

# 迁移理论对中国英语语言变异的阐释

## 摘 要

变异是指说话人对一种语言的语音、语法或词汇选择上的差异。语言变异普遍而客观地存在于各种语言中。语言交际中语言变异现象既是一种特殊的语言现象,更是一种交际策略。研究语言变异的目的在于,可以真正了解活的语言,进一步了解语言的变化过程,预测和干预语言的发展。

一种语言会因使用的地理区域不同而引起语言变异。作为英语地域变异的产物,中国英语是在跨文化交际中作为外语使用的,是两种不同语言与文化碰撞的结果。中国英语的语言变异现象也是一种交际策略。为了更好地完成交际目的,中国英语中语言变异现象不可避免。

本文采用定性研究的方法,从迁移理论出发,探讨了中国英语中语言变异的现象。侧重从积极迁移的角度来阐释英语在中国社会文化语境中的语言变异。本文要回答两个问题:(1)中国英语具有哪些语言特征?(2)英语是如何在中国的社会文化语境中实现变异的?研究表明,中国英语的变异主要表现在词汇、句式、语篇和语法层面上。词汇层面,主要表现在受汉语文化迁移的借词,新造词和语义变化等方面。句式层面,主要表现在意合与话题突出的句子结构上。语篇层面,主要表现在受汉语思维方式迁移的语篇结构上,如书信、新闻、论说文和诗歌分别呈现出螺旋形、归纳式和意合的语篇结构。语法层面,主要表现在一些受汉语迁移的语序和所有格结构上。这些变异是使用者受中国语言和文化迁移的影响在跨文化交际中有意或无意地选择的结果。

中国英语的变异对社会产生的影响有积极的方面,它有助于传播中华文明和文化,丰富了语言的表达力,适应了语言交际的需要,同时也有消极的一面,即冲击并妨碍了语言的规范化建设。因此,为了限制中国英语可能产生的负面影响,我们应该认真地研究中国英语,提出具体的规范方略,以便中国英语健康有序地发展下去。

**关键词:** 语言变异 中国英语 迁移理论 语言和文化迁移

# **AN INTERPRETATION OF LANGUAGE VARIATION IN CHINA ENGLISH FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF TRANSFER THEORY**

## **ABSTRACT**

Variations refer to differences in pronunciation, grammar, or word choice within a language. Language variation is a universal phenomenon of human language. Language variation in language communication is a communicative strategy more than a special language phenomenon. The aim of variation studies lies in comprehending truly living language, making a further understanding of process of language change, forecasting and interposing language development.

Variation in a language may be related to the region in which the language is used. As a product of regional variation of English, China English used as a foreign language in cross-cultural communication is the integration of two different languages and cultures. Language variation in China English is also a communicative strategy. In order to achieve better communicative intentions, language variation is inevitable in China English.

Based on transfer theory, this paper makes a qualitative research and inquires into the phenomenon of language variation in China English. From the perspective of positive transfer, this thesis places emphasis on expounding English variations in Chinese socio-cultural context. Two questions are to be answered: What are the characteristics of China English? How does English realize its variation in Chinese socio-cultural context? The findings indicate that

variations in China English are mainly revealed at lexical, syntactic, textual and grammatical levels. At the lexical level, they are revealed in borrowings, coinage and semantic change transferred from Chinese culture. At the syntactic level, they are revealed in parataxis and the topic-prominent sentence structure. At the textual level, they are revealed in spiral, inductive and paratactic text structures in letters, news, essays and poetry. At the grammatical level, they are revealed in some nativized structures transferred from Chinese in word order, sentence order and possessive construction. The variations in cross-cultural communication are the results of users' conscious or unconscious choices, which are influenced or partially governed by Chinese linguistic and cultural transfer.

Language variation in China English has positive influences on society. It contributes to the spread of Chinese civilization and culture, enriches linguistic expressiveness and fits in with the needs of language communication. At the same time, it has negative influences, namely, lashes and hampers linguistic standardized construction. Therefore, in order to impose restrictions on negative influences China English may exert, we should make an earnest study of China English and propose standard general plans so that China English can grow soundly and systematically.

**KEY WORDS:** language variation; China English; transfer theory;  
linguistic and cultural transfer

## **List of Abbreviations**

<b>AE</b>	<b>American English</b>
<b>ASVOA</b>	<b>Adverbs + subjects + verbs + objects+ adverbs</b>
<b>CAH</b>	<b>Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis</b>
<b>CE</b>	<b>China English</b>
<b>CPE</b>	<b>Chinese Pidgin English</b>
<b>CVE</b>	<b>Chinese Varieties of English</b>
<b>EFL</b>	<b>English as foreign language</b>
<b>ENL</b>	<b>English as native language</b>
<b>ESL</b>	<b>English as second language</b>
<b>IL</b>	<b>Interlanguage</b>
<b>L1</b>	<b>First Language</b>
<b>L2</b>	<b>Second Language</b>
<b>NL</b>	<b>Native Language</b>
<b>NPC</b>	<b>National People's Congress</b>
<b>SIA</b>	<b>Sentence initial adverbials</b>
<b>SVA</b>	<b>Subjects + verbs + adverbs</b>
<b>SVAA</b>	<b>Subjects + verbs + adverbs + adverbs</b>
<b>SVO</b>	<b>Subjects + verbs + objects</b>
<b>TL</b>	<b>Target Language</b>

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## Chapter 1 Introduction

“Two fundamental facts of language are (a) that it is always changing, in all areas of structure (phonology, grammar, discourse style, semantics, and vocabulary) and (b) that it changes in different ways at diverse places and times” (Coulmas 2001: 81). “The patterns of linguistic variation are critical for a full understanding of language change over time” (Fasold 2000: 227). It now seems clear that variation in a language is patterned, that it is related to language change, and that it depends crucially on the interaction with the social setting. Variation in a language may be related to region, social class, educational background or the degree of formality of a situation in which language is used. “Regional variation in the way a language is spoken is likely to be one of the most noticeable ways in which we observe variety in language...There may even be very distinctive local colorings in the language which you notice as you move from one location to another” (Wardhaugh 2000: 40). Language variation in language communication is a communicative strategy more than a special language phenomenon.

We do not thereby simultaneously lose the notion of causation. There is undoubtedly no single cause of language variation, many elements may contribute to the change. The users who are shaping the varieties of a language are always the center and the most important element to explore. In this sense, the non-native users' selection or substitution of linguistic forms mainly contributes to the variation. In addition, this kind of selection and substitution is the transfer of users' native languages and cultures into non-native varieties because of their large culture-bound.

With the identification and recognition of geographical varieties of English throughout the world as World Englishes, interest grows in the identification and description of global varieties of English. The uses and users of English internationally have been profitably discussed in terms of “three concentric circles”, namely, the Inner Circle (ENL societies), the Outer Circle (ESL societies) and the Expanding Circle (EFL societies). Among them, “The Expanding Circle countries are those in which English has various roles and is widely studied but for more specific purposes than in the Outer Circle, including (but certainly not limited to) reading knowledge for scientific and technical purposes; such countries currently include China, Indonesia, Iran, Japan, Korea, and Nepal. However, it must be remembered that languages have life circles, particularly in multilingual societies, and thus the status of a language is not necessarily permanent” (Kachru & Nelson 2001: 78).

Based on Kachru's “three concentric circles”, the Inner Circle is said to be “standard-providing”, the Outer Circle is to be “standard-developing” and the Expanding Circle to be “standard-depending”. In other words, speakers of ENL (English as native language) determine English language standard, while ESL (English as second language) varieties of English have become institutionalized and are developing their own standards. The EFL (English as foreign language) groups therefore depend on the standards set by native speakers in the Inner Circle, while keeping some distinctive local colorings.

As a product of regional variation of English, China English used as a foreign language

in cross-cultural communication is the integration of two different languages and cultures. Thus China English speakers will inevitably create a Chinese variety of English that will be socially accepted as the standard within China. Language variation in China English is also a communicative strategy which may well realize users' communicative needs in cross-cultural communication. In order to achieve better communicative intentions, language variation is inevitable in China English.

With China's entry into the World Trade Organization, the further opening of trade and other contacts with the world (including the 2008 Beijing Olympics), much more might be said about the possible futures of China English. Therefore, we should pay more attention to English variations in China which contain positive and negative effects. Although plenty of studies on it have been conducted from negative aspects of transfer, very few studies have been carried out from a new perspective of positive transfer. That is why, in this paper, the author attempts to propose transfer theory to the study of language variation in China English. Just as Xu Daming (2006: 284) says "the effect of language transfer is considered as a main cause of variation in second language acquisition." It may be possible that transfer theory will shed light on the interpretation of language variation in China English.

Odlin (2001: 27) defines transfer as "the influence resulting from similarities and differences between the target language and any other language that has been previously (and perhaps imperfectly) acquired." According to Ellis, language transfer also called cross-linguistic influence occurs in all aspects of language, and may not always manifest itself as errors (the focus of early studies), but also as avoidance, overuse and facilitation (positive transfer). The present study will focus on the positive aspects of Chinese transfer into English. With these viewpoints, two questions will be discussed in this paper: (1) What are the characteristics of China English? (2) How does English realize its variation in Chinese socio-cultural context? The current study is restricted to China's mainland. English in Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan regions are not included except otherwise mentioned.

This study is a qualitative study. Data are collected from journals, newspapers, magazines and books published at home and abroad. Most of them are written texts by Chinese writers. The research is also supported by the online database of *China Daily* and *Beijing Review*. Theoretically the study is limited in transfer theory. In practical analysis, however, comprehensive approaches in L2 acquisition studies and cross-cultural communication studies are applied to achieve the purpose of depicting the characteristics of China English. Contrastive analysis will also be applied when the paper tries to explain the linguistic variable in the context of two different linguistic and cultural systems, so as to ascertain how English realizes its variation in Chinese socio-cultural context.

This paper consists of five chapters. Chapter 1 introduces the rationale, objectives and methodology of the present study. Chapter 2 presents literature review of the studies on variation, as well as the foreign and domestic studies on China English. Chapter 3 devotes to justifying the theoretical framework and the model for the thesis. Chapter 4 discusses the linguistic and cultural transfer from Chinese into English. Chapter 5 serves as the conclusion.



## Chapter 2 Literature Review

This chapter aims at clarifying several terms related to the research and reviewing relevant researches on China English. Beginning with a discussion of initial studies on language variation, the writer presents a brief introduction of the main researches into China English at home and abroad.

### 2.1 Clarification of Some Terms

As “language variation is a prevalent phenomenon among any speech community and language variety” (Xu 2006: 3), many sociolinguists (Wardhaugh 2000, Hudson 2000, Fasold 2000, and Coulmas 2001) concern language change and sub-questions like language, variety and dialect, speech communities and so on. For the purpose of better understanding of language variation, some of the concepts related to the current study will be briefly reviewed.

#### 2.1.1 Language Change

Language changes through time, though it does so slowly and gradually. There is no language which remains stable all the time. Take English for example, the history of English is divided into three periods: Old English, Middle English and Modern English. A speaker of Modern English would find Old English unintelligible. There are considerable differences between the three stages of English development.

Language is constantly changing as society develops and people's ways of life change. As Sapir (1921: 157) says “everyone knows that language is variable”, “we can find changes in the phonology, morphology, syntax, lexicon and semantic components of the grammar. In other words, all parts of grammar may change” (Dai et al. 2002: 95). Just as what Freeborn (2000) expounds: English language, like all living languages, is in a continuous state of variation across time. The language of one generation of speakers will differ lightly from another, and at any one time there are “advanced” and “conservative” forms, whether they belong to regional, educational or class dialects. Change takes place at every level of language.

There are many causes of language change. Different linguists have different emphases. Historical linguists emphasize the function of history in language change while sociolinguists are more concerned with the relationship between language and society.

#### 2.1.2 Language, Variety and Dialect

Variety is the key to language change, so it has been one of the major issues being studied. “What makes one variety of language different from another is the linguistic items that it includes”, Hudson (2000: 22) defines a variety of language as “a set of linguistic items with similar social distribution.” According to this definition, we can say that all of the following are varieties: English, French, London English, the English of football commentaries, the languages used by the member of a particular long-house in the north-west Amazon, the language or languages used by a particular person. This conclusion is rather

radical though. Hudson (2000: 23) also says “The flexibility of the term ‘variety’ allows us to ask what basis there is for postulating the kinds of ‘package’ of linguistic items to which we conventionally give labels like ‘language’, ‘dialect’ or ‘register’.”

