

Analysis on Linguistic Features of China English and Its Implications for English Teaching

Huan WANG^{1,a}, Ming OUYANG^{2,b} and Jian-Hua JIANG^{3,c,*}

¹College of Foreign Languages, Jilin Agricultural University, Changchun, China

²School of Foreign Language Education, Jilin University, Changchun, China

³School of Management Science and Information Engineering, Jilin University of Finance and Economics, Changchun, China

^a767298149@qq.com, ^b1009534655@qq.com, ^cjjh@jlufe.edu.cn

*Corresponding author.

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Abstract. The globalization of English has caused the localization of native English and the concept of “China English” has been proposed. As a member of big English family, China English has attracted many scholars’ interest at home and abroad. The purpose of this article is to confirm the objective existence of China English and find out the implication for English teaching and learning by analyzing linguistic features of China English including features at the lexical level, the syntactic level and the discorsal level.

Introduction

English is the widely used language in the world. It is not only as a possession of a particular nation, but a neutral communication medium. The globalization of English certainly has caused its localization, resulting in different varieties of English with regional and cultural characteristics. According to Kachru (1990), World English is divided into three circle: the inner circle, the outer circle and the expanding circle. He explains his model as follows: the inner circle represents the norm-proving, including countries where English is used by native speakers (ENL), like USA, UK and Australia. The outer circle stands for the norm- developing, English as the second language (ESL) in the countries which have experienced colonization in the history, including Indian, Nigeria and Singapore. The expanding circle is the norm-dependant. English as the foreign language (EFL) in those countries, including China, Japan and Egypt. Ge Chuangui (1980) first introduced the term of China English in the article “*On some Problems in Han-English Translation*”. He points out: “English is the language of English speaking countries. Anyone outside the countries have to follow English usage when they are speaking English. However, every country has its own condition. As for our country, no matter where in old or new China, there are always something with Chinese unique characteristics, which is needed to express when they are speaking or writing English”. This paper aims to confirm the objective existence of China English and find out the implication for English teaching and learning by analyzing linguistic features of China English including features at the lexical level, the syntactic level and the discorsal level.

Linguistic Features of China English

The Features of China English at the Lexical Level

The lexis of China English refers to the vocabulary reflecting the particular and typical things in China and expressing the Chinese thinking patterns. And the lexis become the strong confirmation of existence of China English in many present articles involving the study of China English so that a larger proportion of research on studying the lexical features of China English have been conducted

than any other linguistic features of China English. According to the definition of China English summarized in this article, the lexis of China English expresses the particular existence in all fields of China by special expressing with Chinese thinking patterns through the ways of transliteration, semantic shift, loan translation and loan blend.

Transliteration

Transliteration is the most widely used to translate the Chinese items into English, which means the use of first language (L1) lexical items in second language (L2) without any changes of the form. Based on the study of Jian Yang (2005), transliteration as the morphemic importation without substitution, which means the application of ‘Chinese terms’ spelling in Pinyin rather than the introduction of a particular Chinese term. This article will summarize transliteration into the transliteration of geographical names, historical and cultural field, political and economic field, and field of life with examples as following.

1. About geographical names
Hunan, Hebei, Henan, Shanghai, Shangdong, Yunnan, Fuzhou, Guangdong, Guangzhou.
2. About history and cultures
Qixi, Yuanxiao, Kungfu, Xiucui, Putonghua, Fenghuang.
3. About politics and economy
Dayuejing, silk road, industrial park, RMB, yuan, jiao, fen, The Belt and Road.
4. About life (food, clothing, shelter and transportation)
Jiaozi, baozi, tea, changsam, qipao, litchi.

Some lexis of China English have been accepted by native speakers in English-speaking countries. Some lexis mentioned largely keep Chinese characteristics, resulting some foreigners have difficulty in understanding the meaning of lexis of China English. When using the way of transliteration, users need to adopt different interpretations and notes to introduce the unique things into China and Chinese cultures based on the level of knowing China and Chinese culture.

Semantic Shift

New English can not only be generated, but also the meaning of original words can be changed. The meaning of some expressions is narrowed to have a special meaning, while the meaning of some expressions is broaden. Some expressions which represent positive things may imprint with negative feelings. The semantic shift words are given new meaning in Chinese context.

There are many typical words of China English with semantic characteristics. For example, “bad eggs” only has its literal meaning in English-speaking countries for native speakers, while it means a bad person in China. Dragon refers to a scary and violent animal in English-speaking countries. But now more and more foreigners begin to understand the meaning of Dragon in Chinese culture. Dragon is already included in China English. Therefore, based on the definition of China English mentioned above, Birds Nest can be regarded as China English.

