Books”, “Five Classics”, “eight-legged essay”, “Hanlinyuan”, “Four modernization” and so on. In his opinion, the existence of China English is inevitable, but it is to express things typical of China and can be understood by foreigners after some explanation, and, most importantly, to be constructed on the basis of following the idiomatic ways of the English people. However, from this article written by Professor Ge, we still cannot get the exact answer about the definition of China English.

In 1988, Huang Jinqui published an article entitled A Positive Attitude to Chinese English. In the article, he pointed out that it was not always a bad thing for Chinese to influence foreign languages in the process of translation because the language influence could be both negative and positive. He took the view that Chinese-colored English firstly was right and then with Chinese characteristics, and it adapted to Chinese civilization and thought and enriched English. He did not define the China English but referred to some characteristics of China English.
In 1989 Sun Li in his article Research of English Varieties and English in China introduced the use of English in the world scope and researches of English varieties by foreign scholars, and then he showed his ideas on some questions like the use of English in China, English of Chinese people and combination of English and China. He also set up three standards for China English: intelligibility, acceptability and identifiability. He appealed to make native people of English accept English used in China.

Subsequently, on the basis of the above articles, Wang Rongpei (1991), Li Wenzhong (1993), Zhang Peicheng (1995) and other scholars made a more detailed analysis of China English. Among them, Professor Wang Rongpei first define the China English, he put forward the view that China English is a kind of English with Chinese characteristics which is used in China mainland and based on Standard English. It is an objective existence. And the similar concept was proposed by the other scholars later.

In general, China English is a kind of English Varieties with Chinese characteristics, based on Standard English. Expressing particular things in Chinese culture, China English is Standard English, which is formed by transliteration, translation and semantic regeneration and not interfered by Chinese.

3. The differences and connections between China English and Chinglish

With the expanding of China English, there are more and more people starting to note it. However, it is tempting to think of China English as Chinglish. Few people can state the distinction between China English and Chinglish clearly and directly. However, as a matter of fact, there are a lot of differences between them. Therefore, it is necessary to make a comparison of them. The second part will analyze the differences and connections between China English and Chinglish so that we can make a better understanding of China English.

3.1 Differences

China English and Chinglish seem the same, but in fact it is not so. China English is a kind of English variant accepted by Standard English, it has the active meaning for English learning and international interflow. However, Chinglish is abnormal English and it gets in way in cross-cultural communication. It is a kind of slovenly English expressed in oral or written form. Chinglish is a contraction of “Chinese” and “English”. It does not meet English regulations and habits. The speakers’ thinking mode, expressing methods, the choice and collocation of vocabulary are all Chinese-style. It is a result of word-for-word translation and mechanical translation. Xie Shengliang made such a definition for Chinglish: Chinglish, also called Chinese English, refers to spoken and written English language that is influenced by Chinese language. It is a distorted and freaky language commonly described as ungrammatical and nonsensical English in Chinese context and it may have derogatory and depreciating connotations. Chinglish usually belongs to wrong English or morbid English used only by Chinese natives. Hence, both China English and Chinglish are English used among Chinese people, but pertain to different variants of English, enjoying particular characteristics relevant to Chinese language and culture. Li Wenzhong went even further to point out the difference between China English and Chinglish. He said, “China English, mainly used as an international language in China, with Chinese borrowings, localized lexicology as well as unique syntax and discourse structure as its major features, contributes much to the international communication. In contrast, Chinglish refers to the Sinicized English usually found in pronunciation, lexicology and syntax, due to the linguistic transfer or "the arbitrary translation" by the Chinese English learners, thus being regarded as an unaccepted form of English. There is fundamental distinction between China English and Chinglish, while the two is inter-related in some aspects. The former is considered as an accepted variety, contributing much to enriching the English language; the latter, not commonly used, causes barriers and misunderstandings in
communication. The research of China English is of great significance both in Linguistics and in the opening process in China.

Professor Wang Nongsheng thinks that Chinglish is one of the major problems affecting the quality of Chinese-English translation. He made a list of the existing problems in Chinglish:

1. Errors of expression's collocation. For example, "the letter writes" should be modified to "the letter reads"; "make achievements" should be modified to "score/attain achievements"; "successor to the revolution" should be modified to "revolutionary successor".

2. Fussy, duplication and repetition. In the sentence "To promote the development of the China-US relations, China needs to know the US better and (the US also needs to know China better)", the words "the development of" are redundant and the words in bracket should be replaced with "vice versa".

3. Too much modifiers. For example, in the phrase "completely smash", the meaning of "smash" is "break completely", so the word "completely" is redundant.

4. Improper ellipsis. For example, in the sentence "It cannot be avoided even if people want", "avoid it" must be added at the end of the sentence.

5. Improper personification. In the sentence "Innovation is the soul of a nation's progress", the word "soul" is to describe the living beings. However, the word "innovation" is to describe the inanimate thing. So the sentence should be modified to "Innovation sustains the progress of a nation".