However, Ferguson (1971: 141) uses “human speech patterns” instead of “linguistic items” to define “variety”. He offers another definition of variety: “Any body of human speech patterns which is sufficiently homogeneous to be analyzed by available techniques of synchronic description and which has a sufficiently large repertory of elements and their arrangements or processes with broad enough semantic scope to function in all formal contexts of communication.”

Linguistic items and human speech patterns are presumably sounds, words and grammatical features in traditional grammar while social distribution and formal contexts of communication refer to external factors such as geographical areas and social groups in which the variety is used.

Generally speaking, in sociolinguistics varieties of a language can be related to their users and use, register refers to “varieties according to use” while dialects are “varieties according to users” (cf. Hudson 2000: 45). Following Cooper (1985), it may be understood that it is not languages that spread, but the increase in the number of the users who acquire the language which marks the spread. Therefore, in this section, emphasis will be laid on dialects.

Pan Zhangxian (2005: 59) illustrates the relationship between language, variety and dialect in the context of World Englishes study as follows:

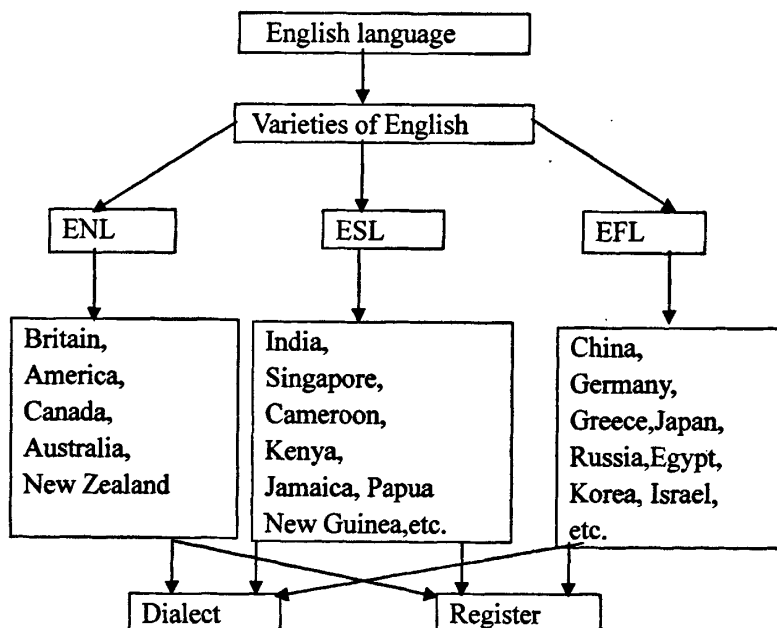


Figure 2-1 Relations Between Language, Variety and Dialect

Figure 2-1 is mainly based on Kachru’s “three concentric circles” theory, namely, the inner circle (ENL group), the outer circle (ESL group) and the expanding circle (EFL group). Pan Zhangxian (2005: 59) says language is superordinate which contains some subordinate

varieties and dialects in terms of English. English language, which is a collective name for English rather than a particular norm such as British or American English, is on the top of the hierarchy. Subordinate to it are different varieties, including three parallel groups, ENL, ESL and EFL. They are parallel not because they are the same in terms of status, function and linguistic features, but as a variety of English, no group is better than the other. She emphasizes each of them embodies the norm of a particular country or region and the choice of users in a particular socio-cultural context. In this sense, it can be assumed that China English which belongs to the EFL group embodies the Chineseness and the choice of users in Chinese socio-cultural context.

### 2.1.3 Speech Community

It is necessary for us to “discuss the kind of community to which varieties or items may be related” (Hudson 2000: 24). The term “speech community” is widely used by sociolinguists to refer to a community based on language. It is Bloomfield who first discusses speech community in his book *Language*. He (1933: 42) says “a speech community is a group of people who interact by means of speech.” However, there are considerable confusion and disagreement over exact definition. Consequently, we should find some alternative views of speech community. It may be helpful to investigate language in society.

Lyons (1970) defines it as “all the people who use a given language (or dialect)” (cf. Wardhaugh 2000: 117). This definition is obviously deficient. If the individuals were bilingual, the speech community would overlap. For instance, English, spoken in many places all over the world, is also spoken in a wide variety of ways, and spoken in speech communities that are almost isolated from one another. If speech community is defined solely by its linguistic characteristics, then people who speak English will belong to the same speech community no matter how different their social and cultural backgrounds are.

Labov (1972) then defines it as follows:

The speech community is not defined by any marked agreement in the use of language elements, so much as by participation in a set of shared norms; these norms may be observed in overt types of evaluative behavior, and by the uniformity of abstract patterns of variation which are invariant in respect to particular levels of usage.

(cf. Wardhaugh 2000: 118)

Labov shifts emphasis away from shared linguistic behaviors to some evaluative behaviors. In other words, he emphasizes the various characteristics which make individuals feel they are the same community.

Gumperz (1971) uses the term “linguistic community” instead of “speech community” and extends the definition that Bloomfield gives by saying “a social group which may be either monolingual or multilingual, held together by frequency of social interaction patterns and set off from the surrounding areas by weaknesses in the lines of communication” (cf. Wardhaugh 2000: 119). What Gumperz emphasizes is the social cohesiveness within the community and at the same time the differences from other communities. In other words, the members with the same social setting or in the same social structure who communicate with each other frequently are in the same speech community.

There is a more comprehensive definition which avoids the term “speech community”,

but refers to groups in society which have distinctive speech characteristics as well as other social characteristics. This definition is provided by Le Page and Tabouret-Keller (1985):

Each individual creates the systems for his verbal behaviour so that they shall resemble those of the group or groups with which from time to time he may wish to be identified, to the extent that, a. he can identify the groups, b. he has both opportunity and ability to observe and analyse their behavioural systems, c. his motivation is sufficiently strong to impel him to choose, and to adapt his behaviour accordingly, d. he is still able to adapt his behaviour.

(cf. Hudson 2000: 26)

Bolinger (1975) makes an even more complex definition:

There is no limit to the ways in which human beings league themselves together for self-identification, security, gain, amusement, worship, or any of the other purposes that are held in common; consequently there is no limit to the number and variety of speech communities that are to be found in society.

(cf. Hudson 2000: 26)

In accordance with this view, “different speech communities will overlap within any population and they will intersect in complex ways with one another” (Pan 2005: 63).

We have discussed different definitions of “speech community”. Firstly, we should take two elements into account. One is linguistic characteristics; the other is social factors. Most of the scholars agree that members of a speech community should share a set of linguistic rules. There are different ideas about social factors among the scholars. Some are more concerned about shared linguistic variables (Lyons 1970); some are more about communication and interaction (Bloomfield 1933, Gumperz 1971); others are about attitudes of the community members and the individual’s self-identity in a multi-dimensional social space (Le Page & Tabouret-Keller 1985).

Then how do we deal with the previous definitions? In fact, although each of them sees one angle of the speech community and bases on different factors, they all purport the definitions of the “speech community”. Just as Hudson (2000: 27) says “there is no need to try to reconcile the different definitions with one another, as they are simply trying to reflect different phenomena.”

Lastly, in the current study of China English, the users of the EFL group who share China English with Chinese characteristics in Chinese socio-cultural context can be regarded as a speech community.

#### 2.1.4 Language Variation

In *Longman Dictionary of Language Teaching & Applied Linguistics* (2003: 577), language variation is defined as:

Differences in pronunciation, grammar, or word choice within a language. Variation in a language may be related to region (dialect, regional variation), to social class and/or educational background (sociolect) or to the degree of formality of a situation (style) in which language is used.

It is evident that language variation can be accounted for by relating it to regional

variation, social variation and stylistic variation. In this paper, language variation refers to variation in a language related to region.

Language variation is a universal phenomenon of human language. Language variation in language communication is a communicative strategy more than a special language phenomenon. Fasold (2000: 223) says "One of major topics in sociolinguistics is the study of language variation and change with its inevitable relationship to social forces." That is to say, variation studies should be explored from both linguistic structures and social factors. In a word, the study of variation is concerned with the impact of the interaction of language, culture and society on the structures and processes of traditional linguistics. The aim of variation studies lies in comprehending truly living language, making a further understanding of process of language change, forecasting and interposing language development (Chen 1999: 80).

### 2.1.5 Regional Variation

Sapir (1921: 161) says "In practice, of course, no language can be spread over a vast territory or even over a considerable area without showing dialectic variations."

According to *Longman Dictionary of Language Teaching & Applied Linguistics* (2003: 452), "Regional variation is variation in speech according to the particular area where a speaker comes from. Variation may occur with respect to pronunciation, vocabulary, or syntax."

Regional variation in the way a language is spoken is likely to be one of the most noticeable ways in which we observe variety in language. There may even be very distinctive local colorings in the language which you notice as you move from one location to another. Such distinctive varieties are usually called regional dialects of the language (Wardhaugh 2000: 40). "The study of regional dialects - varieties of a language which are spoken in different geographical areas - is among the oldest traditions in the systematic study of intralanguage variation" (Rickford 2001: 154).

"'English' is not a single entity but, like any other living language, something that varies considerably depending on one's regional background, social class and network, ethnicity, gender, age, and style" (ibid: 151). Rickford in "Regional and Social Variation" demonstrates how geographical locations can influence an individual's use of particular phonological, structural, lexical and discourse features of English. In this sense, different linguistic features of English can be shown in different geographical locations.

Therefore, in the current study regional dialects can be viewed as: geographical varieties of English with distinctive local colorings, which vary considerably depending on one's regional background. We may regard China English as a regional dialect of English.

## 2.2 Studies of Variation

Most of the advances in studies of variation are inspired by Labov whose classic work *The Social Stratification of English in New York City* (1966) is one of his earliest studies of language variation. In this book, Labov investigates several other variables and discusses some of observations you can make concerning a linguistic variable. The patterns of stratification by class and style are prominent in his works. Other sociolinguists do similar

investigations in many places to seek the relationship between language variation and social class, age, sex and level of formality, such as Wolfram (1969) in Detroit, Trudgill (1974) in Norwich, Cheshire (1978) in Reading. Their findings reinforce Labov's view that social class or status is a very important variable, if not the most important one, which correlates with linguistic differences, with an especially clear boundary between lower middle class and upper working class. Milroy takes a rather different approach to variation in her study of certain aspects of speech in Belfast. Milroy (1980) explains that a social network is a kind of mechanism which manipulates people's way of exchanging goods and services, imposes obligations and confers corresponding rights upon its members. She views network from the point of view of single individuals.

Some latest works which have also contributed to this study include *The Sociolinguistics of Language* by Fasold (2000), *An Introduction to Sociolinguistics* (third edition) by Wardhaugh (2000), *Sociolinguistics* (second edition) by Hudson (2000), *The Handbook of Sociolinguistics* by Coulmas (2001), *Sociolinguistics and Language Teaching* edited by Mckay and Hornberger (2001), etc.

Many Chinese scholars such as Chen Songcen (1999) and Xu Daming (2006) involve this study in their books. However, there are deficient achievements in the field of language variation in China. In *Linguistic Variation and Change*, Xu Daming (2006) makes a comprehensive, up-to-date, and accessible introduction to research achievements about language variation and change in the international linguistic circles. "A variation study, whose key task is a scientific explanation on linguistic heterogeneity, is actually a research about linguistic structures" (Xu 2006: 91). That is to say, a variation study concentrates on the details of linguistic structures in actual speech production and processing (or writing). Language variation is influenced by both linguistic or internal and social constraints. Xu Daming summarizes such different social constraints as speech community, age, gender, social class, style, ethnicity, family, social network and identity. He also provides an account of internal and external factors for variations in L2 acquisition. Internal factors involve markedness and language transfer. External factors include style, age, gender and linguistic competence, etc.

### 2.3 Chinese English, China English & Chinese Englishes

Before proceeding further, we need to figure out some issues in relation to the Chinese "Zhongguo Yingyu". One major issue currently under discussion is concerning the appropriacy of English terms for the Chinese "Zhongguo Yingyu", which has brought about many problems and debates among Chinese scholars. Several terms have been mentioned in the existent studies, including "Chinglish", "Chinese English", "China English" and "Chinese Englishes".

Many linguistic scholars at home and abroad generally acknowledge that "Chinglish" is a derogatory term, and should not be taken into consideration. "Chinese Englishes" is a new term proposed by Bolton who uses the term to include varieties in two senses: one refers to "the idealized norm of an internationally propagated and internationally intelligible variety of the language"; the other refers to "localized varieties of English used intranationally in many societies throughout the world" (Bolton 2003: 46).