Loan Translation

Loan translation means translate Chinese terms into English words in a word-to-word way and thus create new meaning. The translation of semantic components of a Chinese term is literally equal to its English translation. There are three major types of loan translation with examples shown as followings:

The first is the loan translation with Chinese borrowings. Such as the Silk Road Economic Belt, the Ancient Tea and Horse Road, China’s Tibet Autonomous Region, Chinese calendar, China Town, Chinese cabbage. From these examples, it clearly shows that Chinese has strong ability to create lexis of China English with particular things in China. China has built The Belt and Road since 2015 to encourage the connection and development between China and the rest of world. English-speaking countries accept more and more Chinese borrowings than before.

The second is the loan translation with transliteration elements, for example, Beijing International Film Festival, the Qinghai-Tibet plateau, Ping An Insurance, Ping' an Bank. Most of them are the name of festival, place, company or products. Readers of China English may be unfamiliar with some of them so that it is still necessary to use interpretations to understand the meaning of terms.

The last is the loan translation in the form of abbreviation, like CPC (the Communist Party of China), NPC (National People's Congress), CAS (Chinese Academy of Science), PBC (People's Bank of China), CAE (Chinese Academy of Engineering). Definitely, most of them belong to the political field. Although foreigners can understand the meaning of a single part, it's difficult for them to know exact meaning of the whole term without experiences of living in China and touching Chinese society.

Loan Blend

Loan blend refers to blend elements of China and English to generate a new term to express particular things in China. Some of them are generally used as modifier, like Maoism, Hong Kong Phoenix TV, Shanghai Dongfang daily, Shanghai Bright Dairy, Guangzhou Jinan University. At the same time, the type of these words blending Chinese elements with English words have also proved Chinese elements play strong roles in forming new words to describing things and events in China.

The Features of China English at the Syntactic Level

China English is influenced by the way of Chinese thinking and their sentence structure. Below are some apparent syntactic features of China English.

Sentence Patterns

The main difference in sentence structure between Chinese and English is that they belong to different sentence type. Chinese is a language of parataxis, which means the sentences are organized by the logic relation. On the contrary, English is a language of hypotaxis, which refers to the sentences are structured by the grammatical relation. On the basis, Chinese sentences are well terse and lucid and English sentences are more knitted. Some shorten forms are adopted in Chinese so as to make sentences concise. Some examples in China English are illustrated as follows.

1. Long time no see.
2. Work hard and improve daily.

These sentences mentioned above almost close to the structure and style of their original Chinese. Every shortened forms of these sentences reflect the particular features of Chinese sentence.

Linear Sequences

The differences between the way of thinking in China and that in English are clearly manifested in linear sequences (JiaDelin, 1990). It is shown in the Table 1 from the aspect of thinking sequence, linear sequence with examples:

As depicted in Table 1, the English version is: Tom lost his pen yesterday. But Chinese tend to use the version like: Yesterday Tom lost his pen. The sentences as following don't have any grammar mistake, and they are also normative English. But Chinese people prefer to use the latter.

- 1a. I did exercise after I had breakfast.
- 1b. China English: After I had breakfast, I did exercise.

Native English speakers are used to introducing the most important information first in a sentence and then other elements are added to form a linear chain with small head and big body. However, Chinese people are inclined to place other elements in the beginning of the sentence, and then give the central elements. Below are some examples:

- 2a. It is good for us to follow school rules.
- 2b. China English: For us to follow school rules is good.
- 3a. There is no need arguing about this matter.
- 3b. China English: Arguing about this matter is no need.

Table 1. The Differences Between the Way of Thinking in China and That in English.

Language Type	English	Chinese
Thinking Sequence	the subject of action→the action of subject→the object of action→the various marks of action	1.the subject of action→the mark of action→the action of subject→the object of action 2.the mark of action→the subject of action→the action of subject→the object of action
Linear Sequence	subject→predicate→object→various adverbials	1.subject→adverbial→predicate→object 2.adverbial→subject→predicate→object

The Features of China English at the Discoursal Level

At present, most issued article of the research on China English are limited in the level of phonology, lexis and syntax. There are not a lot articles about it at the discoursal level. There are also some rules to govern discourse. Therefore, the study on China English at the discoursal level needs to be paid more attentions. Presenting samples is the most persuasive way to show the features and differences. Below are several contrastive samples to show the features and differences of discourse between China English and Native English.

Language Style

The first comparison is two excerpts of description of scenic spots. The first is from BBC NEWS (<http://www.bbc.com/news>) a native foreigner website, made by native speakers. The second is taken from China Daily (<http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/>), written by Chinese.

Excerpt 1

The American Health Care Act passed the House of Representatives by 217-213 on Thursday without support from a single Democrat. It marked Mr Trump's first legislative victory and goes some way to keeping a key campaign promise to roll back his predecessor's signature healthcare reform. But several Republican congressman who voted for their measure admitted they did not even read it.