From the above, we may reasonably draw a conclusion that Chinglish is not equal to the China English. There are a lot of errors in it and it is often regarded as a nuisance to the pure English for its nonconformity with the accepted English expressing rules. On the contrary, China English conforms to the rules and requirements of the Standard English. Therefore, it rarely has any of the problems mentioned above. That is why China English can be accepted at home and abroad. In a word, we should make the most of China English and try to avoid using Chinglish.

3.2 Connections

Of course, nothing is absolute. From the perspective of second language acquisition theories, Chinglish belongs to inter-language. China English and Chinglish are both used by Chinese people, and they both involve a great deal of cultural and language transfer of Chinese. The distinction between China English and Chinglish is pretty muddied. You will see that they blur into each other at times. Nowadays China gets stronger and wealthier, and with the influence of the political and economic changes and the development of science and technology, the foreign exchange of language cultural changes with it and the international status of Chinglish improve continuously. It is warmly received by more and more people, and some foreigners even think that it has a special charm. Some Chinglish is gradually transformed into China English. According to the statistics of Global Language Monitor in 2005, 20% of the new added English words are concerned with Chinglish. In the top ten global catchwords of 2005, 2006 and 2007, Chinglish is on it for the third year in a row. It reflects the influence and function of Chinglish. Many such “Chinglish” words have entered the dictionary of the English language, and they gradually become Standard English. We can also call it “China English”. That is to say, Chinglish is the transition phase of China English. However, not all of the Chinglish can transfer into China English. Only if Chinglish is widely accepted would be called China English. And this part of Chinglish can also play a positive role in cross-cultural communication. It is of great significance to the communication of Chinese language culture and to the participation of the fast-developing China in the construction of the multicultural system of the world.

4. The Significance of China English in Cross-cultural Communication

According to Lu Hongyan and Zhang Ni, cross-cultural communication refers to communication between native and non-native speakers also refers to communication among people who shares
different language and cultural backgrounds. Of course, the former has been the main concern of Linguistics and language research sector. And cross-cultural communication has a practical significance on research and exploration for foreign language teaching for us. Its purpose is to raise awareness about cultural differences in order to be able to adapt to different cultural environments. It mainly studies: the definition of culture and its characteristics, the definition and characteristics of communication, as well as the relationship between culture and communication. Many Chinese have always been convincing we should learn the culture of American and British so that we can better understand their culture to achieve better communication, but this kind of communication is not equal. And the way Chinese people are learning is putting them in a lower position. Therefore, we need to make full research on the functions of China English in cross-cultural communication and analyze its significance from different points. With the popularity of English in China and the formation of Chinese characteristics, the culture of English and the world can be enriched and developed. With the development of economy, politics, cultural and society of China, and as a result of international promotion, it is bound to cause more wordings with Chinese characteristics being translated into foreign language. This makes the foreign language affected by Chinese gradually. The third part will analyze the significance of China English in four areas: English language teaching, the spread of Chinese culture, the combination of Chinese and Western thoughts and the expansion of English vocabularies.

### 4.1 In English language teaching

Just as the purpose of China daily—“Connecting China, connecting the world”. It is also the orientation of English language teaching. According to Zhou Yufeng (2007), she pointed out that China English is an inevitable English phenomenon for Chinese people in the process of learning English. The objective existence of China English indicates that Chinese people speak or write English in the way specific to China with the features shown at linguistic levels: phonology, lexis, syntax and discourse. Therefore, the intensive study of China English can help improve the efficiency of learning English and can make a better combination of English thinking and that of Chinese in the process of learning English. It can also change the traditional attitude to consider China English as the pollution to "standard" English. Similarly, China English will be helpful for Chinese people to learn other foreign languages. Therefore, on the basis of the introduction of English national culture, English course can properly increase some articles with Chinese characteristics. Not only can it raise the interest of learning English, but also it can enrich teaching content and improve high class efficiency. And there is no doubt that in this way, we can also promote and expand the exchange abroad of the Chinese culture.

### 4.2 In the spread of Chinese culture

The formation of China English is benefit to spread Chinese culture and improve the knowledge of China amongst foreigners. In 1871, Edward B. Tylor stated the precise meaning of culture in his book, Primitive Culture. He said that culture is "that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, law, morals, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society." Because of the specific region, history, tradition, and the form of social organization in China, it leads to the emergence of splendid Chinese culture. What is more, China is a multi-ethnic country where many ethnic groups coexist and different cultures intermingle. In the process of the constant communication, integration and consolidation, it gradually formed its own unique cultural traditions and cultural patterns, such as tea culture, wine culture, food culture and costume culture.