The most controversial problem comes from the choice chiefly between the two terms “Chinese English” and “China English”. Which one is the more appropriate English term for the Chinese “Zhongguo Yingyu”? Different scholars have different concerns and explanations. The author of this thesis agrees with the idea of some scholars (Ge 1980, Wang 1991, Li 1993, etc.) that “Zhongguo Yingyu” is the result of the acculturation of English language in Chinese context and the influence of special Chinese culture and societies on English, and in fact it expresses things and concepts peculiar to Chinese language and culture and at the same time conforms to the standard English norms.

Concerning the relationship between China English and Chinese English, Li Wenzhong (1993: 18-24) holds that both China English and Chinese English express things unique to China and bear Chinese features. But China English belongs to normative English whose composition and scopes of use are richer and wider than Chinese English and whose influences on English will increase with the expanding publicity for the overseas. In contrast, Chinese English is a deformed language phenomenon. Its composition and scopes of use are unstable and limited. Although China English and Chinese English are interrelated in some aspects, there are fundamental distinctions between them. In short, Chinese English and China English are different in essence. Chinese English might be a cultural barrier in international communication because it is not normative and consequently beyond understanding, while China English might benefit the intercultural communication between China and the world.

Therefore, it is considered that “China English” is the more appropriate English term for the Chinese “Zhongguo Yingyu”.

## 2.4 Studies of China English

### 2.4.1 Foreign Research

Foreign scholars have noticed the phenomenon of China English. They use the term of “Chinese English” or “Chinese Englishes”. In their book *International English Usage*, Todd and Hancock (1986: 107) use the term “Chinese English” and list a number of typical features of Chinese English in terms of phonology, vocabulary and grammar. The characteristics of Chinese English in the book are generalized as follows:

In phonology, the variation of Chinese English results from Chinese language and the dialects of Chinese speakers. The authors give some examples: /b,d,g/ is replaced by /p,t,k/, /n/ and /l/ are confused, etc. Since Chinese is a tone language, it is very hard for Chinese people to master English intonation well, and they either bring Chinese tones to English or have no obvious intonation when speaking English.

In vocabulary, the authors cite many English words which are categorized into the nouns of food, martial arts, philosophy and China's dynastic past.

In grammar, there are two cases. One is that Chinese people tend to use active voice instead of passive one that is more appropriate in English; the other refers to the mistakes in tense due to Chinese interference.

Voice about China English is also heard in *World Englishes*, the most authoritative periodical in this field, which publishes a special issue on English in China from a world Englishes perspective, co-edited by Zhao and Campbell (1995) who presented a detailed profile of English in China in the early 1990s, in such domains as education, medicine, media,

tourism and science and technology. Zhao and Campbell also convincingly challenge the argument that English in China is only “an instrument of international communication”, asserting that such a view is essentially “an oversimplification of the sociolinguistic reality of Chinese English” (cf. Bolton 2003: 48). Recently *World Englishes* publishes some special issues, such as “Hong Kong English: Autonomy and Creativity” (2000), “English in China: Interdisciplinary Perspectives” co-edited by Bolton and Tong (2002), Kirkpatrick & Xu (2002: 269-279) review recent debates on the recognition of Chinese varieties of English as a legitimate nativised variety. They suggest that it would be appropriate when Chinese varieties of English are used as a means to communicate with non-native speakers in the Asian region.

The phrase “Chinese Englishes” is used by Bolton, an associate professor in English Department at the University of Hong Kong, who provides comprehensive historical, linguistic and sociolinguistic research on the description and analysis of English in Hong Kong and in the mainland of China. In his book *Chinese Englishes: A Sociolinguistic History* (2003), Bolton explores the history of English language in China from the arrival of the first English-speaking traders in the early seventeenth century to the present.

Other relevant works which have also contributed to this topic are *English as a Global Language* (Crystal 1997), *International English* (Trudgill & Hannah 2000), etc.

#### 2.4.2 Domestic Research

In 1980, a Chinese scholar Ge Chuangui first proposed the concept of China English and Chinese English in his article “A Talk on Chinese-English Translation”, in which he suggests that more attention should be paid to distinguishing China English from Chinese English (Chinglish) since the latter embodies negative connotation of Chinese users’ deficiency in English. He thinks that English originally is the language of native English speakers, and it should have been used in the idiomatic way of English by non-native English speakers. However, each nation has its own specific situation. As in China, no matter in the old or new society, there is something special to be expressed in a Chinese way. Ge Chuangui demonstrates his statement with examples: *imperial examinations* (科举), *Five Classics* (五经), *eight-legged essay* (八股文), *Mr. Science* (赛先生), *Hanlingyuan* (翰林院), *ideological remolding* (思想改造) and so on. He makes a further explanation for the examples: “These English versions are not Chinese English (Chinglish), but China English. When native English speakers hear or read these terms, they may not immediately understand them; yet upon being explained, all these English versions reflecting Chinese culture can be easily understood by them” (Ge 1980: 91-92).

One of the first studies to explicitly recognize “Chinese Varieties of English” is that of Cheng, Chin-chuan (1983: 125-140), who surveys the history and use of English in China, as well as examples of the Englishisation of Chinese grammar. However, he takes only political factors as an element in shaping Chinese varieties of English, neglecting other important factors. Another article “The Two Faces of English in China: Englishization of Chinese and Nativization of English” is published in *World Englishes* by Zhou Zipei and Peng Wenchi (1987).

In recent years, a great number of articles focus on linguistic (Jia 1990, Jiang & Du 2003), pragmatic (Jin 2001), sociolinguistic (Lin 2001, Pan 2002) and intercultural (Xie 1995,



Jiang 2001) aspects of China English and issues concerned with translation (Yan & Liu 2002, Cheng 2004), English teaching (Li & Wang 2002) and nativization (Li 2006). On the one hand, most of scholars emphasize the features of English in China and take optimistic and affirmative attitudes towards China English, though they stress different aspects. On the other hand, some find it too early to accept it as a distinctive variety as English in the outer-circle countries like Singapore or India (Zhang 1995); some call it an interference variety in intercultural communication (Xie 1995), they take cautious and contradictory attitudes; others negate the nativization of English in China, and do not believe that China should need its own variety of English (Qiu & Ning 2002). They take sceptical and negative attitudes.

At the same time, the name of China English has been adopted by many scholars who have joined the discussions since 1990s. Ideas about China English vary among them: (1) it is a national variety with its objective existence (Wang 1991, Li 1993); (2) it is not a national variety, but an English variety (Xie 1995, Lin 2001); (3) it is an inevitable result of interaction of two languages and cultures (Du & Wu 1998, Jiang & Du 2003); (4) it plays an important role in cross-cultural communication and foreign language teaching and learning in China (Pan 2002, Li 2006).

Similar significant works include *World Englishes* by Yan Zhiqiang (2002), *Linguistic and Cultural Identities in Chinese Varieties of English* by Pan Zhangxian (2005), etc. Pan Zhangxian explores the linguistic and cultural identities of CVE in a framework of three-dimensional contextual network, namely, from the temporal, spatial and functional dimensions. She also discusses applicability of the three-dimensional contextual network in the study of non-native varieties of English.

As we can see, the last twenty years have seen a rapid growth of interest in the studies of China English as well as a number of related fields. The literature review presented above demonstrates just what progress the debates and discourses on China English have made since the first identification of this topic in the 1980s. All these have indicated a dramatic and rapid spread of English throughout China in the last twenty years or so.

#### 2.4.3 Limitations of the Previous Studies

However, although a large number of scholars have devoted themselves to the study of special Chinese features in China English, most of them still remain at the stage of quoting the small amount of existing research. With regard to research approach, although the past twenty years have seen the emergence of linguistic, sociolinguistic, pragmatic, intercultural communication and EFL learning and teaching approaches to English in China, few researches have been devoted to expounding the interaction of language, culture and society in terms of descriptive analyses of the linguistic features of China English.

In consideration of these problems, this thesis aims at providing an interpretation for language variation in China English on the basis of a new theoretical framework of transfer theory.

## Chapter 3 Theoretical Framework of Transfer Theory

### 3.1 Definition of Transfer

Language transfer is also called cross-linguistic influence. The origins of the term go back to Behaviorism and its view that the L1 habits influence the acquisition of the L2 habits. Although it is later discredited, the notion of transfer has been revived again and remains fundamental in L2 acquisition research. Although language transfer has been studied for a long time, it is difficult to give the definition for the sake of controversy among linguists.

Odlin (2001: 25) sums up four conceptions of transfer in his book. First, transfer is not simply a consequence of habit formation. Second, transfer is not simply interference. Third, transfer is not simply a falling back on the native language. Fourth, transfer is not always native language influence. To adequately characterize the phenomena, Odlin (2001: 27) offers a working definition of transfer:

Transfer is the influence resulting from similarities and differences between the target language and any other language that has been previously (and perhaps imperfectly) acquired.

Transfer viewed in this way is far removed from the original use of the term in behaviourist theories of language learning. This definition, although somewhat vague (as Odlin admits), provides an adequate basis for the material to be considered in this chapter.

### 3.2 Development of Transfer Theory

The development of the theory about language transfer has undergone three stages. In the 1950s and 1960s, transfer was understood within a behaviourist framework of learning. The theory of language transfer was dominant in the research and teaching of L2 acquisition. Linguists regarded language transfer as the major obstacles of L2 acquisition and believed that the learners' errors and difficulties could be predicted through the contrast of NL and TL. Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis (CAH) was most popular at that time.

Since the late 1960s, there had been criticism of language transfer from practice, theory and research. Firstly, teachers found from experience that not all the errors made by L2 learners were due to the interference of NL. Secondly, behaviorism was challenged by mentalism and recognition. Thirdly, the hypothesis that difference equals difficulty and that similarity equals ease proved to be very imperfect in the empirical research. As a result, language transfer had lost its dominant position by the end of 1970s.

Since 1980s, there has been a successful reappraisal of language transfer and more and more attention has been turned to it. Linguists agree that even though language transfer can not explain all the aspects of L2 acquisition, none of the aspects can be explained well without consideration of language transfer. The theory of language transfer has been further improved since it was combined with linguistic universals, cognitive theory and social factors.

This chapter is primarily concerned with the cognitive accounts of language transfer which have now superseded the behaviourist views outlined above.

### 3.3 Manifestations of Transfer

In traditional accounts of language transfer, the research focus is placed on the errors that learners produce. Errors occur as a result of the negative transfer of mother tongue patterns into the learner's L2. It is possible to identify a number of other manifestations of transfer.

#### 3.3.1 Positive Transfer and Negative Transfer

One important distinction is between positive transfer and negative transfer in terms of the varied effects that cross-linguistic similarities and differences can produce.

Positive transfer is the transfer that makes learning easier, and may occur when both NL and TL have the same form. Odlin (2001: 36) points out that the effects of positive transfer can only be observed when such comparisons often show that cross-linguistic similarities can produce positive transfer in several ways. Similarities between NL and TL vocabulary can reduce the time needed to develop good reading comprehension. Similarities in syntactic structure can facilitate the acquisition of grammar. And similarities between writing systems can give learners a head start in reading and writing in TL.

Negative transfer, also known as interference, is the use of a native-language pattern or rule, which leads to an error or inappropriate form in TL. Odlin (2001: 37) also lists four results of negative transfer. They are *underproduction*, *overproduction*, *production errors* and *misinterpretation*. *Underproduction* refers to the fact that learners may produce very few or no examples of a target language structure. *Overproduction* is sometimes simply a consequence of underproduction or can arise for other reasons. *Production errors* refer to three types of errors especially likely to arise from similarities and differences in the native and target languages: *substitutions*, *calques* and alterations of structures. *Misinterpretation* refers to the influence of native language structures on the interpretation of target language messages sometimes leads to learners inferring something different from what speakers of the target language would infer.

Moreover, Ellis (1999) offers other similar manifestations of transfer, which involve facilitation (positive transfer), *errors* (negative transfer), *avoidance*, and *over-use*. According to Ellis (1999: 302), facilitation, or positive transfer, is evident not so much in the total absence of certain errors, but rather in a reduced number of errors and also in the rate of learning; *errors*, traditionally, are regarded as a result of the negative transfer, and now a great amount of empirical research has been devoted to establishing to what extent errors are the result of transfer or are intralingual in nature; *avoidance* refers to the phenomenon that learners avoid using linguistic structures which they find difficult because of differences between their NL and TL; the overuse of certain grammatical forms in L2 acquisition can result from transfer or from intralingual processes such as overgeneralization. Ellis' classification will be applied to this study to analyze the collected data owing to its concision and convenience.