Excerpt 2

The bill was passed in the House with only one more vote than needed. All Democrats voted against the bill on the House floor, while 20 Republicans voted no. The Obama care repeal, one of Trump's key campaign promises, would usher in sweeping changes to the US health care system in the coming years.

Each of the two experts has its distinctive feature. The first excerpt has 59 words, and the second excerpt has 53 words. The length of them is almost same. However, the sentence in the first excerpt is longer with several subordinate clauses and independent structures by comparing with the second excerpt. There are more compound and shorten sentences in the second excerpt.

Information Order

The third comparison is two recommendations. The first is written by native speakers and the second is written by Chinese.

Recommendation 1.

To Whom It May Concern,

This letter is to serve as my formal recommendation for Andrew Fuller. Andrew has been my direct assistant for several years. He has been interested in obtaining an MBA degree for long time, and I feel that he would be an excellent candidate for your esteemed program. During his time here, Andrew has consistently demonstrated a strong work ethic and a dedication to success. His efforts have produced

high quality results time and time again. Last year, Andrew developed and successfully implemented a plan to streamline our production department. The plan was a major undertaking, requiring a great deal of thought and effort on Andrew's behalf. Though Andrew is my assistant, he is also an unofficial leadership role. Many of his co-workers seek his advices and supports. Andrew is always there for them and is quite comfortable in the role. I feel his budding leadership abilities will become even more effective in a business school setting.

For these reason, I highly recommend Andrew Fuller as a candidate for your MBA program. If you have any questions regarding Andrew or this recommendation, please contact me.

Sincerely,

Thomas Operations Manager Tri-State Directories

Recommendation 2.

Dear Prof. Smith,

I take great pleasure in introducing to you Mr. Li Ming, my classmate and best friend. He is going to pursue his studies as a postgraduate in your university after his graduation here. We've lived and studied together for almost four years. No friend deserves so much love and respect as he does. His performance in the school years was outstanding. In addition, he has a very pleasant personality and staying with him is always pleasant. Will you please give him some guidance regarding the postgraduate entrance examination? If it is convenient, could you introduce him to the future tutor? It would be appreciated of you can give him some help.

Yours truly,

Wang Hua

Differences can be perceived from above. In the first recommendation, purpose of writer is put forward straightly and then reasons. It is impolite for Chinese from the traditional point. It is obvious to perceive the second letter is more euphemistic.

From the above comparison, we can draw some conclusions as following: In native English, there are more complicated sentences, while there are more compound and shorten sentences in China. Due to different thinking patterns and culture background, native English prefer to use direct way to express their idea, while Chinese would like to choose euphemistic way.

The Implications for English Teaching

The Present Situation of China English for English Teaching

Linguistic is a scientific study of language associated with social practice. As a social phenomenon, language can't exist out of society. The concept of China English hasn't been paid fully attention and it hasn't played the role to convey Chinese culture in classroom though it was a standard one. Theoretically, from the connection between language and thought, thought is a spiritual and psychological activity and it cannot exist independently without the objective environment. The objective existence of China English shows that Chinese people speak or write English with Chinese feature at the phonological, the lexical, the syntactical, the discorsal level. We do not deny Chinese English learners need acquire native linguistic competence of English, but they are "Chinese English learners" which are very special and inevitably, they must communicate some issues with Chinese features with people from other country. In fact, most English learners in China can not acquire native English but native like English. In the circumstance, how to define what is native like English becomes more important.

Implications for English Teaching in China

China English is an inevitable phenomenon of Chinese English learners in the process of learning English. As a variety of English, China English has great value effect on conveying culture. Based on analysis, suggestions have been made as following:

1. We should know “China English is not Chinglish which is unstable interlanguage of speakers. Therefore, Chinese English learners or speakers should have a correct attitude towards it. We can not regard it as a wrong one and accept it as a variety of English.

2. Not only teachers but also students should realize the importance of teaching and studying China English. Teachers can guide students to learn “China English” as “correct English”.

3. Some textbook based on both native and China English should be used in language teaching. In addition, new teaching syllabus should be made up and assessment system should be revised based on China English. Furthermore, corresponding teaching methods should be adopted.

4. The research on the features of China English is not systematic. More further and accurate analysis at various levels of China English for English teaching should be continued in the future.

Summary

The paper gives a confirmation of objective existence of China English through systematic and detailed descriptions and analyses of three linguistic features of China English at the lexical level, the syntactic level and the discoursal level to prove the need for cross-cultural communication and give implications for English teaching and learning. Through review previous study on China English, we can clearly find that it is desired to have a systematic description and analysis of the linguistic features of China English.

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