China English makes a great contribution to define Chinese unique culture and spread Chinese culture. For example, “Having tea in the morning” is an important part of Guangdong tea culture with its uniqueness. And “Dianxin” is the most representative food in the morning tea. However, “Dianxin” was translated into pastry, dessert and some other words in the early. Nonetheless, in
China English, “Dianxin” is translated into “dim sum” by directly transliterating. This reflects the difference between Western dessert and Guangdong Dianxin. And it also shows that Chinese food has its uniqueness. This can be expressed fully by China English. Take another example, “Tai Ji” has been translated into “shadowboxing”. In the west, the meaning of shadowboxing is sparring with an imaginary opponent for exercise or training. However, it is quite different from the meaning of Tai Ji in China. Afterwards, it is translated into “Tai Chi” by directly transliterating. In this way, it can express the far-reaching significance of Tai Ji very well. It is benefit to differentiate the two concepts between Tai Ji and shadowboxing, and it is also propitious to the spread of Tai Ji at home and abroad. Because of the different values and culture background from the western countries, the improper translation of some words frequently leads to foreigners’ misunderstanding of Chinese culture. With the increasing of the communication between international and cooperation, China English is widely used in translation. This makes more and more foreigners authentically know more about Chinese culture.

4.3 In the combination of Chinese and Western thoughts

China English is beneficial for the combination of Chinese and Western thoughts. The historical and cultural origin of China is quite different from the western countries. On one hand, Chinese people believe in the doctrine of Confucius and Mencius. However, the western countries worship the philosophy of Aristotle. On the other hand, the philosophy of China is combined with the humanities, but the philosophy of the western countries is combined with natural science. As a result, the Chinese mode of thinking is different from the western countries.

In recent years, the western countries put more emphasis on the eastern philosophy. Some western scholars think that the philosophy of China has lasted so long with profound truth. And it can play a positive role in the western philosophy if they can make a deeply research for the eastern philosophy. Therefore, “The Analects of Confucius”, “The Doctrine of the Mean”, “The Great Learning” and some other ancient books are highly praised by the overseas scholars. In the English translation of these books, China English becomes a remarkable characteristic. China English is conducive to the exploration and discussion of Chinese philosophy by western scholars, and it is also benefit to the philosophy of China reach out to the world.

4.4 In the expansion of English vocabularies

English is an open language, it assimilate a great deal of different language factors. And this is also the reason that English can be widely used in the worldwide. Greek, French, Spanish and many other languages are all contributed to the expansion of English vocabularies. According to information statistics, there is about 80% borrowed words in English vocabularies. Among it, French accounts for the biggest proportion, it is about 30%. At the same time, Chinese also accounts for a big proportion, it is about 10%. It is obvious to see that Chinese plays an important role in the improvement of English. By the statistics, in the Oxford English Dictionary, there are more than one thousand words from Chinese. This illustrates that English has a deeply influenced by Chinese, and it absorb the Chinese elements constantly. A lot of English words and phrases are borrowed from Chinese. From the point of semantics, we can divide it into nineteen classes: food and drink, biological names, geographic name, art, religion and philosophy, government and politics, race, occupation and identity, metrology and currency, language writing, dynasty, garment, entertainment, association and organization, martial arts, medicine, economics, geology, color and so on.

On the other hand, China English greatly enrich the original meaning of English words and extend their significance. Take the sentence “snakes are mixed up with dragons” for an example, in English, “dragon” usually refers to a kind of animals with flaming skill and it also symbolizes evil and violence. With the deepening of international exchanges, the foreign readers begin to understand the meaning of Chinese dragon. Dragon is a symbol of holy, dignity, rarity, and the national spirit. Under the influence of China English, the foreign readers gradually reduce the
prejudice of Chinese culture. For another example, “red” is the worship of color in Chinese culture, it reflects the pursuit of spirit and material, and it is also the simple of auspicious and festive. On the contrary, “white” is the worship of color in western culture. They think that it is a simple of pure and elegant. In their eyes, “red” is a bad word with a strong derogatory sense. It evokes fire and blood, and it is a symbol of violence, danger and dissolution. These can be reflected in many English phrases, such as “The red rules of tooth and claw”, “red revenge”, “a red flag”, “red alert”, and “a red light district”. However, through the culture communication between Chinese and western, the westerners expand their understanding of the color. Due to the differences between Chinese and western culture, it will lead to a lot of misunderstanding. To solve this problem, China English plays a big role in it. Of course, there are many examples of not more than said. This is a solid proof that China English greatly enrich the original meaning of English words and extend their significance. In the future, with the abundance and development of Chinese culture, there will be more China English entering into English vocabularies.

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5. Conclusion

From what we have discussed above, we may reasonably draw a conclusion that China English is an objective existence. It is caused by a variety of reasons, including history, politics, culture and ideology. As a result, it is complex but profound with high cultural value. As a language variety, the rationality, necessity as well as the importance of china English in cross-cultural communication has been widely accepted by academic circles. With economy performing and global integration quickening, the use of English around the world is becoming more and more popular. Of course, the same is true with China. However, when we learn foreign culture, we should pay attention to the promotion and improvement of our culture at the same time. Therefore, there’s no doubt that we should try our best to make full use of China English in different ways, and then go into action actively. Based on the American and British Standard English, we should integrate China English into the Chinese characteristics, and then maximize its role and leverage the value of it. In a word, China English is playing an important role in cross-cultural communication increasingly. It has a promising prospect and a great research value.

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