### 3.3.2 Communication Transfer and Learning Transfer

Another important distinction is between transfer in L2 communication and transfer in L2 learning.

Transfer in communication involves the use of the L1 to either receive incoming messages (reception) or to process output (production). There is general acceptance that transfer in communication is common. Corder (1983) views it as a communication strategy, which he terms *borrowing*. However not all communication transfer need be strategic in nature. "Færch and Kasper (1986) distinguish three types of production transfer. In the case of *strategic transfer*, the learner gives focal attention to a planning problem and to its solution, which may involve the use of the L1. This is Corder's *borrowing*. *Subsidiary transfer* occurs when there is no focal awareness of either the production problem or of the transferred L1 knowledge, although awareness may develop later as a result of monitoring. *Automatic transfer* takes place when the learner makes use of a highly automatized L1 subroutine. In this case, attention is completely diverted to other aspects in the production process" (cf. Ellis 1999: 336). Transfer in communication is motivated by the learner's desire to comprehend or produce messages, but it may also have an effect on the process of hypothesis construction and testing, which many scholars see as central to interlanguage development. In other words, transfer in communication may lead to transfer in learning.

Transfer in learning occurs when the learner uses the L1 in the attempt to develop hypotheses about L2 rules. The general view is that direct learning transfer regularly occurs and that it can be best explained within a cognitive rather than in a behaviourist framework. Transfer is conceptualized as one strategy operating within a general process of hypotheses construction and testing.

According to Kasper (1984) and Færch and Kasper (1986), there are a number of possibilities. One is that transfer is primarily a characteristic of communication; a second is that it is primarily a feature of learning; while a third is that both communication and learning transfer are significant and inter-related aspects of L2 acquisition. Kasper (1984: 20) points out, "Learners sometimes transfer in want of a better solution even though they consider a given concept non-transferable." Thus, not all L1 features found in communication transfer will find their way into the learner's interlanguage.

### 3.4 Constraints on Transfer

Increasingly, researchers have sought to identify the conditions that promote and inhibit transfer. In this section we will consider a number of different constraints on transfer which incorporate linguistic, psycholinguistic and sociolinguistic factors. According to Ellis (1999: 315), they are: 1) language level (transfer occurs at the levels of phonology, lexis, syntax, grammar and discourse), 2) linguistic awareness (conscious or unconscious), 3) sociolinguistic factors (the effects of the social context and the relationship between the speaker and the addressee on transfer), 4) markedness (the extent to which specific linguistic features are 'special' in some way), 5) language distance and psychotypology (the perceptions that speakers have regarding the similarity and difference between languages), and 6)

developmental factors (constraints relating to the natural processes of interlanguage development). It should be noted that these are not the only constraining factors. Non-structural factors such as individual learner differences (such as personality and age), and the nature of the tasks a learner is performing, also constrain L1 transfer. The research that has investigated these constraints help us to understand what is transferred and what is not and also when transfer takes place and when it does not.

The following are some detailed accounts of the constraints on transfer, which maybe have more effects on the later discussion in the paper.

### **1) Language Level**

“Any study of transfer must naturally provide a detailed consideration of cross-linguistic differences in structure” (Odlin 2001: 129). Transfer occurs in all linguistic subsystems. Kellerman comments “there are enormous quantities of evidence for the influence of the L1 on IL (interlanguage) when it comes to lexis” (cf. Ellis 1999: 316). Occurrences of lexical transfer are generally cases of both morphological and semantic transfer. In syntax, cross-linguistic influence is evident in a number of areas, including word order, relative clauses, articles, and verb phrases. In Odlin’s view, there is considerable evidence for positive transfer involving some syntactic structures. And a great deal of evidence has also been found for syntactic transfer (both positive and negative) in studies of word order and relative clauses. Cross-linguistic differences in discourse may “lead to second language speech or writing that differs greatly from the discourse norms of the target language” and it seems that discourse transfer “has considerable potential to interact with other subsystems, including syntax” (Odlin 2001: 70). Evidence for transfer in all aspects of language is now abundant.

### **2) Linguistic Awareness**

Linguistic awareness can be either conscious or unconscious. When awareness is conscious, people frequently give a name to the object of their awareness. However aware people are of various formal units, their awareness is frequently as much social as it is linguistic. In L2 acquisition the linguistic awareness that learners show frequently reflects social considerations.

### **3) Sociolinguistic Factors**

Sociolinguistic factors have also been shown to influence when and to what extent transfer takes place. They include the effects of the social context and the relationship between the speaker and the addressee on transfer.

“It has been suggested that when learners attend to external norms, as they are likely to in classroom settings, transfer will be impeded. However, learners may also make use of L1 forms in their careful style if they have a strong social motivation to do so” (Ellis 1999: 334). The social context can influence the extent to which transfer occurs. “There is no reason to believe that social constraints on transfer are uniform everywhere. In fact, there is evidence suggesting that the importance of transfer in any situation varies largely according to the social context” (Odlin 2001: 144).

### 3.5 Model for Analyzing China English

Most of the discussions of cross-linguistic influences in language learning have focused on negative transfer. While positive transfer is also important, most researches on China English have not addressed this issue. The Chinese transfer in China English is not only a linguistic phenomenon, but also a cultural one; not only the presentation of unique Chinese objects in English, but also the one of Chinese thinking pattern which has been formed through history. As an inevitable phenomenon, it is neither possible nor necessary to eliminate it from China English.

Therefore, my research will be basically set within such a theoretical framework from which we can observe the variations in the long run of the development of China English. It is designed to investigate variations in China English in terms of lexical, syntactic, textual and grammatical transfer.

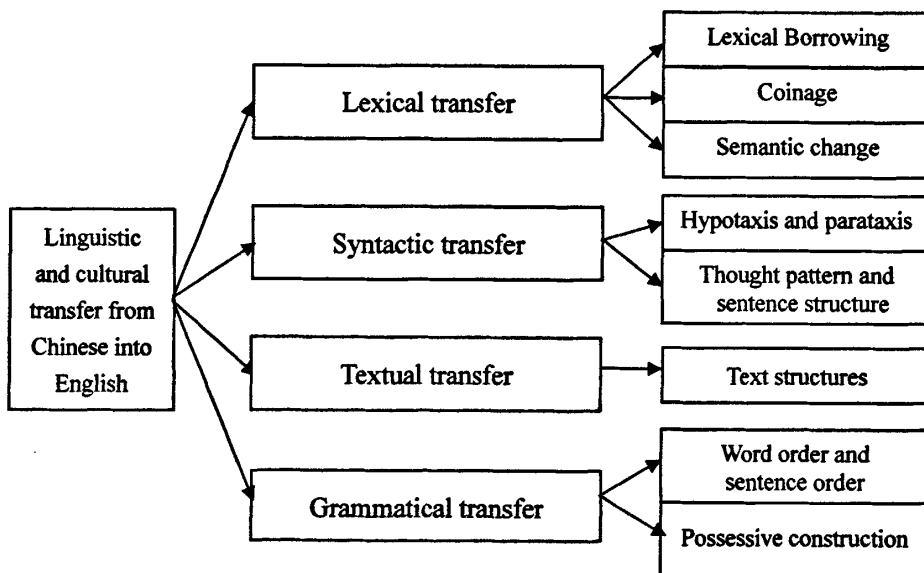


Figure 3-1 Model for Analyzing China English

## Chapter 4 Linguistic and Cultural Transfer

### from Chinese into English

Odlin (2001: 27) defines transfer as “the influence resulting from similarities and differences between the target language and any other language that has been previously (and perhaps imperfectly) acquired.” Transfer depends greatly on the systematic comparisons of languages provided by contrastive analyses. There is considerable variation in the quality of cross-linguistic comparisons.

In Ellis's view, language transfer also called cross-linguistic influence occurs in all aspects of language, and may not always manifest itself as errors (the focus of early studies), but also as avoidance, overuse and facilitation (positive transfer). In traditional accounts of language transfer, one obvious shortcoming lies in the emphasis on the negative aspects of transfer and the corresponding neglect of L1 as a variable facilitating L2-learning. Although it is not uncommon among researchers to mention the existence of positive transfer or a similar term, there is a conspicuous absence of investigations of exactly how the L1 functions as an aid, not an obstacle, to L2-learning. Current discussions of transfer emphasize the necessity of considering the multiple ways in which L1 influence can exert itself. It is clearly insufficient to focus exclusively on production errors, as many of the subtle manifestations of transfer will be missed.

Therefore, in this paper, the notion of transfer means in two aspects: first, it includes both linguistic and non-linguistic influence; second, it lays focus on its results, namely, characteristics of English produced by Chinese users. In other words, the results of the transfer are not necessarily the errors interfered by Chinese in the process of learning English, but rather the characteristics of English produced by Chinese users, hence the characteristics of China English. The transfer can be found theoretically at different language levels, namely, phonological, lexical, syntactic, textual and grammatical levels. The following part will be devoted mainly to lexical, syntactic, textual and grammatical transfer.

#### 4.1 Lexical Transfer

*Oxford Advanced Learner's English-Chinese Dictionary* says “If, as most scholars agree, it is a sign of vigor for a language to show change, then English is in excellent health. Such change in any language is seen in grammar and pronunciation but perhaps most clearly of all in the vocabulary” (cf. Hu & Li 2004: 181).

Vocabulary is the linguistic level at which the variation of language can be most easily, quickly and fully revealed. In other words, any change of a language is usually first reflected in vocabulary. Lexical transfer of China English lies mainly in lexical borrowing, coinage and semantic change.

##### 4.1.1 Lexical Borrowing

English has been flourishing in China since the national policy of reform and opening was carried out. China starts to introduce itself to the world in full scale, and the world begins

to know China unprecedentedly. Sapir (1921: 206) says "The simplest kind of influence that one language may exert on another is the 'borrowing' of words. When there is cultural borrowing there is always the likelihood that the associated words may be borrowed too." When cultural contact happens, words are often borrowed from one language to another. Many new creative expressions appear to express the uniqueness of Chinese culture and ways of life, which have enriched English language. Generally speaking, Chinese borrowings fall into three categories: those through transliteration, those through loan translation and those through CPE (Chinese Pidgin English).

First is the transliteration from Chinese speech, sometimes from classic Chinese, or from southern Chinese dialects, such as Canton (Guangzhou), Wu, Amoy (Xiamen), or indirectly from Japanese, Portuguese, for instance, *tycoon* (大君) and *typhoon* (台风) (cf. Pan 2005: 132). Lexical borrowing in this sense may be explained as the use of L1 lexical items in L2, not necessarily involving any formal change. However, the main source is from the present standard pronunciation system, *Pinyin*, a fact largely due to China's language planning policy in which the use of *putonghua* is encouraged nationwide to facilitate a standard form of communication. Examples are classified as follows:

(1) about politics:

gung ho(共和), wan sui(万岁), dazibao(大字报), shuanggui(双规), dibao(低保), zoutai(走台), etc.

(2) about history and culture:

cheongsam(旗袍), fenghuang(凤凰), putonghua(普通话), pai-hua(白话文), xiuca(秀才), yamen(衙门), Yum Cha(饮茶), lama(喇嘛), etc.

(3) about recreational and sports activities:

pi pa(琵琶), erhu(二胡), xiao(箫), yuqin(月琴), wushu(武术), kung fu(功夫), tai chi(太极拳), qigong(气功), yang ko(秧歌), weichi(围棋), mahjong(麻将), etc.

(4) about local conditions and customs:

feng shui(风水), kang(炕), kowtow(叩头), Chingming(清明), Qixi(七夕), paikau(牌九), tong(堂), Kwai-tse(鬼子, 洋鬼子), etc.

(5) about food:

tangyuan(汤圆), tofu(豆腐), jiaozi(饺子), baozi(包子), chopsoy(炒杂碎), chow mien(炒面), won ton(馄饨), moo goo gai pan(蘑菇鸡片), Wu Liang Ye(五粮液), Moutai/Maotai(茅台), etc.

(6) about names of persons and places:

Confucius(孔夫子), Hu Jintao(胡锦涛), Jiang Zemin(江泽民), Beijing(北京), Shanghai(上海), Lhasa(拉萨), Tibet(西藏), etc.

(7) about measurement units:

yuan(元), jiao(角), fen(分), mu(亩), li(里/厘), liang(两), jin(斤), qian(钱), Yang(阳) Yin(阴), etc.

(8) about trademarks:



Maxzm(美加净), Hisense(海信), Haier(海尔), Changhong(长虹), etc.

(9) about tea:

Bohea(武夷), Pekoe(白毫茶), Congou(工夫茶), Hyson(熙春茶), Twankay(屯溪), Keemun(祁门), Oolong(乌龙茶), etc.

(10) about animals:

Shanghai(浦东鸡), kylin(麒麟), Shih Tzu(狮子狗), chow(一种浓毛黑鼻中国狗), etc.

(11) about plants:

kaoliang(高粱), ginkgo(银杏), mandarin(中国柑橘), litchi/lichee(荔枝), longan(龙眼, 桂圆), cumquat(金橘), tung(桐油树), ginseng(人参), whangee(黄竹), whampee(黄皮), etc.

The examples demonstrate different sources of Chinese borrowings. In terms of them, three different varieties can be identified: classic Chinese, Chinese dialects and *Pinyin*. Words like *yamen* and *kowtow* are borrowed from classic Chinese. Words such as *chow mien*, *mahjong* and *Bohea* are borrowed respectively from southern dialects of Cantonese, Wu and Amoy, whereas most of words are transliterated through *Pinyin*. Because of historical reason, these varieties are used as different sources of borrowings. China has a history of linguistic contact with English which dates back to the seventeenth century when English first reached southern China. This period was followed by increasing contact between the two languages as a result of British colonization. Consequently, local dialects of southern China serve as the early source of Chinese borrowings.

However, the long-standing inconsistent Chinese pronunciation system, together with different dialects makes early Chinese borrowings look strange to Chinese readers today. Therefore, some of such spellings have been replaced consciously by the standard pronunciation system, *Pinyin*. The names of Chinese dynasties such as *Chou*, *Chin*, *Sung* and *Ching* have been replaced by *Zhou*, *Qin*, *Song* and *Qing* respectively (Pan 2005: 134). Other words such as *Lhasa*, *chow mien*, *tai chi* and *kung fu* maintain their old spellings due to their high profile overseas and their entering into English dictionaries.

In recent years, the main source has been from *Pinyin*, for instance, *dibao*, *jiaozi*, *yuan*, *Changhong*, etc. In terms of the political influence, *Pinyin* plays a very important role in safeguarding the national dignity and sovereignty. For instance, in order to be strongly against Japan's possession of *Diaoyudao* (钓鱼岛), we never translate the island into *Senkakus*. And it is necessary to use China English versions when *Nansha Islands* (南沙群岛) and *Xisha Islands* (西沙群岛) are referred to in world affairs. In this situation, a Chinese borrowing is used consciously as a substitution for the English equivalent because we have a strong social motivation. It is necessary for us to avoid transfer in general recognition of the importance of external norms, but in cases where the use of *Pinyin* appears socially appropriate we may still resort to transfer.

(12) idioms and proverbs:

- ① Three cobblers with their wits combined equal *Chukel Liang*, the master mind.  
(三个臭皮匠, 顶个诸葛亮)

- ② Show off proficiency with axe before *Lu Ban*, the master carpenter. (班门弄斧)
- ③ *Tung Shih* imitating *His Shih*. *His Shih* was a famous beauty in the ancient Kingdom of Yuel. *Tung Shih* was an ugly girl who tried to imitate her way.  
(东施效颦)
- ④ The man of *Chi* worried lest the sky fall. (杞人忧天)
- ⑤ Lord *Ye*'s love of dragons. (叶公好龙)
- ⑥ *Liang Shanbo* and *Zhu Yingtai*, the *Romeo* and *Juliet* in China. (梁祝)

It is obvious these examples reflect Chinese cultural features. The italicized parts are famous historical figures in China. So a suitable English equivalent is difficult to find in expressing Chinese culture. In other words, it is inevitable to use *Pinyin* to convey what Chinese is in an English sentence. Besides, there is still an English explanation next to *Pinyin*. Chinese borrowings and English are complementary to each other, making both English and Chinese readers better informed.

At present, a great number of Chinese borrowings, which are used to describe and state Chinese matters and concepts that often have no English equivalents, have been collected in English dictionaries. It depends very much on the change of societies and the development of China. There are inevitably more chances for Chinese borrowings to join in English vocabulary repertoire, as long as there are more chances for language contact between English and Chinese and for communication between China and the world in English.

Second, Chinese borrowings are formed through loan translation (or calques). These words or expressions are "formed from the materials that already exist in the borrowing language but according to patterns from another language by way of literal morpheme-for-morpheme translation" (Hu 2001: 96). However, on many occasions, An English equivalent cannot be found for a typical Chinese idea, subject or matter, such as *Great Learning*, *May Fourth Movement*. On some other occasions, the phrases may be somewhat difficult to comprehend, there needs to be a further explanation after translation. For instance:

- (13) Yet in the eyes of the *Jade Emperor*, the *Supreme Deity* in *Taoism*, marriage between a mortal and a fairy was strictly forbidden.

(*Beijing Review*, August 29, 2007)

The meaning of the phrase seems easily comprehensible after a short yet clear explanation. This usage is very efficient in cross-cultural communication. Consequently, loan translation has become a very important way to introduce Chinese borrowings into English. It is very common in China English media. Below are some examples:

- (14) about politics:

spiritual civilization(精神文明), Three Represents(三个代表), rule by virtue(以德治国), the Gang of Four(四人帮), the Tenth Five-year Plan ( "十五" 计划), enter by the back door ( "走后门" ), only adequate food and clothing(温饱), etc.

- (15) about economics:

red packet(红包), iron rice bowl(铁饭碗), open-door policy(开放政策), re-employment program(再就业工程), a well-off society(小康社会), the reform of state-owned enterprises(国企改革), etc.

## (16) about history and culture:

facial make-up(脸谱), Taoism(道教), Buddhism(儒释道), the Analects(《论语》), the Four Books and the Five Classics(《四书五经》), the Book of Changes(《易经》), etc.

## (17) about local conditions and customs:

chopsticks(筷子), Joss house(庙, 佛堂), Joss stick(线香), etc.

## (18) about food:

bear's paw(熊掌), hairy crabs(毛蟹), lotus seeds(莲子), shark's fin(鱼翅), bitter melon(苦瓜), beggar's chicken(叫花鸡), spring roll(春卷), etc.

In (14) and (15), a substantial number of loan translations are found in the political and economic registers of China English. Reform and opening up constitute the most salient features of the new period in China. From the last two decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century on, many new words and expressions with Chinese characteristics have boomed into English. Their appearance is owing to the 16<sup>th</sup> CPC National Congress in particular. Some of them, though uncommon in native English culture, can be easily understood by foreign people. Others may first sound strange and fresh to the foreigners, but after the specific context has been provided along with proper explanations, they can be easily understood and accepted by international readers.

Words shown in (16) and (17) are matters and concepts peculiar to China, originated from ancient literature, philosophic thinking or Buddhism culture. They are heavily culture-loaded and have historical connotations. Even the present Chinese youth without much knowledge of Confucius and Chinese religion would feel confused by what it exactly refers to. So when introducing these words to foreigners, we need to add a long explanation. In fact, most of them have entered into English dictionaries, due to the influence of Chinese traditional culture.

Loan translations in (18) are grouped according to the heading "food". China is a country where "the masses regard food as their heaven". Moreover, Chinese cuisine is well developed and becomes the interest of Westerners. However, no English equivalent can be found for typical Chinese food. So in most situations, they will be expressed in Chinese borrowings: some as (5) shows, others as (18) shows. There is no reason why these words can not make their way into English dictionaries in the future.

## (19) idioms and four-character expressions:

调虎离山: to lure the tiger out of the mountains

倾国倾城: to overthrow cities and ruin states

立党之本, 执政之基, 力量之源: the foundation for building our Party, the cornerstone for its governance and the source of its strength

政治协商, 民主监督和参政议政: political consultation, democratic supervision and participation in and deliberation of state affairs

The first two examples are translations of Chinese idioms. At present, more and more Chinese translators seem to prefer English versions with Chinese features. Although the linguistic expressions are alienated to English readers, with the help of context, the ideas

beyond the language can be easily accepted. At the same time they maintain the Chineseness of idioms. In this sense, the form of literal translation is much better than the seemingly English equivalent. Four-character expressions are another resource of typical China English which is very rich in setting phrases, proverbs and epigrams. As politics-bound words, they reflect not only the unique feature of Chinese language but also the ideology of Chinese people.

As English is used for a larger number of purposes in China, a great many calques have been transferred into English. They have not been necessarily included in the lexicons of native English varieties but have high frequency in local English usage. They are somewhat a compromise between speakers of Chinese and those of English, and also the negotiation between the two cultures.

However, it by no means implies that all Chinese terms can be transferred into English in this way. Some words through loan translation are not properly used. For instance, *first products*(拳头商品), *run car*(跑车), *running dog*(走狗), etc. In English culture, a dog is a pet which can even be considered as a family member. If translated literally into English *running dog*, it is hard for English speakers to understand why “走狗” is a pejorative term in Chinese. Such a translation equivalent may produce a cultural conflict between speakers of Chinese and English. Therefore we must be careful in assuming that literal translation gives exact equivalents in meaning or that different languages always have words to express the same thing. When a suitable English equivalent is easy to find in expressing Chinese culture, we should avoid such literal translation. Hence, we can correct the above words into *competitive (hit, first) products*, *sports car*, and *an evil follower* respectively.

Third, Chinese Pidgin English does contributions to the formation of Chinese borrowings in English. A famous example is the greeting expression: *long time no see*(很久不见), besides *chop-chop*(快), *chin-chin*(请, 请), *sampan*(舢板), *people mountains and people seas*(人山人海), etc.

According to Ellis (1999: 28), “Both translation and borrowing—the use of the L1 to deal with some communication problem—are examples of communication transfer.” In other words, all the above expressions of Chinese borrowings which reflect the unique features of Chinese language and culture are examples of communication transfer. They are used for purposes of communication. Furthermore, in the process of assimilation into English, some of them have changed so much that it is difficult to recognize their origins, for instance, *tea*, *silk*, and *china*.

#### 4.1.2 Coinage

“Even in very dissimilar languages, however, there do appear instances of morphological transfer” (Odlin 2001: 83). We can also find many new words which are coined to cater to local unique objects and concepts in China English. With reference to current models of word-formation in the field of World Englishes, “coinage of new items, through a number of processes, including: analogical constructions, clippings, abbreviations, total innovations, new compounds, prefixed compounds and hybrid compounds” (Bolton 2003: 212). In the following section, the coinage of new items will be dealt with in terms of some processes.

#### 4.1.2.1 Abbreviations

Abbreviations are very common in China English. The process of abbreviations leads to a great number of China-specific acronyms, which are made up of the first letters of the name of an organization. These acronyms are highly common in China English media. Acronyms peculiar to China are equally popular, especially when used to name political, cultural and economic administrations, organizations and systems. Examples of acronyms are many, such as:

(20)

CCTV (China Central Television)

CPC (Communist Party of China)

CPPCC (the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference)

HKSAR (Hong Kong Special Administrative Region)

SEZ (special economic zone)

SOE (state-owned enterprises)

ABC (American-born Chinese)

NBCP (the National Bureau of Corruption Prevention)

Acronyms tend to be cautiously handled in usage, following the standard practice of offering the original form with the abbreviated form, to ensure understanding by both domestic and foreign readers. However, some acronyms appear more regularly in the abbreviated form only, such as *CCTV*, due to their common usage and higher profile.

Recently, there is a tendency to form a new word which is made up of several words with the same initial letter. For instance, "*S*" *Plan*, the new trend in 2007's healthy project, is composed of several words with "S" as initial letter: Sleep better, be strong in both mind and better, become slim, smile confidently, have a sunny heart, smart adds your charms. *3C* stands for computer, communication and consumer electronics. These words appear frequently in China English media.

#### 4.1.2.2 New Compounds

In the process of constructing new vocabulary for expressing locally unique objects and concepts, non-native English speakers also employ this strategy. New compounds are created through combining words in a way that is unique to Chinese context and used to express special Chinese matters and concepts. In some cases, new compounds may overlap considerably with the category of loan translation. However, the term new compounds here tends to focus on the creative process aspect, the result of which brings about an original combination of words, whereas loan translation lays its emphasis on the translation process. Typical examples are in the following:

(21)

Imperial examination (keju, examinations in feudal China for selecting imperial officials)

Ancestral home (zaju, place of origin of one's family's ancestors)

Dough stick (a fried stick of wheat dough)

Foodstall (an open-air pavement restaurant)

Street hawker (an unlicensed street trader)

Typhoon shelter (a sheltered area within a harbour)

The themes of the times (zhu xuan lǔ)

The top priority (dì yī yào wu)

#### 4.1.2.3 Prefixed Compounds

Another important component which is often found in the new compound category is prefixed compounds. By far the most productive prefix in the prefixed compounds category is *Chinese*, although *China*, *dragon* and *mandarin* also have certain productivity. Below are some examples:

(22)

Chinese cabbage (baicai),

Chinese calendar (nongli)

Chinese character (hanzi)

Chinese chess (xiangqi)

Chinese gooseberry (mihoutao)

Chinese medicine (zhongyao)

Chinese New Year (chunjie)

China English (zhongguoyingyu)

Dragon boat (longzhou)

Mandarin collar (qipao ling)

On reading such words, readers will immediately associate them with Chinese culture, which makes it an efficient way of establishing Chinese identity. These words are not only Chinese in origin, but also, more importantly, carry the most direct and distinctive cultural symbol—the words *Chinese*, *China* and *dragon* themselves.

#### 4.1.2.4 Hybrid Compounds

In morphology a hybrid refers to a compound or derived word whose single elements come from different languages. English has absorbed elements from many different languages in the development of English vocabulary. Hybrid compounds in this section particularly refer to words or phrases having both the elements of Chinese and English. Hybrid compounds with Chinese as modifiers are highly common in China English. They can be found in a large number of examples, such as:

(23)

Mao-jacket (zhongshanzhuang),

Tan tan noodles (dandanmian),

Ming Dynasty (mingchao),

Qingming festival (qingmingjie),

Han people (hanzu),

Shanghai's Jinmao Tower (jinmaodasha)

Nanmu wood (nanmu),

Huangshan Mountain (huangshan),

Zisha sand (zisha),

Yongdingmen Gate (yongdingmen),

Pingju opera (pingju),  
Siheyuan courtyard (siheyuan)

There is some overlap of the meaning in Chinese and English. The compound words sometimes show redundancy in structure. Among examples listed above, *Huangshan Mountain* shows redundancy of Chinese element *shan* and English element *mountain*. And so is the case in *Nanmu wood*, *Yongdingmen Gate*, *Zisha sand*, *Pingju opera*, *Siheyuan courtyard*. It might be a compromise for both Chinese and foreigners to serve the purpose of effective communication.

Many of names of the historical sites and scenes in China are expressed similarly in mixed forms. It cares for travelers at home and abroad. It also cares for two different cultures, Chinese and English.

Besides, both English prefixes and suffixes are used in the process of derivation. The prefixes used in common include pre-, post-, neo-, pro-, anti-, as in: *pre-/post-Qing* (period), *Neo-Confucianism*, *pro-/anti-Kuomintang*, *non-Han Chinese*. Commonly adopted suffixes in “Chinese base plus English suffix” are suffixes such as -er, -ese, -ism, -ist and -ize, as in: *Beijinger*, *Taoism*, *Maoist*, etc. They reflect a fusion of Chinese *Pinyin* and English prefixes and suffixes.

#### 4.1.3 Semantic Change

As revealed in the last two sections, lexical items may be borrowed or coined to a language. “It is also true that words may shift in meaning, i.e. semantic change” (Dai et al. 2002: 102). Semantic change plays a very active role in enriching the vocabulary of a language. It is an important source of constructing World Englishes vocabulary besides an important process of lexical evolvement. This feature can be found in various varieties of English, as has been demonstrated in the studies on Indian English (Kachru 1965) and Hong Kong English (Bolton 2003), etc. This area has always proved to be a very dynamic one in the field of World Englishes. When dealing with semantic change, we often recognize three categories which are semantic extension, semantic restriction and semantic shift. In this section we shall look at three processes for semantic change, namely, semantic extension and restriction, and semantic shift.

##### 4.1.3.1 Semantic Extension and Restriction

Semantic extension involves extending or elevating the meaning from its originally specific sense to a relatively general one. An interesting example is the word *tail*, which originally meant the tail of a horse. Now it refers to the tail of any animal. Contrary to semantic extension, semantic restriction refers to the restriction of a word to a narrower or more specific sense. For instance, the word *meat*, which used to mean food, but now, refers to flesh of certain animals being edible. Semantic extension and restriction often occur in the process of English development. This semantic process is also present in China English.

Consider the word *intellectuals* that shows semantic extension in the following example:

(24) Learning that I was to take the exam, many of my colleagues disagreed and asked me to give up as at that time *intellectuals* were not considered respectable.

(*Beijing Review*, August 31, 2007)

The term, *intellectuals*, in most English speaking countries refers to only people with high academic status such as college professors. However in China English, the term refers not only to people who have had a college education: college teachers, media doctors, scientists, engineers, middle or primary school teachers, college students, but also to those senior high school students in some rural areas. The English word covers a much smaller range of people than its counterpart in Chinese culture. Chinese people bring their own cultural experience to the understanding of the word *intellectuals*. Hence, in this case the word *intellectuals* has acquired an additional meaning to its original one. We can find many more examples such as *social sciences*, *working class*, kinship terms, etc.

(25) Since last year, Tang has designed the interior of a 300-square-meter *drugstore* in Lhasa and finished the design plans for the city's first apartment building equipped with elevators.

(*China Daily*, August 3, 2007)

A *drugstore* or a *chemist's shop* is another example which shows semantic restriction. In a *drugstore* (American English) or a *chemist's shop* (Britain English), medicines, toiletries, and various other small articles (soft drinks, cosmetics, magazines, etc.) are sold. One can even get food in a drugstore. However, in the repertoire of China English, only medicines and some kinds of medical apparatuses are sold. Another important difference between them is that one can buy most kinds of medicines in China, but without a doctor's prescription one can buy only a few kinds of medicines in English-speaking countries. Chinese society has a different concept regarding the word *drugstore* because of different Chinese culture and ideology.

#### 4.1.3.2 Semantic Shift

In the English discourse produced by the Chinese, there are many words or phrases which are English in form but Chinese in meaning. As early as in 1987, Xu Guozhang pointed out that China English, while perfectly grammatical, uses many words which are English in lexical form but Chinese in cultural content (cf. Chen 2005: 17). We group these words into the lexical transfer with nativized semantic shift, which mainly refers to words and phrases that are used with intactness in form and change in meaning or connotation. The exploration in this part will be from two points, lexical meanings and connotations.

Semantic shift in China English is often manifested in the transfer of meaning as the following examples illustrate:

(26) But these *golden weeks* are considerably helping to boost domestic consumption. Some people have even suggested that the number of *golden weeks* should be extended.

(*Beijing Review*, January 8, 2007)

There are long festivals and holidays every year in China. Each of three seven-day holidays—Labor Day, May 1-7, National Day, October 1-7 and the Spring Festival which varies in date year by year, is named *golden weeks*. Large numbers of Chinese people spend seven-day holidays in traveling, shopping, visiting relatives and friends, etc. We call them *golden weeks* because this extremely stimulates compatriots' consumption and brings



tremendous commercial chances reflecting the surging retailing volume of social consumption. However, it tends to cancel seven-day holidays now because of various social problems resulted from central consumption. Some deputies to the NPC suggest decentralizing these seven-day holidays among more Chinese traditional holidays from this year on.

(27) What merits' noticing, however, is that as a result of preferential state policies in *family planning*, the population of ethnic minorities has increased dramatically in recent years.

(*Beijing Review*, May 28, 2007)

*Family planning* is a state policy implemented to check excessive population growth in the 1970s in China. The semantic meaning of this word can only be explored in a particular historical background in China, because Chinese cultural meaning has been transferred into the word *family planning*, which in British English is restricted to the register of family.

According to *Longman Dictionary of Language Teaching & Applied Linguistics* (2003: 108), connotation means "the additional meanings that a word or phrase has beyond its central meaning". According to the *Webster*, it means "the suggesting of a meaning by a word apart from the thing it explicitly names or describes". Connotations of words vary from culture to culture. Therefore, a same word in two different languages may have totally different connotations. If they are ignored, serious misunderstandings may occur in cross-cultural communication. The connotations of a lot of English words differ from those of their translation equivalents in China English. Semantic shift as represented in the shift of lexical connotations will be discussed in the following examples:

(28) "I haven't made that much contribution," said Qu Yajuan, adding that she was just the right person chosen as an object of *propaganda* at the time.

(*Beijing Review*, June 15, 2007)

(29) For years, media organizations have been nothing but government *propaganda* machines.

(*Beijing Review*, July 6, 2007)

In English the word *propaganda* is basically derogatory in sense and in connotation. However, in China English, as in (28) the word is used in a positive way and has a perfectly respectable meaning; as in (29) the word is used in different aspects of everyday life to mean the "passing of information", a neutral term.

The following examples show the use of the words *ambitious* and *aggressive*.

(30) Even if the president and the executive branch do get things right, the effort will be eviscerated if overly *ambitious* politicians in the legislative branch make a brutal hash of coherent policy.

(*Beijing Review*, September 7, 2007)

(31) Seeing their children embrace this laid-back lifestyle, traditionalists view it as the result of the invasion of an *aggressive* Western culture.

(*Beijing Review*, December 22, 2006)

*Ambitious* means eager to attain success, honor, power, fame, etc. And *aggressive* means enterprising and forceful. In the western culture, these are considered good qualities. It is

legitimate and even desirable for one to fight to attain one's objectives and find one's way to achieve high social status. Therefore they are both positive in meaning. However, in the Chinese culture, modesty is highly valued. It is natural that Chinese people would not like ambitious or aggressive persons. Therefore they are both pejorative in connotation.

However in recent years the word *ambitious* shows a tendency of moving towards employing a positive connotation as is found in the common usage of the west. Let us see the following examples:

(32) After Jiang's speech, several prestigious Chinese universities put forward the *ambitious* goal of becoming top-ranking world universities.

(*Beijing Review*, September 4, 2007)

(33) Between September 2003 and August 2007, he was deputy head of a committee under the State Council, China's cabinet, which oversees an *ambitious* project to divert water from the country's humid south to arid north.

(*Beijing Review*, September 7, 2007)

This shows a shift back to the mainstream usage of the word due to the fact of China's increasing contact with the world and the fact that the word used in this way may cause misunderstanding in international communication. However, this does not mean that all words with a semantic shift from native English usage should be corrected.

Many positive or neutral words in English, yet their corresponding items in Chinese might have undesirable connotations, and the translation equivalents of some positive or neutral words in Chinese may be pejorative in meaning to English-speaking people, too. Wang Zhenya (1999: 76) summarizes in the following:

Words positive in meaning in English but pejorative or neutral in Chinese: sexy, young, dog, ambitious, aggressive, self-made man, individualism, equalitarianism or egalitarianism.

Words neutral in meaning in English but pejorative in Chinese: landlord, capitalist, boss, lover, free love.

Words pejorative in meaning in English but positive or neutral in Chinese: old, peasant, comrade, do-gooder, propaganda.

The variations of evaluative attitudes towards so-called "same" words between Chinese and English native speakers reflect to some extent the cultural values and concepts peculiar to Chinese and English.

In summary, the vocabulary items of China English conform to the fundamental standard—intelligibility as well as Chinese national conditions. They are not only borrowed or coined to cater to local unique objects and concepts, but also shift in meaning or connotation in terms of cultural values and concepts peculiar to China. In reality, they are the result of linguistic and cultural transfer from Chinese to English. With China's getting stronger day by day, they will play greater roles in cross-cultural communication.

## 4.2 Syntactic Transfer

A sentence in a language is not just a random collection of linguistic units which are smaller than sentences. Rather, in any language these linguistic units are related in meaningful ways. However, the ways in which the relationships between linguistic units are represented in speech or writing vary from language to language.

English is a synthetic language, emphasizing hypotaxis, and English people's analytic thinking dominates, while Chinese is an analytic language, emphasizing parataxis, and Chinese people's comprehensive thinking dominates. Chinese thinking is inevitably and obviously transferred into English at the syntactic level in China English.

### 4.2.1 Hypotaxis and Parataxis

According to *American Heritage Dictionary*, Hypotaxis (形合) means "the dependent or subordinate construction or relationship of clauses with connectives; for example, I shall despair if you don't come"(cf. Song 2003: 93).

According to *The World Book Dictionary*, Parataxis (意合) means "the arranging of clauses one after the other without connectives showing the relation between them. Example: The rain fell; the river flooded; the house was washed away" (cf. Song 2003: 93).

Hypotactic relations at the syntactic level refer to constructions whose components are linked through the use of conjunctions. And paratactic relations refer to constructions whose components are linked in meaning through juxtaposition and punctuation/intonation and not through the use of conjunctions. It is often said that English is more hypotactic while Chinese is more paratactic.

Due to different ways of thinking, English people attach more attention to hypotaxis and make sentences for achieving formal cohesion. They tend to use logical connectives in making a grammatical connection when there is more than one independent clause. Of course, that is not absolute. There are also paratactic sentences in the English, e.g. *All covet, all lose. Easy come, easy go. Like father, like son. Merry meet, merry part. No pains, no gains. Out of sight, out of mind. Self do, self have.* On the contrary, Chinese prefer parataxis and they resort to reasoning for achieving semantic coherence. To them, sometimes, the logical relation between two sentences is self-evident, so connective-free sentences exist in the Chinese. This point can be well illustrated by the following examples:

(34)

Safety is first and prevention is most.

安全第一，预防为主。

China enjoys political stability and unity among the people, develops all businesses and increases its national strength.

中国政通人和，百业俱兴，国力增强。

Eight do's and eight don'ts

八个坚持，八个反对。

The Party is built for the public and it exercises state power for the people.

立党为公，执政为民。

At the age of 30, a man should be able to stand on his own feet; at 40, he should be able to avoid perplexities.

三十而立，四十不惑。

A Chinese diplomat should be firm in stance, broad in vision, swift in wit, qualified in profession, outstanding in talent, noble in character.

中国外交人员应立场坚定，眼光远大，头脑敏捷，业务熟练，才华出众，风格高尚。

Comparisons between these English sentences and their Chinese counterparts show that the English versions are close to the structure of the original Chinese, and every phrase conforms to English syntax. They are not only concise in form but also effective in communication. In addition, Chinese culture is transmitted. It is often said that they are positive transfers from Chinese to English. Of course, some negative transfers are also found on line or among students, such as:

(35)

Good good study, day day up.

好好学习，天天向上。

He very much wants to go.

他非常想去。

Do people want thick road.

做人要厚道。

You have two down son.

你有两下子。

They are good examples showing that this kind of transference is not always useful or acceptable. This translation shows no concern for English culture into which it is being moved, can not serve the purpose of effective communication and is not a part of China English. In reality, sentences like this are generally used among Chinese students as something joking and can not be found as common usages in China English Media.

#### 4.2.2 Thought Pattern and Sentence Structure

Professor Lian Shuneng (2002: 40) says "Linguistic differences mainly result from the different ways of thinking." The investigation by Kaplan (1966: 6) represents: "the thought patterns of native English speakers are linear, and their analytic thinking dominates, while Chinese people are spiral, and their comprehensive thinking dominates." In this sense, at the syntactic level, English natives are firstly used to placing the main points at the beginning of a sentence and then other points are added one by one. On the contrary, Chinese people are used to explaining in a round-about way, firstly elaborate other points, and lastly make clear the main points (Jia 1990: 13). Here are some examples:

(36)

It is impossible for me to get there before July.

For me to get there before July is impossible. (CE)

要我在七月以前到达那里，是不可能的。

It is doubtful whether he would play the part.

Whether he would play the part is doubtful. (CE)

他是否愿意扮演这个角色，值得怀疑。

There is no use crying over spilt milk.

Crying over spilt milk is no use. (CE)

面对已泼出的牛奶哭叫, 是徒劳的。

Now is the best time for doing it.

The best time for doing it comes now. (CE)

做此事的最好时机到了。

(ibid.)

The topic-prominent sentence structure is a very important feature that sets Chinese apart from many other languages, particularly English which is a non-topic-prominent language. In English, nearly all sentences must have a subject, which typically occurs right before the verb and the verb agrees with it in number. In Chinese, however, the structural subjects are not obligatory while the concept of topic appears to be quite crucial in explaining the structure of ordinary sentences. "It can be assumed that the differences in selecting a topic in Chinese and a subject in English would reflect two different thinking processes for the Chinese EFL learners" (Chen 2005: 46). Professor Chen Jianping (2005) examines how native Chinese students, majoring in English and representing pre-intermediate and high-intermediate EFL learning stages, interpret the given Chinese sentences which are recorded in a tape. The following table shows the results.

Table 4-1 (based on Chen 2005: 38)

Group	Number of responses	Cases of T-p constructions	Percentage
1 <sup>st</sup> -year students	1469	349.5	23.79%
4 <sup>th</sup> -year students	1385	348	25.13%

Table 4-1 tends to support the hypothesis that Chinese students of both learning stages are characterized by their unconscious tendency to produce topic-prominent constructions. Topic-prominence in Chinese may reflect a different habitual thinking pattern in syntax from subject-prominent English. This suggests that the topic-prominent feature of China English may prevail among Chinese EFL learners over a relatively long period.

Furthermore, Chen Jianping examines differences between the two groups of Chinese students by focusing on two types of topic-prominent constructions (prepositional phrases as topics and other phrase structures as topics). The results are presented in Table 4-2.

Table 4-2 (Chen 2005: 42)

	First-year		Fourth-year	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Phrase structures	325	83.33	202	53.72
Prepositional phrases	65	16.67	174	46.28
Total	390	100%	376	100%

It is obvious that the 4<sup>th</sup>-year EFL students use more prepositional phrases to mark the

topic than the 1<sup>st</sup>-year EFL students. The use of prepositional phrases appears to sound more English and look more mature syntactically. Therefore, it matches the author's assumption that "the use of prepositional phrases to mark the topic is a characteristic of more advanced learners' interlanguage production while learners of early stages tend to rely more on the direct transfer of the Chinese top-comment order" (ibid.). This can be well illustrated by the following sentences:

(37)

There are five apples two are spoiled. (1<sup>st</sup>-year)

Among these five apples there are two spoiled. (4<sup>th</sup>-year)

五个苹果两个坏了。

Such a wonderful football match you'd better watch the color TV set. (1<sup>st</sup>-year)

For this wonderful football game we must watch color TV. (4<sup>th</sup>-year)

这么好的足球赛，不看彩电不行。

Comparing sentences of the 1<sup>st</sup>-year students with those of the 4<sup>th</sup>-year students, we find the basic word order of the 4<sup>th</sup>-year students is still within Chinese topic-comment frame, though the use of prepositions is a typical English syntactic phenomenon. With reference to the EFL group, the two groups of Chinese students belong to the same speech community. However, there are still differences between them because of their different learning stages. The more advanced the group of students are, the more grammatical the sentence structures they use. In other words, the 4<sup>th</sup>-year students approximate closer to the standard varieties. Cheshire (1978) concludes "variation is governed by both social and linguistic factors" (cf. Wardhaugh 2000: 168). In the 1<sup>st</sup>-year students' speech, variation is governed by norms that are central to Chinese culture. Variation in the 4<sup>th</sup>-year students' speech appears to be less rigidly controlled by Chinese norms. Besides, the two groups of students are subject to two linguistic constraints on the structure of regular English sentences, of which one favors the use of less grammatical sentence structure and the other favors the use of more grammatical sentence structure. In accordance with Ellis (1999), facilitation or positive transfer is evident rather in a reduced number of errors and in the rate of learning. It is probably true to say that above-cited sentences are positive transfers of Chinese topic-prominent structures.

### 4.3 Textual Transfer

In his article "A Contrastive Analysis of the Language Characteristics in the English Compositions of Chinese and American University Students", Ma Guanghui (2002: 345-349) concludes like this:

In the studies of contrastive rhetoric or English writing, the EFL writings different from those of British and American people can not simply or blindly be regarded as wrong or inappropriate. The textual variation is a very complex matter, involving register, text types, culture, society, history, rhetoric and personal writing style and so on. So the differences of English writing should be studied in a comprehensive perspective.

The following discussion will be focused on text structures in terms of different text types.

First, let us come to the structure of a letter in China English.

In “English as an Asian Language: Implications for the English Language Curriculum”, an Australian scholar Kirkpatrick provides an English letter by a Chinese student as follows:

(38)

I have been a loyal listener to Radio Australia's English teaching programmes and to “Songs You Like” for several years. I consider both programmes to be extremely well produced.

Let me describe myself a little: I am a middle school student, I am eighteen and my home is in X, a small border city. The cultural life really isn't too bad. Because I like studying English, I therefore follow those programmes closely. But because the Central Broadcasting Station's English programmes are rather abstruse, they are not really suitable for me and therefore I get all my practice in listening comprehension and dialogue from Radio Australia's English programmes. This practice has been of great benefit. As I progress, step by step through the course, I am keenly aware that not having the teaching materials presents several difficulties. Because of this, I have taken time to write this letter to you, in the hope that I can obtain a set of Radio Australia's English programmes teaching materials. Please let me know the cost of the materials.

In addition, I hope to obtain a Radio Australia calendar. Wishing Radio Australia's MSC Programmes even more interest.

(cf. Jiang & Du 2003: 28)

The grammar is correct and the whole letter reads smoothly. Maybe many Chinese who are familiar with English can write similar letters. The structure of this letter is:

- (1) Facework
- (2) Reason for request
- (3) Request(s)
- (4) Sign off

While the structure of an English letter is (Kirkpatrick, 2000):

- (1) Request(s)
- (2) Reasons for request
- (3) Facework
- (4) Sign off

Comparing these two, one can see clearly that the letter structure of China English is different from that of British and American English. “The systematic deviations from the British and American model at pragmatic and textual level, as which we have no reason at all to regard errors” (cf. Jiang & Du 2003: 29).

Guo Ke and Zhao Hong (2001) analyze the news structure of *China Daily* from 1981 to 1999, the statistic result is:

Although Fulbright and Robert Dardenne, the professors of Shanghai Foreign Studies University, think that the newspapers of English-speaking countries at most times don't conform to the inverted pyramid structure, we found that in *China Daily*, the traditional and efficient structure used in the analyzed 22 articles accounts for 62.9%.

(cf. Jiang & Du 2003: 29)

At the same time, the two researchers find that in terms of the news reports with inverted pyramid structure, summary lead is habitually used in British and American newspapers,

while to their surprise, quotation lead and main-fact lead are usually adopted in *China Daily*. The spiral text structure in China English is well reflected in authoritative *China Daily*.

As has been said previously, the thought pattern of native English speakers is linear. They tend to express their opinions, feelings and attitudes directly and are impatient of the round-about way of saying things. As a result, they often put more important information before less important information. On the contrary, the thought pattern of Chinese people is spiral. They tend to say things indirectly, thus moving from less important information to more important information. The Chinese ways of writing a letter and news reports prove that the high frequency of the spiral text structure in China English is not a matter of English proficiency, but a matter of linguistic and cultural influence of L1 on L2.

Then, let us come to the structure of essays in China English.

Researches (Kaplan 1966) have revealed that there appears to be a western preference for a deductive pattern and a Chinese preference for an inductive pattern in discourse. Based on the above researches, Professor Chen Jianping analyzes 363 essays written by Chinese EFL students. Firstly, he develops an analytical framework for the essays. He (2005: 53) summarizes "If an essay begins with a thesis statement in the first paragraph or in the second paragraph following the introductory remarks in the first paragraph, it is considered to be a deductive essay. However, if an essay does not have a thesis statement at the beginning and the writer concludes the essay with the theme summary / thesis statement, it is considered to be an inductive essay."

Chen Jianping thinks that some essays which do not have clear thesis statement either at the beginning or at the end are also considered as inductive essays. Then, he identifies three types of the essays (essay with inductive structure, essay of deductive frame with inductive paragraphs and essay with deductive structure). Furthermore, he uses three samples to demonstrate three basic analytical frameworks. Because of limited space, they will not be cited in this paper. Lastly, the results of the structural analysis of 363 essays are presented in Table 4-3 below.

**Table 4-3 (ibid: 60)**  
**Summary of the Structural Types of the Essays**

Essay types	Number	Percentage
IND	115	31.68%
DIP	80	22.04%
DEP	168	46.28%
Total	363	100%

Notes:

IND = essay with inductive structure

DIP = essay of deductive frame with inductive paragraphs

DEP = essay with deductive structure

It is well illustrated that the inductive pattern is a preferred pattern of discourse in



Chinese cultural context, which contrasts with the standard paragraph and essay structure in English. This mainly owns to the strong influence of the habitual discourse pattern of their native language.

Let us see the structure of a poem in China English as the following shows:

(39)

Original text

呆  
秀才  
吃长斋  
胡须满腮  
经书不揭开  
纸书自己安排  
明年不请我自来。

China English text

A  
Foolish scholar  
Fasted so long,  
Whiskers covered his cheeks;  
Neglecting to study the classics,  
He left pen and paper aside.  
He'll come without being invited next year.

(cf. Xu 2006: 27)

At the textual level paratactic relations are also observed more frequently in Chinese than in English, which means that there are less textual connectives (additive, adversative, causal and temporal) in Chinese than in English. The poem implicates the deep cultural background, namely, the essence of imperial examination in feudal China. The English version is close to the structure of the original Chinese and every sentence conforms to English syntax (SVA, SVO, ASVOA, and SVAA respectively). Furthermore, the logical relations between four sentences can be understood without the aid of textual connectives. This typical translation in a special cultural background in China is the translator's conscious choice, which is influenced by his native Chinese culture. A paratactic text structure is transferred into the poem in China English.

From the above samples, we can find that the text structure is a very important feature that sets Chinese apart from English. Different text types show different variations, different variations reflect different cultural backgrounds. Therefore, the variation of text structures across languages is pertinent to the cultural differences between societies.

Quirk (1985: 6) reminds us that:

...even the simplest, shortest, least technical, least momentous texts have a structure involving profound interactions between language and the world, between individual and culture in which they operate: involving extensive assumptions about shared knowledge and shared attitudes, reasoned inferences about the degree to which participants in even such simple communication are willing to cooperate.

After reading texts in China English, the westerners are likely to have a better understanding of the oriental culture of working and living, which presents them a fresh look at the same world and offers them a new perspective to the same thing. As a cultural envoy, China English with its characteristics at the textual level plays an irreplaceable role in spreading and promoting Chinese culture to the world. In a word, the variation of text structures in China English can present the Chineseness of China English in one aspect at the textual level although this reveals only the tip of the iceberg.

## 4.4 Grammatical Transfer

### 4.4.1 Word Order and Sentence Order

There are differences in word order between English and Chinese, although two languages are both SVO language (subjects precede verbs which in turn precede objects). The western people reason from the particular to the general, from parts to the whole or from the small to the big. However, Chinese people reason just the other way round. They move cognitively from the general, the whole or the big towards the particular, the individual parts, or the small. Professor Wang Zhenya (1999: 123) says “some contrasts of word order between English and Chinese are related to this cognitive difference between western and Chinese cultures.” We can look at the following example:

(40) For the first time, mainland residents will be able to invest directly in overseas securities, and the *Tianjin Binhai New Area* will become the pilot area for the new policy, the State Administration of Foreign Exchange (SAFE) announced on August 20.

(Beijing Review September 14, 2007)

This is different from native English of which the sequence of address should be from the small to the big. Thus, the italic can be reorganized as *Binhai New Area, Tianjin*. Of course, the frequency of this usage is much lower now because of China's increasing contact with the world. Chinese users of English for most of time would like to follow native English, but due to the influence of their culture and language, they sometimes consciously or unconsciously use a particular grammatical structure.

It is believed that an adverbial clause is normally and conventionally preposed in Chinese, while postposed in English. Ford (1993) examines how native American English speakers use four types of adverbial clauses (temporal, conditional, causal and concessive) in terms of their sequences with the main clause. The result shows as follows:

Table 4-4 (cf. Pan 2005: 168)

Position /Type	Temporal	Conditional	Causal	Concessive	Total
Initial	21 (34.4%)	26 (59.1%)	0	1 (33.3%)	48 (26.2%)
Final	40 (65.6%)	18 (40.9%)	75 (100%)	2 (66.7%)	135 (73.8%)

Pan Zhangxian (2005) also makes a comparative study of English writing by the Chinese (CVE texts) and those by American writers (AE texts) to compare the frequency of the sentence initial adverbials (SIA) in each group. The CVE texts are from *China Daily*, *China*

Today, *English Business Weekly* and *21<sup>st</sup> Century*; the AE texts are from *Time*, *Washington Post* and *Newsweek*. The result is illustrated in Table 4-5.

Table 4-5 (Pan 2005: 172)

Position	Data	Frequency of SIA
Initial	CVE texts	36%
Initial	AE texts	20%

Just as Pan Zhangxian (2005: 173) says “CVE has the characteristics of preferring the sentence sequence of subordinate-main while American English prefers a sequence of main-subordinate.” Such differences in comprehensibility suggest that the branching direction favored in a language is an influence on the types of syntactic complexity likely to occur in a language. English is primarily right-branching while Chinese is primarily left-branching. Therefore, the high frequency of the SIA in China English echoes with the left-branching nature of Chinese.

Judging from conclusions of the above scholars, the difference in sentence order between China English and American English is related to the different ways of thinking in the Chinese and western cultures. The inductive pattern is also a preferred sentence pattern in Chinese cultural context.

#### 4.4.2 Possessive Construction

Both a possessive inflection (as in *children's*) and a prepositional construction (as in *of the children*) are used to express possession in English. The possessive inflection always appears at the left place of the head, while the prepositional construction is on the right. However, there is a structure of the possessor plus a particle “de” in Chinese.

In traditional English grammar, the scope of use is relatively narrow. The possessive inflection is often used when the possessor is animate, that is to say, when the possessor is inanimate, a prepositional phrase is preferred. However, in Modern English, the scope of use is gradually widened. The possessive inflection may also appear in the inanimate possessors within some given situations. Currently, there is not an evident regular either. As far as possessive construction in China English is concerned, there are three forms of the possessive inflection deserved to be mentioned.

First the possessors are the names of nations or organizations such as companies, banks, as the following examples show. These possessors are between animate and inanimate because they are inanimate by name, yet what they refer to are animate, including the people or the personnel in the nation or the companies, banks, etc. The following examples help to illustrate.

(41) We believe those measures will enable *China's products* to attain higher quality in the near future.

(Xinhua News Agency September 12, 2007)

(42) This in turn could slow down *public companies' growth prospects* and help cool down the stock market in the long run.

(43) Banks are lending out money much faster than the *central bank's target*.

(44) *China's Steel Roses* are riding high after their last-gasp heroics against Denmark, and are confident they have what it takes to beat high-powered Brazil.

(*China Daily* September 15, 2007)

There are more examples such as *China's General Administration of Quality Supervision, Inspection and Quarantine*, *China's central bank*, *China's Consumer Price Index*, *China's population*, *China's family planning policy*, *China's music industry*, *China's foreign exchange reserve*, etc.

In the first situation, most of the genitives can be expressed both in possessive inflection and prepositional phrase. They are interchangeable. However, the habitual usage of "China's" is more often than "America's", "England's" in native varieties of English. It is a kind of positive transfer. The knowledge of Chinese "de" construction is easily transferred into English "'s" inflection. As the examples reveal, the frequency of the use of "'s" to express the possessive relations is much higher than "of + n." phrase in China English media.

Second, the possessors are inanimate, such as:

(45) There were 12 state-owned or state-holding enterprises and eight foreign-funded ones, with retail sales of 8.9 billion yuan and 17.33 billion yuan, accounting for 13.06 percent and 25.44 percent of the top 100's total.

(*Beijing Review* December 17, 2006)

(46) *The bridge's project management team* said the bridge will open to traffic in the first half of next year -- about a year ahead of schedule.

(*China Daily* June 19, 2007)

...percent of the total of the top 100 would be more popular in English, as well as *the project management team of the bridge*.

Third, the alternative for the possessive inflection can either be "of" prepositional phrase, or "in" prepositional phrase, such as:

(47) The wedge-shaped tower, with a rectangular hole at the very top in *Shanghai's Lujiazui financial district*, covers a floor area of 381,600 square meters.

(*Shanghai Daily* September 14, 2007)

(48) An analysis by a Dongguan real estate company revealed that the percentage of house-buyers from Shenzhen rose from 1 percent in January to 30 percent in June in *Dongguan's Liaobu Town*, and from 15 percent to 50 percent in Changping, another town in Dongguan.

(*Beijing Review* September 19, 2007)

Lujiazui is a financial district belonging to Shanghai administratively, and Liaobu is a town subordinate to Dongguan. However, in English we seldom say London's Trafalgar Square, but rather, Trafalgar Square in London. Therefore, the expression of *Shanghai's Lujiazui financial district* and *Dongguan's Liaobu Town* are deviations from English possessive construction. This further supports the view that transfer also affects the acquisition of grammar and "having acquired a first language during childhood, the learner comes to the task of learning the L2 with a well-organized neurolinguistic system" (cf. Chen 2005: 47).

## 4.5 Summary

Based on transfer theory, detailed analyses in this chapter have seen the characteristics of China English at different linguistic levels and also ascertained how English realizes its variation in Chinese socio-cultural context. “Linguistic features do not have social significance in and of themselves but only in terms of the social groups that use them. In England, it is prestigious to “drop your r’s”; in New York City, it is not” (Rickford 2001: 161). The typical use of a particular word, sentence, text or grammatical structure in Chinese socio-cultural context is the user’s conscious or unconscious choice, which is influenced or partially governed by his native language and culture. This variation in language is an important and well-recognized aspect of our daily lives since language-users are in different regional and social communities.

So far, language variation as a communicative strategy in China English has been discussed within the framework of transfer theory.

## Chapter 5 Conclusion

In the preceding chapter on lexical, syntactic, textual and grammatical transfer, the research focus is on variations in language structures and the consequences that those variations have for communication. We can draw a general conclusion of the current study.

This paper has expounded variation in China English as a communicative strategy in cross-cultural communication from the perspective of transfer theory, which is different from the previous studies on variation, and has attempted to seek a new interpretation of it. So the study of this dissertation is significant in certain respects.

Language variation in language communication is a communicative strategy more than a special language phenomenon. Hence, language variation in China English is also a communicative strategy which can best realize users' communicative needs in cross-cultural communication. To start with a discussion of initial studies on language variation and a brief introduction of the main researches into China English at home and abroad, the present study on variations in China English has been proposed by the author based on limitations of the previous studies.

In this study, variation has been studied from a new perspective of transfer theory. The paper explains variations in China English from perspectives of lexical, syntactic, textual and grammatical transfer. Lexis is the most active level at which there are plentiful Chinese characteristics, including borrowings, coinage and semantic change. At the syntactic level, there are some preferences in the choice of certain sentences and sentence structures. For instance, compared with English people, Chinese users of English prefer parataxis. At the textual level, there are also some preferences in the choice of text structures. For instance, Chinese prefer an inductive pattern in writing English essays. At the grammatical level, the statistic results of contrastive analyses by some scholars indicate that Chinese users of English tend to place adverbials at the initial position of a sentence more often than Americans. The illustrated discussion of China English suffices to ascertain how English realizes its variation in Chinese socio-cultural context. And it can be regarded that variation is a result of linguistic and cultural transfer from Chinese into English.

Trudgill (1975) says: "Linguistic change in English will continue, but it is very unlikely indeed that this will lead to a decrease in the mutual intelligibility of different varieties of English. That is, it is not legitimate to argue that change in English is a bad thing because it will lead to a breakdown in communication. It will not—so long as all English speakers need and are able to keep in touch with each other" (cf. Trudgill & Hannah 2000: 147).

We should take a lenient attitude towards China English. It is consciously or unconsciously used in intercultural communication. The negative transfer is always kept at the minimum amount, while the positive transfer is elaborated to the maximum amount. Language variation in China English has positive influences on society. It contributes to the spread of Chinese civilization and culture, enriches linguistic expressiveness and fits in with the needs of language communication. At the same time, it has negative influences, namely, lashes and hampers linguistic standardized construction. Therefore, in order to impose

restrictions on negative influences China English may exert, we should make an earnest study of China English and propose standard general plans so that China English can grow soundly and systematically.

There is some discussion of implications for pedagogical practices. At present, it is frustrating to find that many English programs emphasize “idiomatic” or “pure” English and intend to reproduce Standard English but fail to consider how to cope with the diverse forms of English in the real intercultural communication. There is no universally practiced variety, even if the speeches in tapes and of teachers’ which used to be regarded as “standard”. In reality, they are just good examples worth following and imitating but are by no means the framework that English-learners should unconditionally confine themselves to. And foreign teachers in China may come from different cities within the country and different nations where different regional dialects of English also prevail. In this regard, education plays a crucial role in transforming Standard English ideology but not reproducing Standard English. Therefore, it is imperative that we establish rationalization models in education. That, however, would be the subject of another study.

Limitations are inevitable and more could be done in future studies. The present study focuses on variations at different linguistic levels in China English, leaving phonological level untouched. And more detailed aspects at linguistic levels need to be explored. Besides, as is mentioned above, how to establish rationalization models in education is still a question.

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